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The New Hungarian Quarterly

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The New Hungarian Quarterly

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ZOLTÁN KODÁLY, OCTOGENARIAN

by

LÁSZLÓ EŐSZE

I

A life embracing eighty years is in itself worthy of remembrance and celebration, if in no wider a circle than that of friends. But when more than six decades of this life have been given up to a rich career of creative achievement, it justly commands the widest respect and admiration.

This year the world of Hungarian and international music celebrates the eightieth birthday of Zoltán Kodály and the sixty-fifth anniversary of his initiation as a composer. It is therefore apposite to recall the principal stages of his life and art, although he is still actively engaged in creative work among us. Hardly a year ago he astonished the audiences of the Luzern Festival by a new composition, the Symphony in c minor.

Zoltán Kodály's career as a composer began at the close of the last century in Nagyszombat, a small town with a historical past near what was then the north-western border of Hungary (now Trnava in Czechoslovakia). Here Kodály attended school for eight years, devoting all his spare time to studying music. He learnt to play the piano, then the violin and also the 'cello. He took part in chamber music at home, played in the school orchestra and sang in the cathedral choir. In addition he buried himself in scores to get acquainted with the treasures of musical literature. His extensive studies and fresh musical experiences became a source of inspiration for his first attempts at composition, including an overture for orchestra written in 1897 at the age of fifteen and given a public performance by the school orchestra.

Although Nagyszombat was the point of departure, the town where he grew familiar with the literature and the mysteries of the craft, his first musical impressions, which were to leave their indelible mark on his whole life, go back to a still earlier period, to the seven years spent at Galánta. What he heard there was the pure, untainted ancient singing of the Hun-

garian village. Thus Galánta formed the "fons et origo," particularly as regards inspiration and musical idiom.

In 1900, when Kodály came to Budapest to study at the philosophical faculty of Budapest University and at the Academy of Music, he was already immune to the influence of detrimental or worthless trends, of barren experimentation. The first eighteen years of his life, the most susceptible years, were spent in the Hungarian provinces, in a family circle passionately fond of the classical masters. In Budapest, music itself and the mother tongue of musicians was at that time German; the ideas and instruments of late romanticism, which had become definitely passé by then in the West, still ruled supreme. Both Debussy's art and the brilliant initiatives of the Russian, Czech, and Polish national schools, already held in high esteem by Liszt, failed to penetrate the wall which Budapest audiences had erected from the music of the imitators of Wagner and Brahms, shutting out the rest of the world of music.

The wall could be broken through only from inside, and this was the target Kodály set himself at the age of twenty. In this great endeavour he did not remain alone. At the very outset he found a comrade-in-arms, who had dedicated his brilliant abilities to the service of the same aims and who stood by him all his life, through thick and thin. This friend was Béla Bartók.

Both of them studied music under the erudite, conscientious professor, János Koessler. Kodály took his degree in composition almost simultaneously with his University degree in Hungarian, German and philosophy. No more than a few years elapsed before they both returned to the Academy of Music, this time as professors. In the meantime they conceived and elaborated together the great scheme of collecting and editing Hungarian folk songs, which were gradually falling into oblivion. The first collecting tours took them to the peripheral regions of the country. Before the First World War Hungary was a country of mixed nationalities, and the border areas were inhabited mainly by peoples whose mother tongue was not Hungarian. The Hungarians in these regions lived either mixed up with the other nationalities or in separate settlements, sharply divided from the rest. Kodály assumed that traditions were preserved in their purest form by the Hungarian populations of the ethnographic border and that therefore the most ancient layer of folk music was presumably to be found there. Scientifically his hypothesis proved to be correct, but politically it provoked disapproval among the ruling classes, which fanned hatred against the non-Hungarian nationalities, particularly when the areas concerned were ceded to Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia in accordance with the peace treaty of 1920.

This circumstance, together with the scarcely concealed hostility towards the peasant on the part of the dominant class of landowners explains why the two research workers received no state support whatsoever. The expenses involved in the collecting tours themselves they managed to cover from their own savings, but their resources were too meagre to meet the costs of publication. Yet the accumulating material made such publication imperative. In a few years, Kodály and Bartók alone collected over 3,000 melodies. The guiding principles of systematization and publication were laid down as early as 1913, but their realization had to wait nearly forty years. The song material, increased to tenfold in the meantime, has been issued since 1951 in the bulky volumes of the Hungarian Folk Music Archives.

In the opening years of the century Kodály's scientific conception thus provoked violent opposition in official circles. It is hardly astonishing that his artistic principles, which were imbued with the same spirit, aroused indignation, or, at best, met with lack of understanding and indifference. Besides Hungarian folk music, his chief source of inspiration was French impressionism, which he became acquainted with at this time. In 1907, when he returned from a tour of study and brought home in his trunk the works of Debussy, he may be said to have symbolically built a bridge between Paris and Budapest, between modern French and still more modern Hungarian music. The sun of Gallic spirit thus rose on the Hungarian horizon from behind the dominant summits of latter-day German romanticism. These ideals, however, had nothing in common with the idols of contemporary music-loving Hungarian audiences. Kodály—like Bartók—defied generally prevailing tastes, and instead of the smooth path to quickly attained and as quickly evaporating success, he chose the harder, more arduous road towards the objectives he had set himself.

2

The dates of the two masters' first concert appearances, March 17 and 19, 1910, are celebrated today in Hungary as the double birthday of modern Hungarian music. At the time, however, the official music world branded Kodály as a "deliberate transgressor," accusing him of "despising thought and melody" and of "avoiding harmony in his compositions," although he was professor of harmonics at the Academy of Music. Some people went so far as to declare that his art was pathological. More understanding was shown in other countries. Progressive audiences in Zurich and Paris, which had also heard the music of the "young barbarians" (as Kodály and Bartók

were alluded to) in 1910, recognized that the two young composers were endeavouring to create a new classicism. Unlike the majority of their western colleagues, it was not the enormous or the extravagant that they were striving for, but the truly great; not the astounding the unusual, but the new.

Kodály's *First String Quartet* (Op. 2) performed on that occasion was the first of his major works to be based on folk-song elements. Apart from turns of melody, the instrumental treatment too was occasionally reminiscent of peculiarities associated with folk music. The *Sonata for 'Cello and Piano* (Op.4), on the other hand, was rooted entirely in folk music, as is evidenced by the pentatonic symbol that dominates the composition, by a melodic structure based on fourths, by the rubato, quasi-improvised instrumental style of the first movement, *etc.*

Among the later chamber music pieces dating from the 1910's, the *Duo* (Op. 7) for violin and 'cello reveals a new hue produced by the concatenation of these two distant members of the string family. Kodály's rich imagination here exploited the roughly equal technical properties of the two instruments, their suitability for the performance of the same configurations and melodies, and the fact that their tones, despite this similarity, vary within a wide range. The greater part of the work is dominated by rubato instrumental themes of folk-song type, while the last movement is characterized by a nursery song, giving a restrained presentation of a breathless ostinato.

The *Sonata* (Op. 8) for solo 'cello is remarkable for reviving 17th and 18th century *scordatura,* the two lower strings being shifted from *c* and *g* to *b* and *f* sharp. Virtuoso passages appear here for the first time as a new colour on Kodály's palette—a natural consequence of the solitary instrument's being reduced to its own resources. The formal unity of the composition is ensured by themes developed from a common root; each of the movements nevertheless displays a widely different character. The first fascinates by its dramatic atmosphere, the second by the abundant melodic flow, the third by its dazzling mastery of technical resources.

The *Second String Quartet* (Op. 10) is a magnificent example of the perfect amalgamation of folk music and individual tone. The sweeping last movement—with its six sharply defined themes—exemplifies Kodály's uniquely rich melodic inventiveness.

In the *Trio Serenade* (Op. 12) Kodály employed related instruments: two violins and one viola. Its pure and full string tones are among the principal virtues of this serene, enchanting composition, whose melodic and harmonic content sums up on a higher plane the characteristic features that made their appearance in earlier works. However, it surpasses the latter mainly

in the greater organic unity of thematic development, in a clearer arrangement of modal correlations. This composition, classically lucid in both structure and substance, of balanced proportions and varied melody, is an outstanding masterpiece not only among Kodály's works, but in the chamber music treasury of the 20th century.

3

Simultaneously with these pieces of instrumental chamber music, nearly fifty songs saw the light of day. In these Kodály solved the fundamental problems of Hungarian singing style. The recognition that Greek and Latin metres, with their varied groups of syllables, were more congenial to the nature of the Hungarian language than iambic or trocheeic verse forms is an indication of Kodály's thorough sense of prosody. In disclosing the peculiar nature of the Hungarian accent, he demonstrated that it was not a simple, dynamic, but a rhythmic, even melodious phenomenon. The faultless declamation of the words resulting from their adjustment to alternating rhythms is already evident in the sixteen songs included in the series entitled *Singing* (Op. 1). Ingenious harmonization overcomes the most difficult problem, that of welding the frequent change of moods and remote pictures in popular verses.

Another typical illustration of the masterful treatment of words may be found in the *Two Songs* (Op. 5) in the second of which Kodály set to music the poem "Weep, Weep..." by Endre Ady, the greatest representative of 20th century Hungarian lyrical poetry. The free, recitative melody, while following every least vibration of the poem, never loses itself in details, but reflects the whole atmosphere, magnificently intensifying the profound effect of the thoughts expressed.

The title *Belated Melodies* (Op. 6) alludes to the passage of a hundred years before melodies were belatedly composed to the treasures of Hungarian poetry in order to render their existence complete. The first piece—*Solitude*—is a masterly miniature, in which Kodály immortalized the peace of solitude and the ecstasy of self-communion. In crass contrast to the intimate, soft light emanating from the harmonies of this song, the other gem of the cycle, *Farewell of Carnival*, teems with playful rhythms and ironically bubbling mirth.

Most of Kodály's chamber music and songs were composed between 1905 and 1920. They were thus the fruits of his youthful years, which makes their maturity all the more astonishing. Their main function, nevertheless, was to help perfect his means of expression and to prepare him for his later

tests of strength. His instrumental style was ripened by his chamber music compositions, his vocal style by his songs. About 1920 it became evident that the preparatory period had come to an end, and the master was now ready for fulfilment, for an all-embracing synthesis.

Then history interfered. The First World War, in which Hungary, as part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, had become involved from the beginning, finally came to an end. Grave losses and trials had plunged the country into a crisis, which steadily deepened during the bourgeois revolution that followed the war. In the spring of 1919, power was seized by the working classes and the Hungarian Soviet Republic was established. During the brief period of its existence—its destiny was sealed already in August by foreign intervention—it sought a way out of the hopeless situation by means of sound initiatives in every sphere of life.

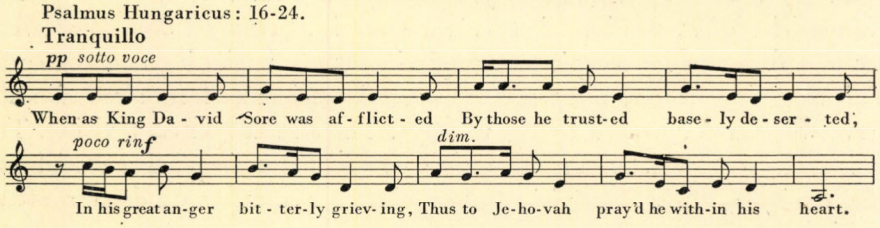
The composer, Béla Reinitz, commissioned to deal with the sphere of music, relied on the expert opinion of Kodály, Bartók and Dohnányi, and formed a directorate of these musicians. The Academy of Music was reorganized and a new administrative board set up, with Ernő Dohnányi as director and Zoltán Kodály as vice-director. After the overthrow of the revolutionary regime the adherents of the old order started a campaign of vengeance against those whom the people had put in their places. Dohnányi was dismissed from his office, Kodály was suspended and subjected to disciplinary investigation. In the course of nearly half a year he had to endure the bitter ordeal of twelve court hearings. Official proceedings were supported by attacks in the government press. One of the papers wrote: "The young generation of musicians must be protected from corruption by ultra-neologist, symbolist and cubist trends. Let musicians be trained, and not *fledgeling-Kodálys*. . ."

His enemies could not triumph over Kodály. The verdict terminating the disciplinary proceedings annulled only his appointment as vice-director. He was nevertheless prevented from returning to the Academy for two years. Support from abroad served to counterbalance the attacks sustained at home; the Universal Edition of Vienna offered him a contract providing for the publication of all his works. While preparing them for the press, Kodály checked and reviewed all his compositions, summing up the results he had achieved. This work could manifestly not be confined to mere registration, but grew into a significant stage of musical development. This was clearly revealed on November 19, 1923—the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the Hungarian capital by the union of Pest, Buda and Óbuda—when a masterpiece of 20th century music, the *Psalmus Hungaricus* was performed for the first time.

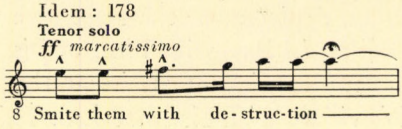
4

Kodály's psalm is the moving lament of a poet inseparably united with his people. It is, in the words of Bence Szabolcsi, "the heroic song of every persecuted and oppressed people." The text of the composition spans thousands of years, for—according to the Bible—they were uttered by King David as the fifty-fifth psalm, about 1000 B. C., to be rendered in Hungarian 2600 years later by Mihály Kecskeméti Vég, preacher and poet, at the time of the Turkish occupation, and to be finally invested with full life after the passage of several more centuries in the music of Kodály. Pentatonic melody, western harmony and forms merge here with natural spontaneousness.

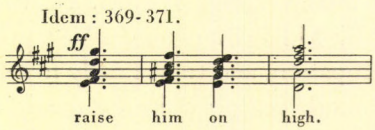
The composition opens with a short, passionate orchestral part. When it has quieted down, the unisonal chant of the choir chimes in:



This pentatonic melody, as the principal theme of the work composed in rondo form, returns on another five occasions, in the form of a choral *ritornello*. The material of the orchestral introduction also recurs in a remarkable manner—practically like a second rondo theme—but not as often as the principal theme. Thus the Psalmus is actually built on a double framework, on the firm pillars of a vocal and an instrumental theme. The episodes are dominated by the tenor solo. Of the six episodes only the last is relinquished to the choir, while in the fourth, tenor solo and choir are united. In the first part of the composition, the climax of the lament is reached after being prepared by a masterly crescendo. As the poet's cries grow louder, the orchestra joins in to reinforce them; then, after a breath-taking pause, the curse from the Old Testament cuts in:



The culmination of the second part—the prayer—is the counterpart o this powerful outbreak; however, in accordance with the text and contrary to the preceding part, it assumes a consonant character, and instead of coming from the lips of the soloist, it pours forth from the entire chorus and full orchestra.



The colours now become veiled, the lights grow dim. The recurrent choral theme is heard once more in its original form, followed by the gradually weakening *pizzicato* of the 'cellos and contrabasses, as the grand composition dies away into silence. The work is a grandiose dramatic fresco set in a frame of lyrico-epic contemplation at the beginning and the end. This rounding off does not result from considerations of form alone, it also serves the ideas conveyed by the message. The climax reflects a vision. To finish the composition on that note would have implied a denial of the reality of life. The vision must therefore fade, as do dreams after waking.

The Psalmus was a milestone in Kodály's life and art, terminating the period of chamber music and songs and initiating the era of great symphonic compositions, works for the stage, and *a cappella* choirs. Cavillers were reduced to silence, while recognition and appreciation have been steadily growing ever since. The period from 1920 to 1923, the years of silence—or rather those of silencing —would, in retrospect, seem to have been rather a time of gathering strength.

The next major composition, *Háry János* presented in 1926, was a significant contribution to stage music. The opera consists of five adventures with a prelude and an epilogue. Its hero, a mendacious veteran, is not simply the Hungarian peasant counterpart of Plautus's Miles Gloriosus or the German Baron Munchausen. To quote the composer, he "brings to life the fanciful Hungarian bent for story telling, expressing the indestructible, everlasting Hungarian quality of optimism." The adventures attributed to Háry in the old tale are depicted on the stage; we witness scenes of the emperor's daughter falling in love with him, of his single-handed victory over Napoleon, his astute settling of affairs at the Burg of Vienna, and finally his return to his village with his betrothed. This work is an epic that

sings of the strength, gallantry, and patriotism of the Hungarians. At times, the music strikes the note of Hungarian folk songs—for instance, in reflecting the lives and depicting the character of Hungarian heroes—at others, it provides illustration—*e.g.* in telling of adventures in strange lands, of courtly personages. Frank, warm lyricism and noble pathos prevail in the former, whereas the latter sparkle with irresistible humour and mockery. The *Theatre Overture*, consisting of the introduction to the work and provided with an independent conclusion, and the *Háry Suite* in six movements —composed of the most outstanding parts of the opera— are popular items on the programs of symphonic concerts. The Suite's comprehensive unity, built up on contrasts, is realized by the composer's weaving his message into the odd-number movements *(The Story Begins, Song, Intermezzo)*, while the even-number movements colourfully illustrate a series of incredible, humorous incidents *(Vienna Chimes, Napoleon's Battle, Entry of the Imperial Court)*. The contradiction between the two worlds is emphasized by contrasting themes and orchestration.

The Hungarian people is the protagonist of Kodály's other opera, the *Székely Spinnery*, presented in 1932. The plot, developed from the intertwining of twenty-one folk songs and ballads, is soon told, for it deals with the vicissitudes and happy union of a pair of lovers. To determine the form of the work is more difficult; perhaps the most appropriate definition would seem to be "folk ballad of opera size." Almost the whole of the *Székely Spinnery* rests on vocal parts. The composer's unique faculty of transcribing folk songs is revealed here in all its beauty, as is the "Hungarian counterpoint" devised by himself (making two folk songs sound concurrently, *etc.*). Only in the brief, suggestive introduction and in a passionate interlude does the orchestra have an independent role; otherwise, it merely provides accompaniment.

In these two compositions Kodály confined himself to putting on the stage the Hungarian folk song in its original form. "Audiences," he said, "must be awakened to a consciousness of their own musical language, otherwise they will fail to understand what they are told in this language." He did not, of course, create the modern Hungarian national opera with these two compositions. However, no one could have accomplished the task of preparing the soil more perfectly than did Kodály.

Numerous other compositions came into being parallel with the two works for the stage. The finest specimens of Kodály's folk song transcriptions for singing voices and piano were published in the ten booklets of Hungarian Folk Musik during the period from 1924 to 1932. Every one of the fifty-seven pieces bears witness to the master's way of seizing the spiritual

content of a folk song in his transcription, accentuating the essence of melody and words and never disregarding their true, inherent character for a single moment.

5

The year 1925 opened the gates of an entirely new world in Kodály's art. The series of children's choirs were started in that year. These miniature masterpieces—*Villő, See the, Gipsy Munching Cheese, László Lengyel, Whitsuntide Song,* to mention only a few—initiated a new era not only in Hungarian choral singing, but also in the history of European vocal art. Their chief peculiarity is that children's voices are alone suited to their interpretation. These choruses serve to kindle in their young performers the joy of creative achievement, since they radiate the playful spirit of childhood living in the make-believe world of games. They stand near to the little ones owing also to their classical character. In general, children think objectively, and are free from romantic notions. Only classical music can therefore be true music for children.

In these choruses the melodies are plastic and the parts easy to sing. Euphony—always a primary aim with Kodály—is particularly evident in these works. He always endeavoured to avoid major-minor tonality, at first employing natural minor, Dorian, and mixed modes; pentatonic themes came to prevail only later. With the passage of time, linear progression of voices became predominant, which did not imply relegating harmony to the background, but gave the voices greater independence and equality of rank. This was promoted by frequent imitation and canon-like solutions, thereby strengthening the unity of the works. Examined from the aspect of form, the first children's choruses are found to be major, complex, cyclic compositions, while the later ones are shorter pieces with a single theme. All are marked by strict discipline of form, clear construction, and preference for the elaboration of variations in place of verse architecture. Apart from these traits, the secret of their success lies in the human attitude of the composer: Kodály never approaches children with condescension but turns to them with sincere love, one might say with respect. In his more than forty works of this kind he was thus able to portray more perfectly than anyone before him the two great realities of a child's life—fiction and play.

From that time forward Kodály has given his youthful singers ever increasing care and affection. Apart from his individual genius, he has been actuated by his vocation as a teacher. He wanted to lead them out of their musical wantlessness and make them susceptible to real values. However, he soon recognized that this activity could

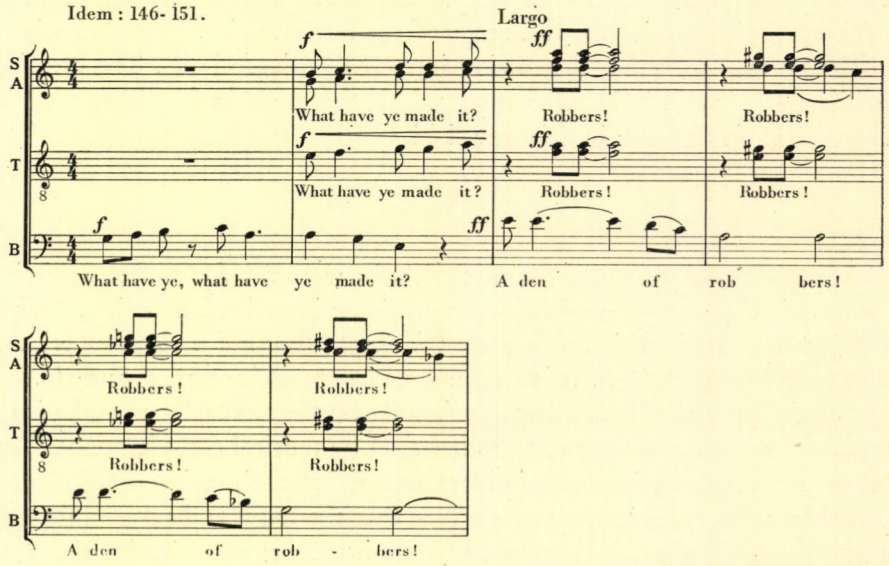
not be confined to youth but had to be extended to the whole people. Building up the future was the most important, yet the present also demanded urgent help. He consequently formulated a new principle—for himself and the country's choral movements, hitherto concerned chiefly with male choirs—to the effect that "works proclaiming the entirety of life require the full range of the human voice." From unmixed choirs he thus turned with growing interest to mixed choirs. The creative brilliance and technical skill that graced his choral works for children blossomed into full beauty in this new field.

6

Most of Kodály's works for mixed choirs were the fruit of the thirties and forties. The most remarkable ones, displaying all the peculiar features of Kodály's art in this sphere, are *Old People, Jesus and the Traders, Always Late,* and *Norwegian Girls.* It is a common characteristic of these and similar compositions that they are shaped primarily by the atmosphere and logic of the words, the course of events, rather than by musical considerations. The words are the most important pillars supporting the musical architecture. Another common trait of these works is that the truth and acceptability of the composer's personal message are confirmed by some objective element. Sometimes he appeals to nature, on other occasions he enlists the help of mankind. The classical balance of homophonic and polyphonic parts is remarkable. In the alternation of these two factors, the choice depends not only on musical considerations but also on the words. Hence there are no purely homophonic or purely polyphonic compositions among them. Homophonic treatment is more appropriate to lyrical or epic moods, whereas dramatic pulsation tends to call for polyphonic construction. One of Kodály's strongest points as vocal composer—his perfect sense of prosody, which manifests itself in the tiniest details and the largest units alike—is equally characteristic of all the choruses. He availed himself of every possibility offered by purely musical devices, making full use of the formative, mood-suggesting quality of superimposed parts, and often intensifying an effect by stressing emotional or intellectual elements lying dormant in the words.

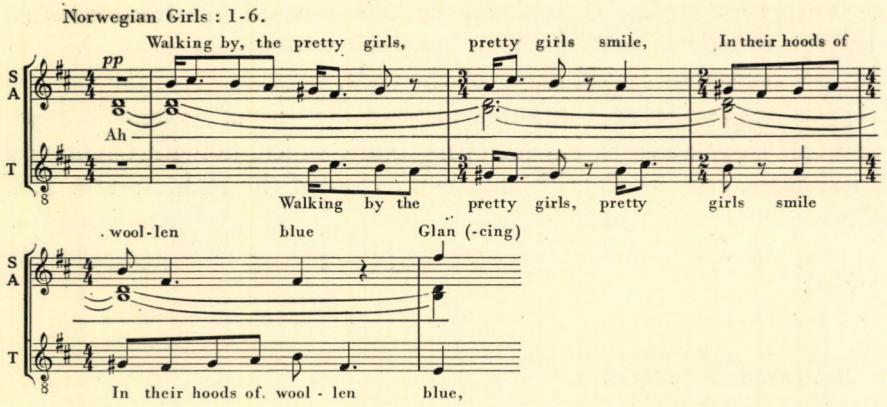
At the dramatic climax of *Jesus and the Traders* the power of the words is enhanced rather by the psychological than musical factors. "*My house is the house of prayer...*" come the Passion-like words of the text. Then the music is developed on two levels. The bass continues in the spirit of the gospel: "*What have ye made it? A den of robbers!*"

The other voices reiterate *"Robbers!,"* expressing simultaneously the unmistakable accusation: it is you who have done it, you who are robbers yourselves.



After this eruption, the atmosphere gradually calms down. Repeated dramatic exclamations denounce the high priests, the scribes. They are omitted only where the words allude to the people. It is evident that, considered solely from the musical aspect, the previously employed method might have been followed here too. Kodály, however, refrained from resorting to this handy means of providing an impressive conclusion, to avoid its becoming an end in itself, and again sought to find the expression best suited to conveying his message.

The beginning of the choruses is also characteristic. Instead of starting *in medias res*, Kodály prefers to introduce most of his mature compositions with a "stationary picture." Even though dramatic elements appear later, the beginning is usually of epic-lyrical quality. *Old People* and *Norwegian Girls* are similarly introduced by such a "closed exposition" which, in its general effect, creates a uniform impression and sets the prevailing mood. In the latter composition the stagnant fog (suggested by the double organ point of the contralto part) and the girls of Balholm smiling impassively as they walk along the harbour (soprano-tenor) are made almost perceptible to our senses.



If mention is made, in addition, of the symbolic and descriptive use of words, which are apt to recur again and again in diverse variations, it becomes evident how inexhaustible a treasury of musical devices is offered by Kodály's choruses.These masterpieces are worthy heirs and successors of the great centuries of European choir culture.

Besides vocal compositions, this period yielded a rich crop of symphonic works. It will suffice here to cite the major orchestral compositions of a decade, *Summer Evening* (transcribed in 1929); *Marosszék Dances* (1930); *Galánta Dances* (1933); *Budavár Te Deum* (1936); *Up Flew the Peacock* (1938—39); *Concerto* (1939). All these works form permanent items on concert programs.

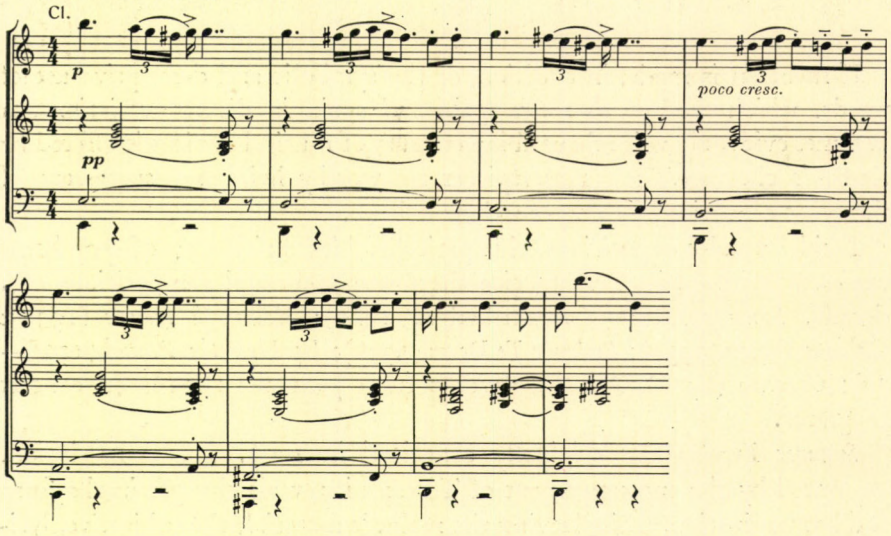
Summer Evening was originally conceived in 1906. The transcription, prompted by the encouragement of Toscanini, reveals changes in the form and harmonization, while leaving the melodic material, the subjective, lyrical mood, and the orchestration of the original almost unaltered. The work is in sonata form, with the exposition comprising the inner development of the themes (except for the closing theme). In a singular way, every theme has several aspects. In the recapitulation pentatonic themes are given special prominence, while the coda summarizes the message of the work by fusing the principal and closing themes.

The melodic material of the symphonic dance poem, *Marosszék Dances*, was derived from Kodály's earlier Transylvanian folk-song collection. As to form it is a minor rondo with three interludes and a coda. The refrain—an instrumental paraphrase of a Székely song, composed in a rubato vein and of noble pathos—returns characteristically in every variation. The variation, however, affects harmonization more strongly than the melody itself.

The first interlude is an animated dance song of *giusto* rhythm, in the second the tune played by the flute sounds as if improvised, the third contains a bagpipe melody in *giusto* rhythm. The work comes to an impressive end with the boisterous Hajdú dance of the coda.

It was not ancient folk airs that inspired the second symphonic dance poem, the *Galánta Dances*, but recruiting music which, notwithstanding its ancient roots, came to flourish only at the close of the 18th century. This composition too is in rondo form, but of slightly looser construction. After a lengthy *Lento* introduction the dignified principal theme is played by the clarinet:

Dances of Galánta: 50-58.

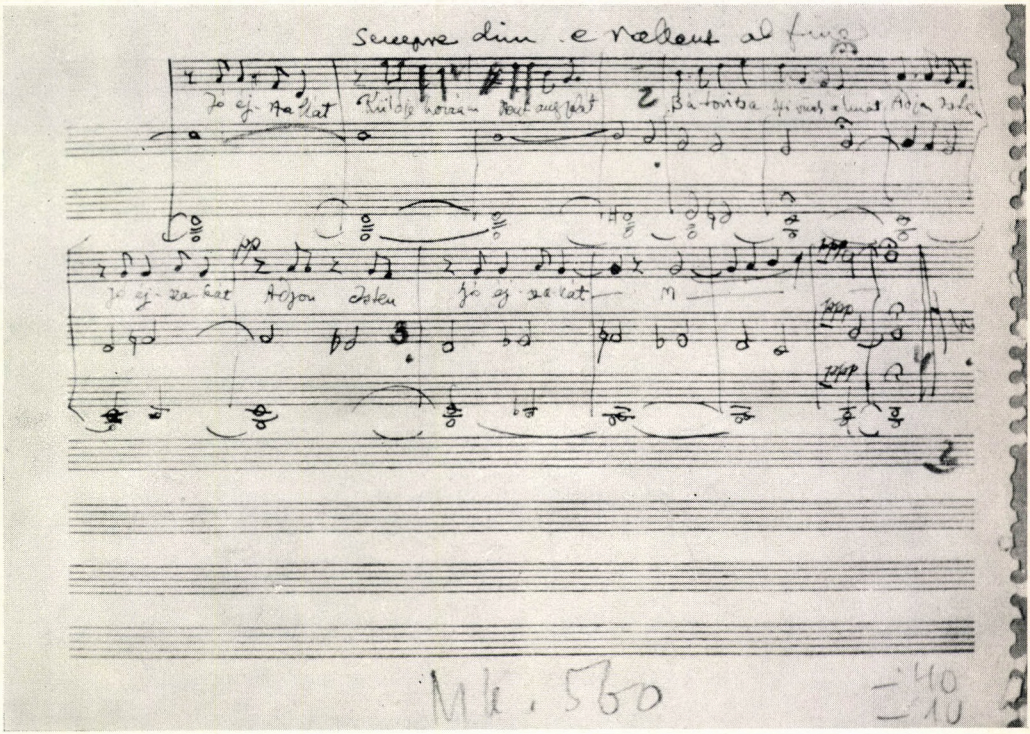


The coda, which follows after altogether two interludes and a return of the rondo theme, constitutes the larger part of the work. Its melodic wealth shapes it into something of a "state within a state" of large-scale formal unity, the four parts of which, however, live virtually independent lives.

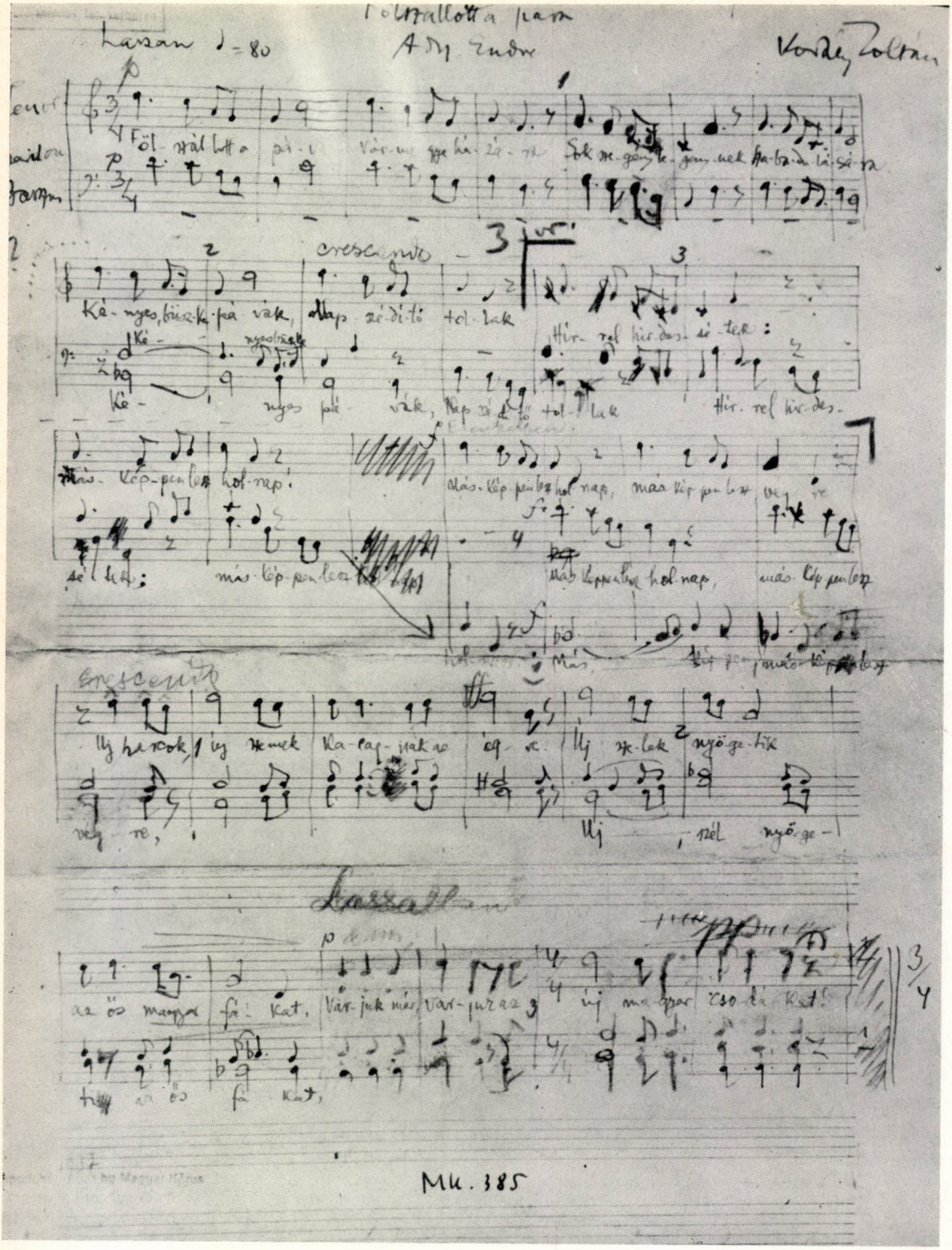
The orchestration of the two dance rondos is similar, though in sound the second may perhaps be fuller and more brilliant. However, in harmony they widely differ, owing to the diversity of the musical material. In the *Galánta Dances*, respect for historical traditions causes first place to be given to classical harmonization enriched by the attainments of the 19th century.

The *Budavár Te Deum*—the counterpart of the Psalmus—for four soloists, mixed choir, organ, and orchestra, may perhaps be regarded as Kodály's most

Zoltán Kodály in his Study



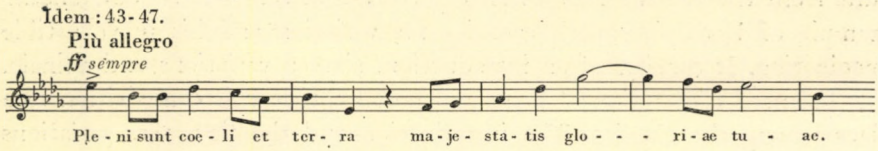
Page from Kodály's Musical Notebook



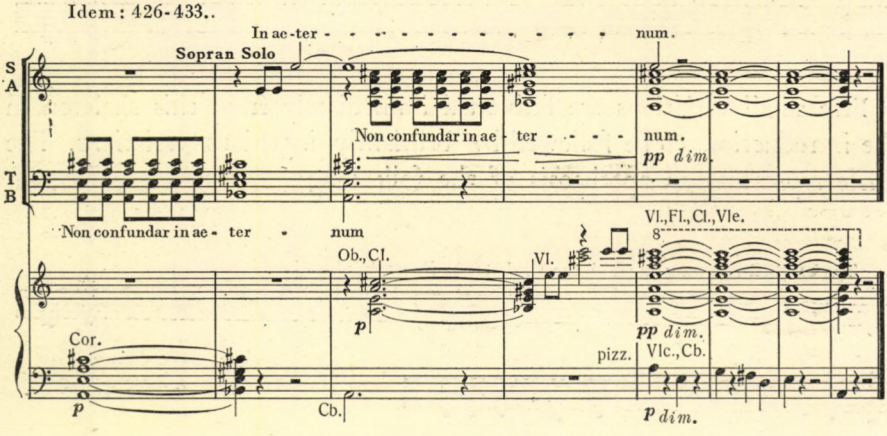
Autographed Score of „Up Flew the Peacock"
(based on Endre Ady's poem)

concentrated composition. Its indissoluble unity, perfect form, and the balance of its sundry elements, are the more admirable when we bear in mind that in this composition the master has blended a greater number and variety of styles than in any other of his works.

The *Te Deum* was composed for the 250th anniversary of the Hungarian capital's liberation from the Turks. The opening fanfare of the trumpets evokes battle memories, while the triumphal song of the choir celebrates the victory. The first climax of the work is the *Pleni sunt* fugato following the *Sanctus*, bringing baroque choral polyphony to perfection in a new spirit. Its pentatonic theme, recalling Gregorian chant, springs from ancient layers of Hungarian folk music.



In the middle part, the atmosphere changes: the tempo becomes slower, the $^4/_4$ measure is replaced by $^3/_4$, and the soloists make their first appearance. "Premature" returns are followed by a real recapitulation in which the *Non confundar* brings back the *Pleni sunt* fugato which formed the culmination of the first part. These twin points of climax and their return give the work a firm structure. Taken as separate major units, the various parts assume trio, sonata, or rondo form. By the individual and novel intermingling of these classical forms Kodály has built a modern bridge form,



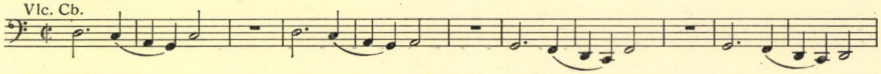
the two main pillars of which, the twin points of climax, rest on pentatonic themes. The grandiose dramatic fresco closes with an exquisite lyrical soprano solo, while the chief motif is heard for the last time as the receding *pizzicato* of the string bass, underlying the soft bars of the choir—like a symbol. This highest synthesis constitutes at the same time the most beautiful conclusion.

The *Concerto* as a whole is a peculiar combination of baroque orchestration and principles of form, the dance-like rhythm of older Hungarian art music, and the melodics of ancient Hungarian folk music. Its particular value lies in its dynamism, classical balance, thematic plasticity, disciplined mode of construction, and rich variety in the solo treatment of the instruments.

Up Flew the Peacock—an orchestral work of sevenhundred-and-ten bars built from the ancient Hungarian eight-bar folk song—is an outstanding example of Kodály's superb capacity for variation and his inexhaustible imagination. It consists of an introduction, sixteen variations, and a finale. The balanced elaboration of form and mood entitle this composition to a place among the classics. The introduction and the first ten variations constitute a separate unit, as do the last two variations with the finale; both parts are dominated by folk-song elements. However, the four variations between these two parts—in the nature of a *trio*—carry one into spheres remote from the spirit of folk tunes.

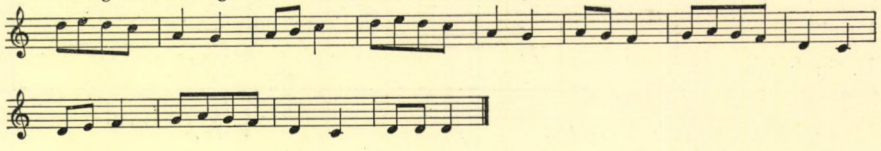
The folk-song theme is introduced only in the 65th bar. In the introduction it appears merely in a reduced shape carried by the bass—a sort of pentatonic symbol:

The Peacock Variations: 2-12.
Moderato
Vlc. Cb.



Five small variations are fashioned immediately from this skeleton in the introduction, to be followed by brilliantly ingenious variations. The finale represents an apotheosis of the folk song:

The original folk song on which the finale of the Peacock is based.



Kodály's creative genius here develops the natural qualities of the folk song with the almost boundless means offered by art music—for the most part in conformity with its inherent traits. In the radiant, glittering colours of his orchestra the ancient tune unfolds like the gorgeous feathers of the peacock on a sunny meadow.

7

Kodály's portrait, even though limited to a sketch, would be deficient, indeed false, if it failed to acquaint us with at least the main features of his activities as a scholar and a teacher, a dual activity which he has been carrying on since 1905. The value of his innumerable articles and studies never depends on their length. The shortest and the longest alike contain the thoughts and statements of a dependable scholar and a teacher of wide intellectual horizon.

Scholar and artist—two entirely different vocations. Each seems to call for a different mentality, a different temperament, hardly capable of meeting in one and the same person. Kodály has nevertheless declared: "Not only do the various branches of science belong together, but science and art cannot exist without each other. The more there is of an artist in the scholar, the better, and vice versa. Without intuition and imagination a scholar can become only a hodman of science, while an artist without strict inner order and constructive logic will get stuck at the boundaries of art."

Kodály's studies on folklore undoubtedly represent the main field of his scientific activities. In the first of these he confined himself chiefly to recording folk songs and giving an account of relevant material. Later papers dealt with the results obtained in various branches and in connection with special problems. After thirty-two years of research, his comprehensive monograph, *"Hungarian Folk Music,"* was finally published in 1937. This fundamental work of Hungarian musicology, besides going through several editions in Hungary, has appeared in English, German and Russian.

Hungarian musical criticism and aesthetics also owe much to Kodály. In about fifty articles he laid the foundations of Bartók-aesthetics and effectively promoted the development of public taste. Nothing escapes his interest and he always puts his finger on the essence, investigating each problem in its correlations. What is most important, he never stops at criticism but always points out the way and gives guidance. He shouldered the hard work involved in popularizing and propagating general knowledge, because —as he remarked in one of his lectures—"this work cannot be entrusted to amateurs and charlatans. The best are just good enough for it."

Kodály's manifold educational activities show an unbroken line of development, what might be called a mighty crescendo. At the beginning he concerned himself only with professional musicians; later, having recognized the numerous deficiencies in Hungarian musical life, he turned his attention to the public, especially to future audiences. He took in hand the reform of singing instruction at school. Finally, he extended his activities to adults—to the whole people. These three aspects of Kodály as a teacher reflect three different periods of his life. The first lasted roughly until 1925, the third began around 1940. The second period—the education of youth—did not keep modestly within the limits set by these two dates: it started beforehand and continues to the present day.

This extensive educational work may be considered as a theme with countless variations, the theme being the creation of a national musical culture based on popular traditions, raising it to a European standard by concomitantly generalizing instruction in singing, music reading and writing, and the spread of the choir movement. This great and single theme—the aim and motto of his whole life—recurs in every article and study, sometimes openly, on other occasions in a less explicit form. A long series of compositions serves this aim. They include collections and singing exercises intended expressly for the purpose of instruction, as well as numerous choral works.

It is Kodály's merit that—luckily for Hungarian youth—when the radical social transformation following the liberation of the country in 1945 opened up new perspectives in the sphere of musical instruction, it was unnecessary to "improvise," to strike out on a hurriedly cut path. The straight and broad road marked out by his teaching was there to be taken. This teaching, matured in the struggles of two decades, applied to almost every branch of musical life. Adequate material and modern methods were thus readily available to meet the surging number of music students. It became possible to develop an organic unity between the training of a musical elite and the education of the masses, because a plan for such a course had stood ready for a long time. What seemed utopious in "gentry Hungary" before 1945, is becoming a reality under socialism.

Nothing has been said here about Kodály's concert tours abroad, his activities as a conductor, his role in public life, and many other aspects of his work. In our view a succinct survey of his life-work conveys more than a mass of biographical data, for the master's life has increasingly merged with his manifold activities and finds ever more perfect expression in his magnificent compositions. It is therefore appropriate to summarize in conclusion the chief characteristics of his music, in order to define his place in contemporary music.

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In Kodály's art—as in all his activities—the endeavour to achieve an all-embracing synthesis occupies a central position. Its most fundamental feature is its Hungarian character. Perhaps it is no overstatement to assert that he summarizes the great epochs of European art music—in modern Hungarian, in a language he himself has created. The roots of his art reach back through the style of Debussy, Brahms, the Vienna classics, Bach and Palestrina, to the Gregorian chant on the one side, through 19th century recruiting music, 18th century Hungarian college music, 16th century rhymed chronicles to the ancient Hungarian folk song on the other. Mature, classical models on the one side, scant material of art music, abundant resources of folk music on the other. To have succeeded in welding these various elements—the best traditions and most valuable attainments of several centuries (and of two utterly different cultural spheres)—into a higher unity is Kodály's great achievement. He has been able to evolve the great synthesis of ancient melody and new harmony, of collective will and individual knowledge, of folk music and art music, of what is European and what is Hungarian. His style is therefore pre-eminently organic. Organic in its entirety, since it has organic antecedents and its effect may be traced to the latest Hungarian compositions. Organic also within each of his works, from major forms, constructed with an excellent sense of balance and proportion, down to the minutest details. The other chief trait of Kodály's style is the primacy in it of richly flowing melody and euphony. In the final analysis this also determines the harmonic texture of his works. A composer who wishes to address millions, who by his art desires to promote their aesthetic progress, could have chosen no other road.

At the beginning of the century the revolutionary novelty of Kodály's music justly aroused the alarmed opposition of conservative musical circles. Today, when the still bolder innovations of a new generation of composers are being debated, the pioneering initiatives of the early years of the century would seem to have lost some of their significance. However, the light of noble classicism and true humanism emanating from Kodály's works will continue to shine through every obscurity, because it rises from a source which never ran dry, even in the most inhuman age: the composer's belief in mankind and in the future of his own people.

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This year's last number (N° 8) will be a Kodály Special Issue, devoted to the life, work, studies and influence of our great contemporary composer. A list of essays and other contributions will be published in N° 7.

A SOCIETY WITHOUT SNOBS?

by

IMRE KESZI

1 A CIRCUMSCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECT

Thackeray, in his noted work on the subject, defined the concept in the following terms:

"He who meanly admires mean things is a snob."

We believe that this definition will now everywhere be considered a trifle too general. In our view it is also possible to admire mean things without snobbishness. Undoubtedly it is part of the snob's character to admire certain kinds of thing. It is also obvious that these things do not always merit the degree of admiration which the snob pays them. Yet their "meanness" is of a special character. No snob is aware that that which he admires is not always worthy of admiration. The snob is not perverse, he does not consciously admire things which are unworthy of admiration. The object of his admiration is at least in appearances embued with an admirable character. Admiration of appearances thus plays an important part in the psychology of the snob. The snob does not, therefore, admire mean things that are so mean as not to explain at least the admiration felt for them by a snob. As far as the mode of admiration is concerned, in most cases we may experience that the snob admires the not infrequently less admirable object of his admiration in a very admirable way indeed. Since it is all a matter of appearances, these appearances are an important factor in every facet of the snob's behaviour. Ultimately therefore, the snob does not admire the meanest things, nor does he admire in the meanest ways. Nevertheless we may generally not approve of his behaviour. Thackeray himself did not approve of him, though he defined his place and influence in the society of his own period, over 110 years ago, as being of far wider scope than we do in ours. He was obviously right—he certainly knew the society of his own period better than we. And this in itself goes to prove that the place of the snob is, in the course of the development of society, confined to an ever smaller circle.

Thackeray, illustrating his theory with numerous examples and facts, enumerated the most varied categories of snob in his work. Snobs of rank, snobs of money, snobs of the army and the church, the snobs of the university, of science and of literature, the visitors and the hosts, the travellers and country dwellers, those who stay at home and those who visit clubs—yes, particularly many kinds of club-going snobs. This was obviously a faithful reflection of the society about which Thackeray wrote. The categories certainly differed from one another in many respects, but they had as common features the over-estimation of appearances, the requirement that others observe them, and, in the ancient problem of external *versus* intrinsic merit, involved a definite stand in favour of the former.

Examined concretely in the medium of social relations, snobbishness involves ostentatious admiration and imitation of the classes, strata and types who are considered distinguished or high-ranking. It thus obviously bears a causal relationship to societies in which classes, strata and types that may be considered distinguished or high-ranking, exist. It is therefore easy to prophesy its attrition in a society where the above conditions for its survival are lacking. Since the snob imitates appearances, generally without inner comprehension, that which he considers worthy of imitation and enviable is generally the position, role and function of certain social factors, and only in the rarest case their true inner content or possible value. The snob always admires and imitates those who in his view are in some respect on top. In the apparently inevitable stage of development, when the working classes have won moral esteem and political power but have not yet attained their ultimate aim of eliminating class differences, there obviously also arises a kind of snobbishness which regards the imitation in appearances—not, therefore, in work for instance—of the working classes as its aim. The development of Hungarian society has also produced not infrequent striking instances of this seemingly converse, but actually perfectly regular snobbishness. Particularly in the years around 1950.

Apart from social stratification in the narrower sense, another important sphere for snobbishness is in cultural life. Here too, it is generally a matter of uncomprehending admiration and imitation of uncomprehended things. This, however, is nevertheless in many respects a different category to that of the genuine social snob. For this reason we shall return to the cultural snob at the conclusion of our investigations, by way of an appendix. What we shall first examine more closely, is the social snob. It is of his golden age and decline that we shall treat.

2 The past of snobbery

In the sweltering July of 1934, the United States Minister in Budapest felt he would like to have a pleasant, cool evening, and as behoves a very busy diplomat also used this occasion to improve the friendly relations between the two countries. To this end he arranged for a nocturnal excursion by ship on the Danube. Hardly had the boat, with coloured lights shining on the masts and proceeding between the distant, cheering crowds of curious Budapest citizens lining the two banks, left the illuminated buildings of the city, when dancing began on the deck. Among the guests, comprising aristocrats, the highest circles of financial, industrial and commercial life, moreover the best known—though not the most eminent—representatives of the cultural sphere, there was a radiantly happy, smiling young man. Nobody knew him and everyone thought he belonged to another set of the guests, but he was a great success, especially among the ladies. His mild intoxication exuded a strange, alien magic—perhaps the over-greedy enjoyment of life and of the present moment. And it may have been just this emotional surplus that attracted the attention of the detective inspector on board, who drew him aside and discretely requested him to show his gilt-edged invitation card. Then—also discretely—he took measures to have him isolated. For this young clerk, Mr. X in the lower ranks of the financial oligarchy, had clambered on board over the railings without an invitation, and his heart had probably throbbed with stage fright as he waved to his friends, who pulled away in their dinghy. Since no evil intent could be presumed of him, the detective simply isolated him from the cheerful company above, and in the secret depths of the ship probably addressed some words of reproof to him. This would indeed have put an end to the matter by the contemporary rules of chivalry, had not two ladies started to look for their swain when he disappeared. Even so, of course, nothing in particular came of it, but the little piece of scandal was made public knowledge and the papers—it being the summer doldrums season—wrote about the case, devoting thick type to a rapturous statement by Mr. X that he had had but one object in his adventure: for once in his life he had wished to be in the company of genteel ladies. According to the testimony of the popular illustrated weekly *Színházi Élet* ("Theatre Life"), in issue No. XXXII of 1934, the gentle ladies to whom he referred showed proper appreciation of this confession. Unfortunately *Színházi Élet* does not furnish further details of the form this appreciation took. It may be, however, that Mr. X actually managed to make a career through his escapade.

Several other similar cases also occurred during the course of the same year.

(It is sufficient to take any single volume of the above theatrical periodical —which, though not setting very high standards, was actually extremely popular—and to turn over its leaves, scanning it here and there, particularly the permanent gossip column entitled "A Zserbó-bó-ban," in order to find masses of such and similar cases.) Selecting a story completely at random, we have for instance the miniature tragedy of the young "industrial" baroness. This lady had—either by an oversight or as a mark of special favour—been invited to a garden party at the country house of a real, genuine count and his wife. Since this was, of course, the lady's first visit to the place, the young count of her acquaintance who had wangled the invitation for her—perhaps not entirely without a view to possibly re-gilding the somewhat tarnished crest—led her through the succession of halls in the magnificent castle, ever further from the others, towards the intimacies of ever more obscure solitude. And the young lady was happy, and would have remained happy, had not the photographer of the above weekly arrived in the meanwhile to take a group photo of the illustrious guests for the Society column. This indeed took place, while the young people were enjoying the happiness of each other's exclusive company. In all probability this too would have passed by without any trouble if the young lady had not considered the photograph, her presence on the group photo of distinguished guests in which she would appear at the very centre of the world of magnates, more important than her awakening love, or than anything else in the world. Unfortunately, she did. We may imagine her, even while in the arms of the young count, looking up occasionally with concern and asking what was up with *Színházi Élet*. And when she learned that she had missed the great occasion of a lifetime, she blanched, surrendered herself to the spasms of her nerves, and in full view of the bewildered guests, ran off, weeping. What sense would there have been in her staying, if her envious friends would not see her on the photo? So she fled, sobbing, and if the interests involved in refurbishing the crest had not recalled her, she might perhaps never have returned.

In this case the enchantment of the castle's galleries would not in itself have sufficed to retain the young lady. Yet the force of this magic was by no means to be underestimated, particularly not in the quarter of a century following on the First World War. At this period, however, its power had obviously also come to include the attraction of the morbid beauty of decay and decline. The ancient nests of the aristocracy had by now partly already entered the sphere of public, plebeian use. A rich Belgian gentleman, who through some link or other was familiar with and an ardent enthusiast for Hungary, decided to engage in propaganda on her behalf in the

West. First, to obtain publicity, he assembled a group of twenty young ladies from among the richest English, French and Belgian girls. These were all to have come to Hungary in their own cars, as the readers of our oft-quoted theatre paper learned with admiring enthusiasm. Unfortunately the ladies, who would have liked to be accommodated as paying guests, all insisted—probably on the basis of the information supplied by our Belgian friend—that they should here be put up in the real castles of live and active aristocratic families, as far as possible in the vicinity of the rooms of the peer's family. Under these conditions the visit could not be arranged, though *Színházi Élet*, in a desperate appeal, almost made it the duty of the whole country to find accommodation that would satisfy the requirements of the young Western ladies, in whose view it seems a real Hungarian count was a phenomenon no bit less romantic and exotically attractive than a Hungarian *csikós* (horseherd) or a Hungarian gipsy band leader.

Another few years, and the beauties of the counts' castles really came to delight the whole people. But the paying-guest system was actually established by the second half of the thirties. An aristocratic family had by then turned part of their Castle of Füzérradvány into a hotel. The guests particularly liked to go shooting, though this was by no means a cheap pastime with the price of a stag at ten thousand pengő (£ 800). An author of peasant extraction who was taking a holiday at the castle had a conversation with its owner, and they agreed in establishing that the passion for hunting and shooting was a natural and a deep-rooted feeling only in the case of the aristocrats and the peasants. For the rest it was mere snobbishness. Let the fields, the meadows and the pastures belong to whoever they will, but the forests should remain the property of the magnates.

"We have been hunting for a thousand years now—we need the forests," said the proprietor.

"And we've been poaching for a thousand years," replied the author. And they both nodded their agreement.

But this was already the beginning of a change. And the continuation inherently leads us to the next chapter.

3 Snobbishness in the recent past

It would be superfluous to relate the history of the transformation that has taken place. Instead here are some items on the changed forms of snobbishness, on the changed types of snob.

In the article of the literary periodical *Magyar Csillag* ("Hungarian Star") telling of the paying guests of the Füzérradvány Castle (pp. 544-553. 1943, II), there is a passage on Old Cili, the venerable butler, who in his double function waited on both the count and the guests. In a double function and with a double standard of behaviour. Because actually he only felt respect for the aristocrats, entertaining profound contempt for the rest, particularly if they attempted with vulgar, democratic airs to become intimate with him. And he did not take any great pains to conceal the fact that he impatiently awaited the end of summer when he could see the last of the milling crowd, with its uncertain atmosphere, out of the castle, for its rooms once more to be occupied by the accustomed hunting guests.

"The gentlefolk will be here soon," he would silently, happily mutter to himself, for whatever happened, it was only the old set that he accepted as gentlefolk.

I have myself had the good fortune to meet Old Cili, or at least his double. And from this stage we shall begin putting only initials in place of quoting the full names, since in most cases I do not know whether the person concerned is still alive or not, and whether he does not, perhaps, hold an important position in the life of our society. We shall speak, therefore, of Old H., the charming old butler of the castle at S. When the castle passed from the hands of prince W., a badly involved politician of the Horthy era who had fled abroad, into those of the Hungarian people, the Government, in the late forties, gave it to the Hungarian artists as a holiday resort and a retreat for creative work. A museum was established in the former castle of Ferenc Rákóczi, the eighteenth century leader of the national independance movement, and authors, painters and musicians sought to retire here for the hours of their inspiration. The staff, headed by Old H., the prince's former valet, saw to their comfort and catered to their needs. At first strange anecdotes were afoot about him. He served the food with his face averted, he would not look at the guests, only occasionally to be discovered observing with a contemptuous smile from a remote corner how the painters held their knife, like a paint-brush, at the blade-end of the handle. It may be, in fact it is probable, that these rumours contained a measure of truth. Old H. must then still have been thinking in the same way as Cili, perhaps he was still secretely expecting the gentlefolk back for the autumn shooting season. However, by the time I had occasion in 1950 to spend the autumn in the castle in place of those gentlemen, I found an Old H. who had by this time altered in many respects. And this Old H. was extremely sympathetic. He had retained the strict self-discipline, the discretion, the cour-

teousness, the love of order and cleanliness of the prince's former valet. But by this time he had noticed that those who now visited the castle were somehow closer to him, from both the human and the social point of view, than his former masters. His stiffness let up and sometimes even thawed to become a peculiar kind of bantering and respectfully instructive behaviour. "That's two slices, if you'll pardon me," he would say with a smile, when one of the hungrier young painters was too greedy in helping himself. "Please look round to see how many we are and how many slices of meat we have." Not that he generally had much occasion for his teaching. The artists—those of them who had any need at all of instruction—fairly quickly learned the style which would permit them to nurture the traditions of the castle with their own spiritual content. There were few among them who, lacking this sense of style, had to put up with the well-intentioned admonitions of Old H., and fewer still, perhaps only one, who was not willing to put up with them, though he was badly in need of reproof. It is with a feeling of nausea that I remember the not even very young poet who kicked up a noisy scandal in the small hours of the morning because he had got up and not found the breakfast on the dining-room table. "Be so good as to read this," said Old H. with angelic patience, pointing at the rules of the house, hanging on the wall. "Breakfast in the dining-room from half past seven." The poet blanched. "Tell me, is that what you answered the prince, when he asked to have breakfast?" he demanded with a neurotically provocative air. At this Old H. also blanched. "I didn't have to say things like that to him," he replied quietly, but firmly. "He was able to accommodate himself to others."

Old H. was not right, at least not wholly so. Apart from the one nincompoop, the artists of the democratic era were also able to accommodate themselves to others, no less so than the prince himself. Now they had themselves become princes and they had no reason whatever to throw their weight about with the snobbish vehemence of the parvenu. The poet's stupid, converse snobbishness was, in this form at any rate, exceptional. The typical form was rather that there were certainly several artists who would have liked to have called themselves the grandsons of Old H., instead of their petty clerk or grocer grandfathers. Unfortunately the old boy was a bachelor.

The new form of snobbery was, as I have said, really only new in form. In its content, in respect for the leading class of society and in conformity to it, it was basically a direct continuation of the old. One proof of this is that in most cases the new snobs actually arose from the very same persons who had been the old ones. This too is a type of which many examples

could be encountered in the years around 1950. Everyone met them who then lived in Hungary, so that I shall again merely pick on one or two figures at random.

T. was a lawyer with an independent practice between the two wars, an agile, clever and prosperous man, who could afford in his situation to entertain his own opinion of the rulers of the country. This he indeed did: he would have liked to be the ruler in their place. And at the end of the war he felt that the moment for this had come. He decided with his persuasive eloquence, his thundering voice, his sharp, practical wits that had been trained to find adroit solutions to problems, to enter the service of the new life. He was proud of the new social contacts he had acquired. One day we were walking down Museum Avenue together, when a thin-moustached young man with a slight limp appeared, coming towards us. T. stopped him with enthusiastic cries and embraced him. The young man was a trifle taken aback, but he patiently put up with this dramatic display of affection lavished on him. We went on. After a few paces T., in the manner of one passing a remark behind somebody's back but insisting that the person should hear what was being said, began to roar, in stentorian tones:

"A steel-smelter, my friend! A simple steel-smelter!" he roared. "And what an excellent man! Mark my words, I'll see to it, whatever it takes, that he's made district prefect in place of that rotten U." This U. was prominent in one of the bourgeois parties and happened to be a rival lawyer living two houses further off. "We must do all we can to put the right man in the right place!" He did not want to be a prefect himself, he did not wish to have power or a position for his own person, but he was fully convinced that he was a kind of superhuman force that dispenses power and position on earth. He was convinced of the unique importance of his person, he was immodest in an almost abstract way, without requiring any special rank, permanently enraptured with himself in an almost impersonal manner. He saw the world as the creative projection of his own ego, and was happy. In the meanwhile, since he had to make a living, and a good living at that, he continued his independent practice as a lawyer. Then, suddenly, there came the disaster, when in the course of proceedings over a not quite impeccable business manipulation, he unexpectedly came up against a whole series of the people whom he had felt to be his own creatures. Possibly the young steel-smelter was also among them, either as district prefect, or in another, even higher position. One thing is certain—T. collapsed. "When they have me to thank for everything," he complained in a whimper, and heaped abuse on the young judge who had a few years earlier been a factory carpenter in one of the large industrial establishments

that T. had occasionally visited to deliver rousing speeches and listen to the problems of the workers.

My first meeting with M. was during the confused and youthfully effervescent summer of 1945, not long after the first harvest had been gathered from the newly distributed lands of the big estates, which had now become peasant property. A few of us, devoted and enthusiastic young men, were travelling to the villages along unbelievable, war-scarred roads, on phantastic lorries assembled of parts taken from junk-heaps, carrying the simple and true message that the new owners of the land must not forget the workers who had helped them acquire that land. The organization unfortunately still left much to be desired, and it was thus that we happened, in a tiny village that still noticeably breathed the atmosphere of feudalism, to come across another lorry, also filled with enthusiastic men. After some argument we decided to pool our modest forces. I was the first to speak, experiencing some stage fright as I sensed the obstinate silence, composed of respect and boredom mingled in strikingly unequal proportion. I could not think how to finish, in order to forestall a disintegration of the audience. However, M. lifted the burden from my shoulder. I had hardly uttered the last sentence, when he suddenly appeared on the table—yes, on top of it—and started yelling. He was a good deal older than I, with flowing greyish hair and an unsmiling, ascetic face, and he raged on top of the table with the inspired fury of the prophets, shaking his fist and bending forward. The atmosphere immediately changed, the peasants gathered round the table and watched M. with bated breath, as though he was some kind of holy madman, obviously paying attention not to what he was saying, but to when he would tumble down, foaming at the mouth. M. did not tumble down. Amid all his ranting he stood firmly on the table.

Afterwards we had a chat. M. was a dentist, and—I hope the dentists will forgive me—this is an occupation whose very mention has always provoked me to a slight smile. God knows why, perhaps as a result of their perpetual strife with the dental surgeons, this trade at one time armoured itself with a kind of limitless self-respect. I was therefore not surprised at M.'s occupation, it suited the temperamental portrait that he had presented of himself. It was also with some satisfaction that I learned that beside his profession M. was also an enthusiastic amateur actor. This too had somehow been in the air.

And it was this that led to our further encounters. M. could more and more frequently be discovered at the performances of cultural teams, of factory and territorial dramatic groups. He played grandiose parts, always the so-called positive heroes, who with the vigour of their mighty personal-

ities hastened the progress of society. The boundaries between real life and the stage were obliterated, and the two fused in his personality. He left his job, preserving of course the mental attitude he had formulated there, and became a fervent apostle of spreading culture among the working class. Naturally, he struggled for no self-centred, indolent culture, but for that which was at the same time also the most practical. His progress from the dressing-room to the backdrop was a cultural mission and play-acting —once he had entered the stage it was reality and life, unfortunately mostly a rather abstract and schematic life, such as the plays of the period round 1950 were apt to show. And since the stage is more important than the dressing-room, M. gradually came to believe that he was himself identical with the heroes he portrayed. "Hullo mate!" he said to me with a broad grin, pulling his grey cloth cap over his grizzly locks—the kind of cap that was the assimilative clothing, in the Rákosi era, of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois who pretended to be workers, thus becoming almost a trade-mark of the new brand of snobbishness. I could not refrain from making a jocular remark. M. became grim; his assumed joviality, undertaken as part of his voluntary work, did not extend so far as to allow him to appreciate a joke.

Both the lawyer T. and the actor and dentist M. are now elderly people, the start of their careers stretches back to the old society. We are here dealing with the newly born snobbishness. It may be generally noted that we are concerned more exhaustively, with greater enjoyment, almost with partiality, with the new snobs and the new snobbery. Why should this be so? Partly, for reasons of tactics. We are endeavouring to show that snobbishness is ceasing in our society, and would not be pleased if someone were to prove of us that we had only done this by purely superficial tricks, misleading figures, or the omission of certain cases and types. But we may also admit with undisguised frankness, that we are far more interested in exposing the increasingly rare, yet literally unexplored possibilities of the new snobbishness, than in the snobs of the old system of whom so much has been written. A whole volume in the history of literature could be filled with works on the cases of imitation and ingratiation with respect to the old Hungarian system of privilege, to the gentry of those days. Is it not far more interesting to examine how this kind of snobbishness is or has been manifested after the change in social systems? What mask has been assumed by this long-ingrained heliotropism, which can therefore obviously not cease from one day to the next? Here again we may find examples, and it does not even require a lengthy search to discover them.

The feudal remnants of Hungarian life generally romanticized the countryside. Life, worthy of a gentleman, or simply of a human being, could only be lived in the refreshing atmosphere of the village. City life was not worthy, not satisfactory. In this respect it was easy to transfer the old snobbishness to the new. If there were no country squires, the peasant would do. And there came the golden age of folk-snobbery.

Z. is the son of a prosperous doctor with a high income. He is a corpulent, round-headed, well-fed young man, who while still at secondary-school had balanced his way with hysterical speed along the tightrope of five thousand years of culture. He was one of those philosophically inclined boys, nervy and abstract, who annoyed his friends with roundabout arguments, was timid and shy of life, in every bit an enervated child of city life. He might have been used as school specimen of the decadence of the bourgeoisie. Possibly his snobbish inclinations did not even attract him to any particular social stratum or environment, but rather to healthiness as such, or his idea of healthiness. He would have liked to go hunting, to take a ride in the fresh morning breeze, to let it blow through his prematurely thinning hair, to partake of a hunting breakfast at a deal trestle-table, chucking great lumps of meat to the dogs that yapped behind him, with Charles Laughton's gesture in *Henry VIII*. Had the times not changed he would in all likelihood have turned to the *other* huntsmen's class with his infatuation. But he was too young to do this—by the time he reached full awareness, he had no other choice. At first he merely showed enthusiasm for the peasants, identified himself with their political interests and fought for them with the methods of the political struggle that were in vogue around 1947—writing articles, delivering speeches, and not yet losing his sense of proportion. At first he was only enthusiastic for the peasants, later he confused himself with them. He may originally have started by trying to deceive others with respect to his extraction. With a great deal of effort and by no means complete success, he learned the most remote dialect. He would occasionally slip a diphthong into his speech, as though—try as he would—he could not rid himself of the habit. He paid tender attention to spoiling his pronunciation of foreign words and names, as if he would very much like, but be unable, to pronounce them properly. He was increasingly successful in deceiving his own self.

He would have liked to assimilate himself to the peasant, with all the human and political consequences of such an assimilation. In actual fact all he had an idea of was a kind of rusticism—of the peculiar feudal-patriarchal atmosphere that in the eyes of the average town dweller comprises in such close-knit unity all the working and the workless strata of the

village, from the landlord to the farm labourer. He had wanted to join forces with the future, with Socialism, yet in fact he took a step backward, to feudalism. And in *this* part of the business he was almost successful.

I well remember when the Political Correspondent of the newspaper I then worked on once came, laughing, into my room. "I say," he said cheerfully. "Z's here, with another odd bloke. Go and talk to them for me, will you? They say they don't want to speak to me."

Z. and his companion were waiting at the secretariat, with dark, menacing expressions. No friendly smile lit their faces, they were stiff and official.

"Well now," I said laughing. "Just like the seconds at a duel."

Even now they would not smile. They were in fact there as something like duelling aids. They had come in the name of a Member of Parliament, N., to call my colleague to account for having in some article omitted to cover one of this peasant deputy's speeches. "The urban gentlefolk's clique!" growled Z. morosely. "But we'll teach this gang what's what!"

His companion, of whom I knew that he was of real, authentic peasant stock, gave a hostile nod of agreement, but he did not say anything. It was plain that, though he admired Z. and also shared his opinion, he was not entirely a master of the situation. The feudal demonstration which Z. had changed into a "folk" one with such natural ease, was for him, the real peasant, alien, and perhaps also a trifle ludicrous. He was in no need of rendering a poor imitation of something. But Z. impressed him. He considered Z.'s feudal posing, which the latter thought was of the people, marvellously urban and triumphant. But through these mutual and complementary misunderstandings they understood each other excellently.

When I last met Z. in the middle fifties, he was in a completely different mood. He seized me by the arm, and with a curious kind of temperamental well-being entered into a long explanation of how, after the oppression born of the cult of the personality and dogmatism, the rights of the peasantry must at last be restored. The diphthongs, which in Hungarian are characteristic of peasant speech and of that only, had grown more frequent in his, had overwhelmed it, so that he now talked with double vowels even where no real peasant had ever used them. He shook his fist in ecstasy as he took all the urban professions in turn and, lingering with relish over the details, analysed what part they had played in ruining the peasantry. When he came to the doctors, I risked an interjection:

"But your father's a doctor himself!"

He stared at me. His look was uncomprehending and shocked. His father was a doctor? No, he had never heard of that before. It was a dastardly slander! Or what is worse, the petty nuisance of cowardly truth, invading

a piece of fiction that had been built up with wonderful consistency and minutely considered in all its details. "Excuse me! I've summat to see to," he suddenly exclaimed and rushed off.

More healthy and everyday than the case of Z's spasmodic, neurotic snobbery, was that of another young man, F. In the former system he too had not been, indeed he could not have been a snob. All the less so, since he had not been a precocious and cloyed traveller in the civilization of mankind, as Z. had. He had been a child. His conscious self and his view of the world began to evolve in about 1950. This was when he became an Academy student. His father was an engineering worker, a nameless hero of the pre-liberation provincial labour movement, a universally respected, elderly, sick man. The boy was a tall, fair, tousle-headed adolescent when I came to know him, of somewhat frightening appearance, morose and unruly, sharp-eyed and highly gifted. His was basically a mutinous, temperamental and ungovernable character, striving at all costs to attract attention and not despising the use even of means other than the choicest to achieve this end. When his first writing was shown me, he was in a difficult position, poor lad. His extraction obliged him to feel gratitude and agreement, his nature egged him to contradiction and revolt. He attempted to liberate himself from this dilemma by making himself independent within his class, as though acting in the name of class loyalty. He gathered about him the legends of the struggle. He did not actually tell lies, but he childishly and romantically exaggerated things. It was not he who was the hero, not by any means, but his father. Yet F. was an excellent focussing point of the rays reflected on him from his father and his environment. Blushing, and with confused modesty, he would not miss a single opportunity at least to allude to the events that had secured the exceptional—and incidentally deserved—position of his family. He applied the cult of the personality which was then the fashion, in a diminished form, but with great adroitness to his own person. He could never sufficiently stress his homeliness, and yet his separate position. He spoke of the then leaders of the system only as Uncle Matyi (Rákosi), Uncle Ernő (Gerő) and Uncle Józsi (Révai), and his enthusiastic anecdotes created the impression that he visited them daily—he really did, once or twice a year—indeed as though these visits were bilateral. At the Academy of Dramatic Art he earned respect and smiles, though it must be admitted that the respect came rather from some of his professors, the smiles from his fellows. It was thus that he came to 1953, and the first foundering of the cult of personality. He blanched at the words and the events. He almost broke down—the very pillars of his snobbishness had been shaken. It is almost inevitable that he now changed over to anti-

snobbery, also a form of snobbery, for he "burned what he had adored and adored what he had burned," up to that moment.

4 The present and future of snobbishness

The apparent converse snobbishness of the lawyer T. and the dentist and cultural worker M. was the attempted assimilation of the bourgeois to the working class, though more in words and gestures than in actual feelings. Of the young people, Z. turned from the city to the village, through redaubing a romanticism that we might almost call old-fashioned. The snobbery of F., the working-class lad, was a vaunting of his belonging to a leading stratum that had risen from—I might almost say, been precipitated by—his class. The individual behaviour of all four people, the two older no less than the two younger ones, was motivated not by a simple desire for self-assertion, but rather the yearning for a certain romantic content to their lives. Let us examine whether this type of snobbishness is still justifiable and explicable now that the fermenting confusion of the first years has calmed down.

Before justifying it, let us see whether—justified or unjustified—this sort of thing may still be encountered at all. Those who know present-day social conditions in Hungary are well aware that this type of behaviour is now mainly rooted in mechanical recollections of the recent past, of the years of the cult of the personality, which do not take present-day realities into account. Even those who are out to obtain advancement have been able gradually to realize that there is no need for them to forget that their father was a doctor. The practice of ten years ago, when social origin and individual class position were weighed with infantile exaggerations, has discredited itself. The struggle that has been conducted against it since the middle fifties only served to administer the *coup de grâce* to this vulgarized view. The value of mere worker or peasant extraction has, to say the least of it, become doubtful. People now rather refer to what they are than to where they came from.

It is obvious that the sooner the contours of the actual class differences are obliterated, the less grounds there will be both for assimilation for reasons of advancement and for romantic snobbishness. And the future is visibly leading to the final liquidation of class differences. No one in Hungary any longer lives of their lands or capital. It is true that there are still obstinate remnants of the antagonistic class conflicts in people's thoughts, and that the non-antagonistic class differences are still fairly visible and

real. The office worker, the scientist and the artist have not completely identical interests and thoughts with the worker, the village doctor may also be easily distinguished from the cooperative peasant. But the difference is no longer so great as to make it worth while for them to imitate or envy one another. Respect and esteem are equally obligatory and valid towards all. That which is respected and esteemed is the true sense of each other's social functions, labour and not appearances.

The reason for the change is, of course, social, in that it follows from the disappearance of the former ruling classes. The fading of the phenomenon may, however, be measured through apparently secondary external features. The disappearance of "good society," for instance, has broken off one of the most copious streams of snobbishness. At the level of petty-bourgeois, middle-class and intellectual social life this has had a stimulating and liberating effect—it has put an end to the obligation to dress, behave and speak according to a mendacious ritual and has made nonsense of the temptation to "get into good society," which was previously the first station in so many instances of impairment of character and taste. And a similar end has been overtaking the forms of address and greeting which were so characteristic of earlier Hungarian society and social life, differing as they did, for almost every rank and station. This is a continuous process, for an inner circle of "good society" withdrawing into itself, continued for a long time to preserve, and in some instances perhaps still preserves, its own forms. They have, however, irretrievably lost their magic aura.

Another phenomenon that is in the process of passing is that the mode of address formerly due to women of the middle classes, the distorted *nagyságos asszony* (best rendered by the German "gnädige Frau"), still occasionally puts in an appearance, and according to the Hungarian humorist writers the former *nagyságos asszony* is just as pleased as is the working class woman, if she is thus addressed in the shops. The phenomenon is not, of course, universal, and in the case of the working-class woman it is far less a question of snobbishness than rather of the fact that the semi-feudal social structure fettered the Hungarian social language and would not allow a universal mode of address such as the French *Madame* to be evolved.

If we were, in Thackeray's manner, to review the still extant categories of snobs, consecutively enumerating them, then we could perhaps distinguish three types that are still more or less live and active in present-day Hungarian society. (Which is a pretty small number if we consider that Thackeray, even according to the roughest count, knew at least twenty categories.) These are: (1) The remaining specimens of the "converse" snob. Sufficient has already been said of these. (2) The reminiscing snob. This

is the modern version of the old type, of what we might call the classical snob. He differs from the old ones only in the tone of his speech, which is that of ironic—more precisely, of pseudo-ironic—reminiscence. His mother confided the secret complaints of her body to the doctor, but would not shake hands with him if he was not a member of "society." What a strange, ridiculous old world! His father let the short-sighted city lawyer shoot at a bear with a shotgun. It was, of course, only ridiculous snobbishness that made the lawyer go bear-shooting—wasn't it? Our snob will go into all the delectable details in showing his contempt for all these contemptible things, for he is a modern man and does not doubt for a moment that comfort for the many, the washing machine and the faience washbasin, are a thousand times more important than all the poetry and the noble, though somewhat outdated nostalgia that surround the life and decease of a social class which was the vehicle of culture through a thousand years. (3) The cultural snob. True to our promise, we shall treat of him separately.

The soil is visibly not favourable for snobbery and grows ever less so. The snob is not a type of our day, far less of the morrow. But this is not only visible, it may also be more profoundly derived from the level at which the endeavours of society and the human spirit always coalesce.

5 Cultural snobs

Their community with the snobs of social life lies in the fact that they are able to approximate only the externals of the things that they respect and to which they are attracted, and not their essence. The dry reality of life, the materialized relations, the frigid power of money are on this plane represented by reason, by the common sense of which everyone is possessed. The old-type cultural snob tries to escape from this into the seething, semi-obscure, blood-steeped world of uncomprehended and indeed incomprehensible, unrelated relations, of ancient secrets, of vegetative magic, of being which may allegedly be confronted with consciousness, of instinct that maybe confronted with thought. In most cases, despite all the exigent references to modernity, the snob's attraction to the romantic past, or rather to romanticizing the past, is here too organically linked and immediately obvious. Professor Breisacher in Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus* is an extreme and ironic example of this snobbish spirit, retiring from the present to the Middle Ages and from the Middle Ages to ancient times, and even ancient history is unpleasantly comprehensible and modern for him, so that he cannot stop till he arrives at the darkest pre-history, when

the mysterious Atlantis sank into the ocean and the human mind was dissolved in the biology of the instincts. It is he who calls perspective in painting an optical deception and glorifies primitive mono-planar illustration in its stead. He for whom Bach, with his tempered system of sound, was the decadent destroyer of the old polyphony. He who condemns King Solomon because he had a part in transforming the sanguinary, ancient tribal god Yahweh into a general and abstract concept of deity. The old-type cultural snob opposes public opinion in all things, and does so grotesquely. In his case therefore, the escape into the alleged fullness of life in the past, his aversion from reason, have declined to the level of means—a means of his own vain self-display.

The fact that there is now more word in Hungarian life of the snobs of the cultural sphere—its rodents, according to some—than of the genuine Thackeray-type social snobs, is evidence that it is now the cultural snob who is the most lively of all the varieties. This is, of course, natural, for the forms of thought generally outlive the forms of being. But it is also natural because, due to this relationship between thought and being, the perspective of the social problems is more clearly apparent at present than that of the cultural ones. And finally it is natural because intellectual differences and the cultural hierarchy are even more difficult to eliminate than the social differences—in fact in some respects they are not eliminable at all and do not, actually, require to be eliminated. The cultural snob will thus have occasion to be attracted to the external features of a genuine or presumed intellectual aristocracy even when the concept of the social snob has long lost its meaning.

But what actually is the cultural snob? The definitions that I have come across differ from one another and are arguable. The possibly most frequently mentioned distinguishing trait, the snob's anti-democratism, is certainly not an absolute mark. Folk-style art has at least as many uncomprehending, superficial, and at the same time exacting adherents as has Camus, and there is no reason for considering them less snobbish. A demonstratively voiced individual opinion that is at odds with public taste and with that which is accepted by common consent? This would be nearer the mark, only the limits are hard to fix. For my own part for instance, I consider Anton Webern a strikingly great musician, and am prepared irately to call anyone a snob who dares mention John Cage and his manipulations with a prepared piano in the same breath with him. Yet I am not at all certain that some people might not consider me a snob on account of Anton Webern, and whether I have not thus lost my right to call anyone at all a snob on any pretext whatever. It is most difficult to extricate oneself from this relativity,

and the question of content offers but slight guidance. I know dozens of snobs—these extremes of individuality in attitude usually appear in dense bunches—who superficially smile and speak of slushy romanticism whenever they hear music that is not determined by the elements of mathematical combination, and I know by no means less antipathetic snobs who reject Bach, because of the mathematical combinative elements of this music.

Some consider that the most characteristic feature of the snobs is their propensity to force others to accept their own opinions by means of a peculiar kind of terrorism in public life. And this brings us to an odd facet of the problem of cultural snobbishness—the fact that in Hungary it is nowadays usual, under the pretext of attacking snobbery, somewhat malignantly to abuse something that is not snobbishness.

For snobbishness is not established by the presence of anti-democratism, nor of the—possibly annoyingly aggressive—assertion of an individual opinion. All these may be a part of snobbishness, but not necessarily so. On the other hand snobbery may evidently be illustrated by copious examples without the presence of these features. Nor is the noisy and immodest voicing of his opinions, or intellectual terrorism, an absolute distinguishing mark of the snob. The characteristic trait of the cultural snob is not his exacerbated individual opinion, nor the volume of his voice. On the contrary, it is his lack of an individual opinion. A sacrifice of his own link with culture for the sake of the accepted, the fashionable, the momentarily topical trend. Just like the social snob, the cultural snob also endeavours to assimilate himself to something that is alien to him, to that which is fashionable and on top, and does so not without a certain degree of subjective enthusiasm and conviction, yet he is nevertheless for the greater part uncomprehending and uninitiated. This is the unique and paramount distinguishing feature of the snob—that, though he may enthusiastically pretend to, he actually has no opinion and choice *of his own*. And those who condemn the snobs for something else—for their individual opinions, for example—can hardly avoid being suspected of intentionally branding as snobbishness something that is not that. Something that, indeed, is not infrequently the very opposite—the failure to pay attention to the uncertain and rather swiftly changing lists of public precedence, the preference for a silent and steady adherence to the great and unchanging fixed stars of artistic value.

Neglecting, for the moment, those who are maligned for being snobs though they have nothing to do with snobbishness, let us examine whether the genuine snobs are ultimately useful or harmful in the field of culture. I venture to say that there is more use than harm in them. It is true that they are frequently somewhat harassing. They generally hang about on the

peripheries of literature and art, with the innocent but sometimes burdensome personal wish to establish some sort of contact with those who are genuine. This, however, is a minor, and rather a personal reservation, and it is under no circumstances commensurable with the positive aspects of their activity, which could, in concise and somewhat commercially-minded terms, be summed up by saying: "They increase the sales of your copies." It cannot be disputed that the operation of the whole of cultural life would be far more difficult without snobs.

6 Without snobbishness

Social snobbery has been condemned to attrition. It may perhaps continue for a while to vegetate in the propinquity and express itself in adulation of those who happen to be in office ("in office," and ever less "in power!"), but having neither sense nor a romantic-emphatic content, it does not appear to face a long life. The chances for snobbishness around culture are more varied and many-sided, betokening a longer survival, but the better people will understand the true values of the spirit, the less need and opportunity they will have to admire its rank in externals. This too will therefore not exist eternally. Snobbishness is losing the soil from under its feet. But what is to become of the kind of human nature that justified it, what is to become of the human type that gave shape to snobbery? What will happen to the snob, without snobbishness?

It is not probable that either the nostalgia or the superficiality, whose dual presence is so characteristic of the snob's mentality, will finally disappear. People of snob stature will continue to be able ardently to yearn, if not for the past, then for the future, and they will be able to project this yearning into the persons of the stratum which socially represents the object of their yearning. Shall we say that the snob of the future will respect the nuclear physicists instead of the counts? However amusing and schematic this seems, I think there is some truth in it. Even in the future, not everyone will attain the grade where they can serve the greater happiness of mankind through their own individual creative powers. Whether they will be many or few, more people or less, we cannot know, but one portion will certainly be constrained to the smaller matters of detail, and respect for the greater, more comprehensive minds. This admiration may, for lack of complete understanding, frequently be superficial, based on what has been heard from others, on the argument of authority. But its tendency will even then be a good one, because it will be directed towards the cause of progress.

If the whole of society is developing in a sound direction, then that which applies to the snobs of culture is even more true of the social snob. If he follows—even though outwardly and even though only in appearances —those who are really worthy of being followed, he will unconsciously and involuntarily change the whole trend.

Those who know present-day Hungarian society can—as yet, with a little imaginative foresight—picture the snobless society of the future. We already have but few people who keep mentioning their ancestors, whether they wore peers' coronets or cloth caps. It will also be in vain for them to speak of their friends in high positions, for though the person concerned may not know it, another to whom he talks will be well aware that the office-holder is also a man of his own kind, flesh of his flesh, blood of his blood. He may possibly still boast of contacts with scientists, artists or eminent workers, but this, though it may be superfluous, is in no way harmful and merely a sign of the fact that our society is increasingly susceptible to the appreciation of true values. Thackeray's definition has therefore gone over to its opposite in contemporary Hungarian society, and even more so in that which is now evolving. "He who worthily admires worthy things is a snob." But then, what does the non-snob do? The same thing, in a still more worthy manner.

FRIGYES KARINTHY, HUMORIST AND THINKER

by

MIKLÓS VAJDA

I

In newspaper articles, essays and lectures, or as translator and one responsible for literary selections, I have had ample opportunity of presenting to *Hungarian* readers a good many *English* novelists and poets. I have always regarded this as an exciting and pleasurable task, one which I am glad to undertake any time. As a matter of fact, it is not unlike the task which faces the returning traveller: to give an account of impressions obtained in a distant and strange land, on behalf of people who have already gained some idea about that strange land from travellers who were there before you. You do not therefore have to begin your story by interpreting fundamentals, struggling to explain generalities, or delving into things that must be evident at first sight. In nearly every instance, you can take for granted a knowledge of at least some basic facts of English literature and, even, history and society (as a rule, much more than that) in the same way as you can depend upon the elements of arithmetics, which are, after all, the foundation of even the most complicated higher mathematics. Readers in this country who cuddle up with a modern English novel or read an essay on, say, the Angry Young Men will have reached this stage after a considerable amount of previous reading—comprising, in the case of the average reader, certainly Shakespeare, Dickens, Thackeray and Scott; probably several modern novelists like Wilde, Priestley, Huxley, Greene and Bates; a couple of Shaw's plays; and undoubtedly at least a few poems by Burns, Shelley, Byron and Keats, for these poets are taught in the schools. But those now studying Shelley at school will recall Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver, Robin Hood and *Treasure Island;* and when, years earlier, they read these latter books, they already looked upon Mowgli and Winnie the Pooh as friends of long standing.

A traveller giving account of his recent discoveries consequently has a relatively easy job. It is not difficult to induce a public already won over

from the first to acquire further knowledge—if for no other reason than because, for the last two hundred years, scouts on the Hungarian cultural scene have traditionally been scanning contemporary foreign (among them English) literary horizons for works that merit being translated into Hungarian. The traveller's task is facilitated, of course, by the circumstance that he can address his countrymen in his native tongue, using native literary concepts and idiom and being fully familiar with the demand he has undertaken to meet.

On the other hand, having grown tired of the centuries-old one-way literary metabolism under which Hungary resigned herself to being only an importer of intellectual assets, we are now making attempts to "gate-crash" foreign markets and as a result find ourselves confronted by the paradoxical but unhappily far from negligible fact that, on the literary map, the road from Hungary to Britain is many times shorter than the road from Britain to Hungary.

Hungarians have over the centuries beaten a well-travelled path to English literature, but English return travellers on the literary road have been few and far between to this day. No doubt, there is something a little odd about the zeal with which we are interpreting and translating and flourishing our classic authors (whom the world has somehow managed to do without so far), pouncing on an English interest that is little more than well-meaning indifference. We can offer no other excuse than that we are aware of this fact, but are prepared to go ahead none the less, since we cannot do otherwise. For we firmly believe that Hungary's national lyric poetry is one of the richest in Europe and that at least a dozen of our 20th century works of fiction deserve to be known throughout the literary world.

Unfortunately this is by no means an easy task. For the non-Hungarian reader, our history, our traditions and our language—the trinity in which most literary *œuvres* are embedded (the more outstanding the deeper)—are a quaint curiosity, an impenetrable medium, a fact which only increases the need for interpretation. Presumably, a sizeable portion of our classic literature must in any case forever remain immured in the prison of the Hungarian tongue. In this country, eminent practitioners of Hungarian have for centuries evolved binding standards of perfect accuracy, both as to content and form, in translating foreign literature and have achieved astounding success. You can, however, scarcely expect equally ranking men of letters of big nations to devote time and energy to so complicated and badly-paying a task as mastering Hungarian to the point of being able to render our classics in their native tongues. Thus, in our efforts to win international appreciation for Hungarian literature, we cannot rely solely on

natural selection, according to the universally accepted norms of measuring literary value—the choice is bound to be governed also by the criteria of translatability and intelligibility. It is a specious argument to say that masterpieces are of necessity supra-national and at all times easily intelligible. In order to be able to appreciate the Divine Comedy, educated people of all European nations have gladly made themselves acquainted with all the intrigues of Italian medieval history, of Florence and the Papacy, and learned the names of a legion of petty plotters, nor have they hesitated, when faced with the bloody incidents and episodes of Shakespeare's English Histories, to look up their encyclopedias, thus meeting the author halfway by assuring him of maximum effect. Yet whereas we Hungarians have readily, and with a confidence and conviction inherited from our forefathers been training ourselves into appreciative readers, we have not been repaid with equal confidence. Naturally, we are well aware that Italian and English history is one thing, and Hungarian history another: the former are more or less equivalent to European history. Still, Europe is inhabited not only by history-making nations but also by those who were the suffering objects of that history-making process and who, having survived it, are now asking for the floor in order to reveal the reverse of the medal: Europe as *they* have seen it.

2

I do not know if there exists in English literature a magic word of the kind Karinthy's name represents for Hungarian readers. Splendid humorists and dazzlingly protean, ever restless intellects, learned encyclopedists and excitingly imaginative story-tellers, shrewd satirists and deeply sensitive lyricists, chatty reporters and bitter thinkers, believers and sceptics, are plentiful in English literature, but Karinthy was all these combined and many others besides. In him, Hungarian literature came of age at the beginning of the century by learning to ridicule itself, and it was partly through him that Hungarian fiction, humorous as well as serious, shook off the lingering provincialism of the Mikszáth era: in him the adolescent city of Budapest, hectically growing into a metropolis and emerging as the hub of the literary revival, found its self-respect. To Hungarian minds, his name—the magic word—involves all these things, in addition to the irresistible laughter, rapturous thrills and pangs and poignancies which his life-work represents.

Hungarian literature at the turn of the century, ruminating on its laurels of half a century before, was stuck in the stagnant waters of epigonism. However, modern bourgeois development, so long retarded, had for several

decades been forcefully advancing in every sphere; Budapest was in the process of feverish growth; and conditions were rapidly approaching the point where Romanticism (which had well outlived its day), the worn and trite themes of a heroic national past, and anecdote-ridden 19th century fiction, would be replaced by a new literature adapted to the exigencies of modern times. First came the pioneers: mostly highly gifted young men from the provinces—like Sándor Bródy—who raised journalism to a metropolitan level and founded a naturalist prose and drama which were concerned with novel social problems. They were followed—at about the time Bartók and Kodály were on their first tour of villages, collecting folk tunes—by a new generation of writers of decidedly radical views, whose movement united diverse trends of opinion and aspirations and presented a well defined program advocating social as well as literary reforms (and, later on, even embracing the revolution). This generation—to name only the most important—included Endre Ady, the symbolist, revolutionary poet, their leader; Mihály Babits and Dezső Kosztolányi, great poets as well as prose writers; Gyula Juhász, melancholic poet of the Hungarian countryside; Árpád Tóth, this sensitive poet and masterly translator of English and French poetry; and, last but not least, Zsigmond Móricz, a naturalist novelist at the beginning of his career, but later the greatest figure of Hungarian realism. For their ideals and models they looked to western Europe, as was evident even in the title of their magazine *(Nyugat,* The West, 1908—1941), a periodical which for over three decades was the centre of power on the Hungarian intellectual scene and a school that trained successive generations of writers.

It was with that first great generation that Frigyes Karinthy appeared on the literary scene. He made his *début* with a remarkable work—a volume of pastiches, literary caricatures on contemporary Hungarian writers. The book was an instant success —at one go, Karinthy won the lasting affection of the public. Entitled "The Way You Write" *(Így írtok ti),* it was prefaced as follows—

> A party of soldiers are out on rifle practice. It's not a particularly good show. The corporal swears, blusters, abuses the soldiers. At last, he snatches the rifle from the hands of one of them.
>
> 'Ah, you're all a bunch of wash-outs,' he cries. 'Watch!'
>
> And he takes aim, fires—and misses. He gets flustered—but only for a moment. Recovering his presence of mind, he turns to one of the rookies.

'Now that's the way *you* shoot.'
He takes aim again—and again misses.
'That's the way *you* shoot,' he says to another.
At last, at the ninth go, he hits the target.
'And that's the way *I* shoot!'

*

The ninth shot is yet to be fired. The corporal's hands still tremble, but his eyes now see the target a shade clearer.

F. K.

The genre was not unknown, either abroad or in this country: very many parodies, travesties and persiflages had been written before Karinthy by numerous authors, among them writers of such diverse artistic tempers as La Bruyère, Flaubert, Proust, Leacock and Alfred Neumann. Those parodies, however, did not go beyond imitating and ridiculing the style—especially the mannerisms—of this or that given composition, mostly without touching the contents and ignoring the writer himself and his particular image of the world, as well as his *œuvre* as a whole. Karinthy boldly went farther than that and actually created a new genre in which he wrote real little masterpieces. For him, the target is not the individual composition, but the whole *œuvre—i.e.* the writer himself—and not merely features of his style. His first pastiches were published in comic papers, and were framed in humorous fiction of himself, the youthful writer, trying his hand at the whole gamut of possibilities and styles of writing before getting down to writing his own big novel. However, his extraordinary sense of style and humour and his active power of empathy soon enabled him to master the art of imitation. But as he aspired to higher things, the "frame story" was soon discarded, and from the steadily thickening later volumes of his collection of caricatures, his wasteful hand weeded out those pieces which were no more than parodies ridiculing particular compositions. The real Karinthian caricatures are miniature portraits, character drawings or criticisms, condensed into a humorous form.

After writing a series of caricatures of Hungarian writers, he proceeded to draw the portraits (sometimes in several versions) of a number of foreign authors—primarily authors that were fashionable in Budapest at the time. Of British authors, he treated Defoe, Dickens, Conan Doyle, Edgar Wallace, H. G. Wells and Oscar Wilde and, in the field of drama, Shakespeare, Galsworthy, Edward B. Sheldon and G. B. Shaw, while America is represented by Sinclair Lewis and Eugene O'Neill. In trying to make a selection

for our English readers, we found to our astonishment and regret that none of these caricatures could be translated into English without substantially impairing its humorous quality. Karinthy's is humour of the highest order, modern, sophisticated, playful, and, as such, is strongly tied to the language in which it is written; as often as not, his ridicule is directed at himself no less than at his subject. Each caricature is full of brilliant plays upon words and other linguistic acrobatics, flashes of wit, grimaces and absurdities; some of them—without thereby doing the least damage to the emerging over-all image—spring topical allusions at you, or references to things Hungarian, allusions to contemporary public figures or to Hungarian imitators of the writer in question. In most cases, the very names of the characters and the titles of the works contain either an allusion of this sort or a pun, and so, in most cases, it would be futile to try to translate or even suggest them.

And yet, in a shot at the almost-impossible, we have had one of the most delightful pieces of "The Way You Write" translated—a caricature of Zola, containing comparatively little linguistic spoofing and all the more masterly bull's eyes illustrative of Karinthy's method.

Of course, Zolaesque naturalism, with its crass exaggerations, its naïve rediscoveries (a reaction to the bashful naïveté of Romanticism), and the *clichés* and mannerisms with which Zola's vast *œuvre* inevitably teams, offers rewarding material for caricature. Here too, Karinthy does not tilt his pen at any particular work of Zola's, but at the writer himself and, above all, his *Rougon-Macquart* cycle.

What we get in this caricature is by no means just a distortion of style. Karinthy offers us a novel in miniature, complete with a "plot," and all composed in Zola's style, mingling plot with exposition, descriptive detail with theorizing literary insertions, representation with flashback in the peculiarly Zolaesque manner. The very *milieu*—a public convenience in Paris—is a caricature of the Zolaesque theme in itself. The "plot," in its ludicrous absurdity and nonsensicalness, imitates the writhings of the impulsive Zolaesque heroes. The suspension-pointed oaths—which actually are no oaths at all—are not just humorous somersaults, but represent a jab at the ridiculous prudery of contemporary book publishing. A vast arsenal of distortion is displayed in the details: "flowers of all sorts and denominations *were breathing secretions of scent;* and *larks suffering from venereal diseases* were whimpering on the branches of the trees" *(italics mine)*—absurd degradations, a parody of naturalism; "a piece of the pulpy mass got under Gervaise's nails. That day, at the grocer's, Old Fouan's *rat started to retch*"—the contrary of degradation; "'I've brought the oil, Ma'am,' he said, and the whole place

resounded *with his own voice*, which issued from his powerful and *somewhat frayed-out throat, through his mouth*" cocks a snook at naturalism's naïvely fervent and sciolistic rediscovery of life's obvious facts; "Farther down the street, three metres beyond the stairs, there was a slightly worn *cobble-stone, surrounded by several other cobble-stones*. At the right-hand corner of this stone, *peering back over his shoulder* towards the cathedral, visible here through Rue de Bombarde, *and twirling his moustache, stood a tuberculosis microbe*"—is a sneer at Zola's micro- and macro-cosmically angled, naturalistic descriptions; and so on. Never a superfluous detail, or a kill-joke exaggeration; every means made to serve the end; and in the witty concluding sentence, Karinthy is free to give the reader the glad eye: Zola, pulled to pieces, has been laid out for all the world to see. This caricature is enjoyable even by one who has never read Zola. Nevertheless, if he happens to despise the writer he sets out to caricature, Karinthy can be far more scathing even than that. He is responsible for the by now proverbial saying (which ought to be the maxim of every comic writer), "I'll stand no nonsense about humour."

Karinthy was twenty-five years old when the first edition of "The Way You Write" was published (1912). This collection of rollickingly funny caricatures, which included all contemporary Hungarian writers of note, radicals and conservatives alike, paved the way for the aspirations *Nyugat* stood for. Although Karinthy's mockery did not spare his own friends and comrades-at-arms either (he himself belonged to the *Nyugat* coterie), from his caricatures one can tell quite unmistakably the writers he loves and appreciates from those he despises. The book was a tremendous success (to this day, it cannot be reissued or reprinted too many times and in too large editions). It was these caricatures that introduced a large number of fun-loving readers to the new great writers of the time; after enjoying the caricature, their natural curiosity made them want to know the original too. In this way Karinthy recruited large numbers of admiring readers for *Nyugat*'s writers. In a Karinthian caricature, not only can readers *recognize* the writer-subject; they can *get to know* him as well. Numerous are the writers, Hungarian and other, whose works have long since been forgotten but whose names and, more, entire character, favourite themes, and atmosphere are well remembered by the public from Karinthy's masterly bull's eye hits. Often, Karinthy's caricatures have proved more valuable and more enduring than the originals they were meant to ridicule—therein lies the significance in Hungarian letters of this splendid little humorous history of literature, which consequently far transcends in importance Leacock's and other authors' seemingly similar writings. For instance, if a Hungarian reader wishes to know something about Georges Ohnet, a now forgotten sentimental French

novelist of the late 19th century, he will find a perfect portrait of him in Karinthy, and as he reads the tears will stream from his eyes—with laughter, for the original would, today, scarcely be capable of bringing tears to his eyes.

With "The Way You Write" Karinthy at once made his mark. He became a regular contributor to big dailies and periodicals, and the same year he rushed into print with another two books. Amongst his friends—novelists and poets who contributed to *Nyugat*—he was the only native of Budapest, and he became, along with Ferenc Molnár, the first truly metropolitan writer in Hungarian literature. His was the typical literary and—which was almost equivalent at the time—journalistic way of life of the period, that of the coffee-house. He and his friends would go to a café (he was a habitual visitor of three "literary cafés") in the afternoon and stay there far into the night or, as was more often the case, until the small hours of the morning. Here they would while away their time debating, telling jokes, pulling each other's legs and reading out their literary products, playing their exciting, bizarre and sophisticated parlour games, writing and courting, reading books and playing at cards. It is a mystery where, when and how—with all these pastimes and other occupations—they managed to write their extensive *œuvre*. From a contemporary and friend, Milán Füst, a bizarre-toned, modern mystic poet of *Nyugat*, comes this description of the youthful Karinthy—

> He wore an orange-coloured coat (it must at one time have been a livery or something) which did service as top-coat. The sleeves of this overcoat were indeed a little too long, and when he was off his guard, they would reach down to his fingers; so whenever he was very intent on explaining something, he would have to push them back a bit. His shoes were quite good enough—I can't deny that. But again he was wearing—God forbid!—a pair of ducks, a new one, and holding nonchalantly in one hand a tremendous yellow glove, and in the other—alas! —again an iron cane resembling a fishing-rod.
>
> 'You cling to that very much?' I asked him hopelessly, pointing at the iron sceptre.
>
> 'Yes,' he owned, proud and firm. 'I like it.'
>
> 'But,' I tried again, 'perhaps ducks aren't quite the real thing this time of year?'
>
> 'Why not? And what about those who haven't got trousers at all? Or who have got a pair with one leg only?' Karinthy opined.
>
> 'That must be rather awkward,' said I, desisting from raising any

further objections, of course. You couldn't. I just cast a reproachful look at his untimely straw-hat.

However, the bohemian exterior hid an artistic sense of the highest order, a vast and many-sided learning, and a legion of plans of ambitious literary works. He did not mean to become a humorist. That his image in the public mind to-day survives, nevertheless, primarily as that of a humorist is due, besides his instinctive playfulness, his natural bent for mockery and his brilliant sense of humour, to a collection of about six hundred short humorous sketches, many volumes of one-act comedies, skits and longer pieces of humorous writing—all written in his unceasing bitter struggle to make ends meet. Of the caricatures in "The Way You Write," he had this view: "For my part—although this is irrelevant—I don't mind admitting that I would rather no trace should be left of my having lived and written than only have it remembered that 'The Way You Write' is associated with my name. It would be painfully embarrassing to me if this book came to mean more—if only in the annals of day-to-day happenings—than it has ever meant to me."

English readers may find it hard to understand how it was possible for a popular and prolific writer, who published at least two books a year, to be plagued permanently by financial troubles. Yet they did plague him—and not only him, but all those of his fellow-writers who lived *only* by what they wrote. In Hungary, maintenance of a rather modest and none too secure 'middle-class' way of life—a three- or four-room flat, a wife and one or two children, a maid, café-going and buying books, summer holidays on the shores of Lake Balaton and, once in a while, an inexpensive trip abroad—called for a tremendous lot of work and involved bitter struggles and often distressing sacrifices of one's artistic ambitions. Owning a car, a yacht and a villa fell to the share of only a few privileged pet writers of the regime, or authors of best-sellers, who readily conformed to low tastes.

The writer was a veritable drudge to his publisher, to whom, in most cases, he was compelled to sell—"in perpetuity"—the copyright of his works, both those already written and those to be composed in the future, so that the royalties he would receive from the numerous reprints were diminutive. To be able to make a living under the circumstances, leading writers of the time, like Karinthy, Zsigmond Móricz, Dezső Kosztolányi, Gyula Krúdy, Lajos Nagy and others, were compelled to engage in multifarious literary and journalistic activities to an almost inconceivable degree. A quiet creative life, free from financial worries, from the rat-race and petty skirmishes of day-to-day existence—a way of life which is an important,

even if external, condition for the creation of grand epic writing, of the grand novel—was inconceivable in Hungary. Martin du Gard's or Thomas Mann's captivating accounts of how and under what circumstances they prepared themselves, through years, for writing their great works—of how they collected, arranged and shaped their material before completing, first, the detailed plan, then, after more years of systematic, slow and concentrated effort, the work itself—tell of things that, to Hungarian writers, were a pipe dream quite beyond their reach. It was by writing mostly short pieces, by embarking on quick-paying projects, and tackling simultaneously a hundred kinds of work in four or five genres at a time, that Karinthy and his contemporaries stormed the heights of immortality. This diversity, no doubt, was the lever that enabled the 'secondary' genres—represented by short stories for the press, columnist's glossaries, reportages, humorous sketches, skits, *chansons*, essays, critiques and literary translations—to reach a hitherto unattained level in the Hungary of the inter-war years. Yet no great epic synthesis within the frame of a *single work* took shape for the very reason, among others, that it was impossible for it to take shape among the countless masterpieces these splendidly gifted authors produced.

On the face of it, Karinthy seemed to enjoy this harassed mode of life. We have it from his contemporaries that disorder and lack of organization were his life-giving element. He was eminently capable of working in cafés, even while engaging in conversation: his last work—the autobiographical novel "A Trip Round my Skull" *(Utazás a koponyám körül)*—which is his most splendid and, perhaps, most perfectly wrought work, was written at his customary table in the Café Central, on the back of bill slips and on paper napkins. He was exceedingly adept at improvising and would find momentary and quick solutions for his persistent financial worries by dashing off a humorous sketch, music-hall skit or newspaper article, forever putting off his more ambitious plans. Now and then, however, he would admit that all his life he had been tormented by compunction on account of the "great work" which was clamoring to see the light of day, but which he never had the time to write. Not long before his death, in his last book, he wrote: "Throughout my life I have been haunted by a vague feeling of having some business to attend to. Of having *left something behind*, something I ought to go back and fetch. Of having omitted something, the most important thing at that... This nagging, urging feeling has often haunted me. But what *is* this business I ought to attend to?" It is this self-reproach, the tragedy of the poet, constrained to do acrobatics, that he expressed in one of his finest short stories, the poignantly dramatic *Circus* (printed elsewhere in this issue).

Karinthy was bounteously endowed with all the essential qualities which might have allowed him to become one of the great satirists of all time. And yet he has written few satires in the true sense of the word, having squandered his talent on short pieces of humorous writing. In this latter domain, however, he has left behind him innumerable little masterpieces. For decades he satisfied the need for humour of a big metropolis all by himself, creating in the process, almost from scratch, countless types, basic situations and techniques—in fact, a whole arsenal—of humorous prose. He has practically worked up all possible themes of humorous prose. Even today, a quarter of a century after his death, his influence is well-nigh paralysing. Hungarian humorous literature ever since has been nothing but the aping, the continuation and repetition of Karinthy, and since his day, no Hungarian humorist worthy of the name has ever approached him. Most likely it is his spirit that feeds, through a ramified system of hidden capillary vessels, the legendary "Budapest humour"—the modern, anonymous folklore of a city which, though sorely tried, has preserved its apparently indestructible capacity for fun—which reacts with amazing promptitude to every new event, every new development, by spawning stupendous quantities of jokes, and whose pertness, cynicism and vitality belong as inseparably to Budapest as do the yellow tramcars that run through its streets or the Chain Bridge across the Danube.

The hundreds of humorous sketches he has written embrace, in their themes, all the aspects of the educated, modern big-city dweller's life. Politics, war, love, marriage, jealousy, society, society life, natural sciences, Freudism, snobbery, the press, literature, philosophy, public life, various types of humanity, human relations, popular customs, the relativity of values, the trifles of everyday existence, or the Big Questions of Life seen in the distorting mirror of humorous degradation—it is well-nigh impossible even to enumerate each of the themes he has treated in his sketches. His method is based on shrewd observation, an unerring selection of characteristic features, extraordinary imaginativeness and maintenance of the right proportions in ludicrous distortion, and a startlingly original presentation. On the whole, the characters of his humorous sketches are not realistically drawn figures, but characters (suggested by a few characteristics) personifying various human qualities. Yet the situation—within the fundamental absurdity—is a realistic one. Karinthy has tried his hand at innumerable other varieties, each funnier than the other, of the relationship between absurdity and reality. His bizarre ideas, absurd situations and brilliant observations are without number. His comprehensive knowledge of psychology, high erudition, and extensive conversance with the natural sciences,

as well as his superb linguistic artistry, are all important factors in his humorous sketches, a few dozen of which, I am sure, are unique in their kind throughout world literature.

A great many of his sketches are based on the extremely simple—yet very profound—idea of the naïve believer who either refuses or is unable to recognize that life is all lies, base deception and compromise. Believing—we bear witness to the effect ourselves by laughing over it—is in itself something funny and pathetic. This sharpened contrast forms the basis upon which is founded the little sketch "There's Something Fishy about my Wife." The whole point lies in the husband's inability to believe that he is being cuckolded. Akin to this naiveté is the innocence of the child who has not yet got over the stage at which one tries to take notions at their face value. This sketch—"An Allegory about the Writer"—again treats what is in fact a weighty issue. For is there a parent who has not yet been confronted with the dilemma of whether to give his or her child the *idealistic* or the *realistic* interpretation of ideas, considering that, in real life, these two interpretations have now drifted miles apart and the original notion is covered by a thick fabric of lies woven of conventions, make-believe and interests.

Many of his sketches deal with lunatics, whom—like modern psychology—he regarded as the extreme and deformed personifications of human possibilities and whom he deeply commiserated and respected. He can achieve extremely ludicrous effects through a modern variety of the animal fable, placing various animals in human situations, or having a centipede soliloquize or letting a pearl-oyster call on Rockefeller in order, personally and without the intervention of middlemen, to sell him the pearl he has toiled so hard to produce.

"Talk with a Good Man" belongs to still another group of sketches. Here, chatting during the torture procedure as if they were gossiping in the street, are "that honest fellow" of an executioner and the dutiful victim of the Inquisition. Commonplaces here acquire creepily grotesque overtones, and at once the trivial, everyday fact that man may be tried and tormented by man is turned upside down and becomes an absurdity. "Privisinszky" stands on the borderland between the humorous sketch and the light humorous essay (very many of Karinthy's writings are such marginal cases, blurring the boundaries of different genres). You can never be the first man in a woman's life: you are always preceded by someone else, a mysterious young man with a jaw-breaker name—it is a profound truth. And finally, "Mr. Selfsame," this bitter little satire—a universal history of all revolutions seen through the eyes of a Budapest humorist, on one and a half pages.

There is a certain point beyond which—metaphorically speaking—the

atoms of humour cannot be broken down. Its roots reach down into the irrational and the subconscious: we laugh, but we cannot tell the reason why. Karinthy knew the psychological laws governing such laughter very well and, wherever this was possible, made the most of his knowledge. Alas, the modest selection offered along with this article is—due to difficulty of translation and considerations of space—scarcely capable of conveying to English readers even a faint idea of the protean wealth of Karinthy's humour.

Perhaps the most splendid effort produced by Karinthy the humorist is "Please, Sir" *(Tanár úr kérem)*, a cycle of humorous sketches containing a masterly treatment of the schoolboy's universe, his mentality, his joys and sorrows, his lies and anxieties, written with classic psychological precision and a nostalgic feeling that gleams through the author's magnificent humour. Again, most of the sketches resist attempts at translation, because of the author's lavish use of contemporary Hungarian school cant. Even in this latter day, more than forty-five years after he wrote them, Karinthy conjures up with astounding wizardry the great experience common to us all, those unforgettable years at school: the excruciating anxiety of being late at school, when you went slinking down silent passages and heard through the doors of classrooms the faint humming of pupils and the clearer voices of schoolmasters lecturing; the mortal fear caused by unexpected oral questioning; the first, innocent advances to girls, who seemed to be wreathed in a strange mystery that was at once attractive and repellent; the desperate efforts to explain away, for your parents, your baddish school report; the enchanting rot you wrote in your monthly tests; the entire bewitching atmosphere of those long-past boyhood years. One of the superb pieces of the cycle is the one entitled "The Form Splits with Laughter" *(Röhög az osztály)*. Who among us can fail to recall the days when for some mysterious reason every boy seemed to be possessed of the devil and riotous spirits gave birth to some marvellous pranks in that strange little community of extremely complex structure? For instance—

> Then someone invents the following game. You pick out, say, Auer, who happens to be engaged busily writing something. You run up to him, out of breath, in an apparent fever about some happy tidings, and grab him by the arm. "Come on... quick..." you splutter at him, and drag the fellow along with you. Auer is completely flustered. "Wha—what's the idea? What's happened? Where're we off to?" he asks, stepping out briskly, excited and alarmed. Never replying, you drag him along, panting, towing him down the passage and rushing with him up the stairs to the third floor. Motion pictures of a variety of possible explanations flash

with lightning speed across Auer's mind. His uncle has arrived from America. The head's sent for him, because the masters have held a conference where it has been agreed that this fellow Auer's quite an exceptional genius, such as the spirit of the time brings forth but once in each century, and so his school certificate plus a scholarship of one thousand crowns will be handed over to him forthwith, accompanied by a festive speech, to be delivered by the headmaster in the common room. The Minister of Education has sent for him; he is now in the common room, has specially come to see him because someone has submitted to him Auer's latest test-paper on Hungarian Literature, which having been read amid tears in Parliament, he has now come as the representative of the Government to shake hands with Auer. The drawing master has sent for him, for a wealthy art patron has by chance seen his free-hand drawing in sepia entitled 'Stylized Shape of Leaf' and proposes to purchase it for thirty thousand crowns and set it up at the City Park Gallery. 'I'll let him have it for twenty thousand,' Auer reflects hurriedly as they reach the fourth floor, out of breath. Here, the dispatch-runner, who until now has never spoken a word, lets go of Auer's arm, and starts quietly down the stairs. Puzzled, Auer turns after him. Down below, clustered at the bottom of the stairs, is the whole class to a man, roaring with laughter. For a minute, Auer stands rooted to the spot. "Idiots," he says angrily, then starts his ignominious descent. Two minutes later, he fairly bursts his sides with laughing as he watches Roboz being taken through the same procedure.

Here, as in so many others of Karinthy's writings, reality clashes with dream—derisive reality with the grotesque and yet touching soaring of the young spirit that knows, as yet, no restrictions. The story continues: one of the boys sits down inside the new litter-bin—quite a roomy chest in fact—and pulls the lid over himself. At a given signal, the boys become quiet, and rise as if to greet their master.

Zajcsek pokes his head out of the bin in alarm, under the impression that the master has entered the room. Howls of laughter. Contemptuously, Zajcsek spits across the rim and disgustedly pulls the lid on.

And now, suddenly, the master actually does enter the room and innocently begins his discourse on the virtues of Emperor Joseph II of Hapsburg.

And now begins a class of horrible agony. The whole form is one great quivering diaphragm pressed downward with absurd force by deadly

laughter. Glowing cheeks throb with the hot fever of stifled mirth, and temples swell. The boys pore over their desks. Silence, at bottom of which lurks the ghastly spectre of a possible explosion of mirth, is singing provokingly in our ears. And there are some desperate, dare-devil cads, in the back rows, who deliberately stretch the critical atmosphere to breaking-point. Little Löbl has gone down on all fours and is creeping about in a leisurely way under the desks. He has crept all round the form and got hold of our legs one by one. The litter-bin stirs suspiciously.

Meanwhile the master goes on with his lecturing, and the tension keeps mounting.

My eyes all but pop out of their sockets. Now... this is the end... one minute more... now the explosion will come... At this moment, the master indulges in the following pleasantry.

"I say, Auer," he remarks. "You'd better stop squirming and wriggling like a cheese-hopper!"

No author of slapstick comedies ever had a like effect upon his audience. The cheers that greet this are like a swollen river bursting a dam. Relieved and wheezing, we howl and shriek for several minutes. The master looks on amazed and smiles indulgently: he comes to the conclusion that he is possessed of a keen and irresistible humour.

The two selections given in this issue from "Please, Sir" are by no means the most successful, only the most easily translatable, sketches of the cycle. The time may come, however, when Karinthy will find a congenial English translator who will be able to see and interpret his linguistic *tours de force*, just as he himself was a magnificent Hungarian interpreter of the humorous writings of Swift, Milne and Leacock.

3

Although there are among them quite a few pot-boilers, most of Karinthy's humorous sketches, embodying as they do the intellectual conception of a restless inquiring, sophisticated mind, were intended to convey some earnest message. The seeds of serious thought hidden in the depths of his playful or satirical sketch-themes would at times sprout a short story or even a novel, thus proving that the humorist, the thinker and the novelist worked in the same fine material. There are in many of his sketches flashes of potentially magnificent satires. Reading them, we are constantly

aware of the presence behind the humorist of a strict rationalist philosopher who speculates on ponderous problems; who would like to believe and for that very reason is a sceptic; who unceasingly probes the relationship between man and nature and between man and man or the many preposterous laws of time and society, with a view to discovering the possibility of a happier and freer human society.

As a thinker Karinthy was a rationalist, an unquestioning believer in and ardent advocate of the natural sciences and technology. The cinema and aviation, for instance, were two absorbing interests of his—he greeted the first silent motion picture in an essay and was on board the first rickety Hungarian aeroplane during its first flight, after which he wrote enthusiastic reportages and poems on his experience. He held liberal views on society, and was an individualist and a pacifist. He wanted to probe everything to its depth, was always in search of explanations and hypotheses, was hostile to obscurantism and mysticism (except—as in his short stories—where he created them specially, for demonstrative purposes), and hated superstitions. He had an unbounded belief in human cognition, and in his articles and short stories he probed—amateur though he was—the distant future and ultimate issues of the natural sciences with remarkable foreboding. All his life he was preparing to write his Great Encyclopedia, which, in this chaotic century when words have long since ceased to conform to the notions they were invented to convey, would have offered a new, bold interpretation of this world that would have served to eliminate the tormenting relativity of things and values. This relativity claimed his attention with particular force: "Everything Is Different" *(Minden másképpen van)* is the title he gave to a volume of brilliant articles in which he tried to get to the bottom of this problem, searching for those fixed points which might provide a foothold for the man of our time, threatened as he is by mortal perils and disabused of all his beliefs.

He aimed at a synthesis that would embrace everything. His inquiring mind and imagination, which, unlike his contemporaries, did not get bogged down in things Hungarian, went a long way toward expanding and enriching the gamut of themes treated by Hungarian literature: he introduced into it the desires, the entirely novel anxieties and the scepticism of Modern Man.

Ever aspiring to higher things he once confessed: "I have written up every subject as best I could—Flying Man, the Motion Picture, the Book-I-have-read, the Friend-I-have-known, the Woman-I-have-loved, the Child, the Stars... But that for which I sought you out, dear Editor, about fifteen years ago, the things I really wanted to say, I have not been able to utter. And I am still incapable of uttering it..."

The First World War was a turning-point for Karinthy. His individualism and rationalism, his love of freedom and his humanism rose up against the horrible blood-bath and the jingoist claptrap, which, for periods of varying length, went to the head of many a fellow-writer; for war-mongering in literature was rampant throughout Europe at the time. Never for a moment did Karinthy fall for the beating of the war-drums. In 1917, he wrote the short newspaper story "Barabbas" (an English version of which appears in this issue), a magnificent little essay on mass psychology and, at the same time, a bitter heart-searching, in which he exposes the tragic failure of the pacifist struggle against war. The tone of despair in his earlier anti-war writings has here been dropped; and in this powerfully symbolic tale he formulates with ruthless pessimism the great Truth: the peoples do not want war, have never wanted it, and yet they have become its tools. Less than 29 at the time of writing, he already showed himself a mature artist, a master of succinct representation that confined itself to essentials, of symbolic concentration combined with a peculiar gift for evocating atmosphere.

He wrote numerous short stories, feuilletons and other newspaper articles against the war, bringing into action his most effective, most destructive weapon—his humour. "Simple Simon's Encyclopedia" *(Együgyű lexikon)* a lengthy sketch, for instance, offers the following definition of a soldier:

> SOLDIER (cf. ARMY).—A constituent part of the weapon known as Rifle, designed to pull the weapon's trigger at the right moment, thereby causing it to go off. This operation is performed by three fleshy, finger-shaped excrescences that fit close to the trigger, which they press. The S.'s are turned out on the basis of domestic manufacture, on Government commission, by skilled and qualified artisans—the so-called Mothers—whose craft, under State supervision, is kept operating round the clock... The S's, as turned out by the mothers, contain some parts which do not answer the purposes of the State and are, in this crude condition, unserviceable as yet. Such parts are, *inter alia*: appetite, thirst, weariness, vivacity, zest for life, thoughts, plans and self-confidence—all of them a corollary of hurried and imperfect manufacture and either totally unsuited for, or constituting a downright impediment to, the aforementioned purpose, *i. e.* the pulling of the Rifle's trigger. To make them serviceable, crude S.'s, fully-built at 21, are conveyed to state-run mills, where they are put through a process called drilling (cf. OIL REFINERIES, FORGE)...

Otherwise social problems failed to appeal to him, or they did so only on a universal and abstract, philosophical plane. A substantial part of his entire lifework is centred round the complex problem of Time. At the beginning of the Century of Technology, following the new inventions that were making such a determined bid to conquer Space (radio, automobile, airplane), somehow—especially after the astounding lesson drawn from the theory of relativity—Time too seemed to fall within the compass of man's possible conquests. This was indicated not only by Wells' time-machine but also by the novelists' changed approach to Time, an approach that with a light gesture has knocked to pieces, turned upside down, and jumbled conventional fiction-time—a faithful copy of the chronological order of real-life happenings. It has thereby opened up new ways—new dimensions, as it were—of representation, particularly in the works of Proust and Joyce—and, at the same time, to a less important extent, of Gyula Krúdy—and later of V. Woolf, A. Huxley and others. At Karinthy's hands, even topsyturvy Time was turned into an instrument of passionate speculative research. To say nothing of countless humorous sketches in which, by playing on different variants of the idea of the time-machine and flitting backwards and forwards in Time—into the past or into the future—he finds some excellent opportunities for poking fun, Karinthy has written short stories of a kind hitherto unknown in Hungarian literature—for instance, on the primeval world, selecting the dramatic moment when man for the first time picks up a weapon, or when Adam finds Eve, and so forth. His excursions into the future are in a similar vein.

Towards the end of his life he wrote a fantastic novel, *Mennyei riport* ("Celestial Report"), on a scientifically envisioned other world, on dimensions beyond the earthly three, in which he plays with the idea that the Past actually continues to exist, only in a different dimension from the Present, and that, somewhere in a fifth or sixth dimension, there is also to be found the imaginary heaven of each single human being, and so on. Incidentally, in this somewhat desultory and eccentric novel he contrived to voice, *sub rosa*, his protest against the growing menace of fascism: his hero disgustedly roams the *Germanic heaven* of a fanatical German spiritist. And—perhaps most meaningful of all—the hero, a British newspaperman called Merlin Oldtime, finds his Virgil in this strange other world, personified by the great eighteenth-century French rationalist, Diderot.

For Karinthy's thinking was influenced largely by the French rationalists of the eighteenth century and—especially in his youth—by Swift (the subject of one of his essays), H. G. Wells, Strindberg, Freud and Weininger; but above all else, it was shaped by natural science, which, both as theme and

as material, he introduced into Hungarian *belles lettres*. In his makings, the thinker in him determined the writer of fiction and of plays, and even the poet. In all these genres, his sole, absorbing interest was the universe of abstract, philosophical and scientific problems, such as the relationship between the sexes, time, history, freedom, the other world, dreams, insanity, technology, relativity and human society. Two remarkable, bizarre experimental novels, continuing the voyages of Swift's Gulliver, constitute bitter utopian satires. The first—*Faremido*—takes us into the wise, unsentimental and just world of inorganic existence, of machines superior to man, who is shaped out of perishable matter. In this world of machines, speech is replaced by music—the machines communicate with one another in musical phrases (hence the title—the name of this strange land, in musical idiom—Fa-re-mi-do). They have created a perfect harmony of community life such as the perishable, inferior earthly world is incapable of building up. At the time of writing (in 1915), Karinthy still looked to rapidly developing technology for a solution to the crisis of human society.

His other Swiftian satire (incidentally both satires also represent excellent parodies of Swift's writing), *Capillaria*, is a statement of Karinthy's pessimistic and slightly romantic views on womanhood. His original shyness towards women, combined with Strindberg's then fashionable views and, even more, with Freudism and with Weininger's scientifically-based misogynic fanaticism, grew into a self-contained philosophy. At this period, he regarded Woman as a sensual, emotional, non-reasoning creature, the tyrant of reasoning, Man the fighter and builder, and also as the root of all social evils. In Capillaria, a submarine female empire, women devote themselves entirely to carnal pleasures and feed on the brains of the midget males, by now degenerated into mere genitals. But even here, he cannot refrain from lifting the Gulliverian mask to make grimaces at war. The story opens with Gulliver being called up to serve as surgeon on the S. S. *Queen*, which is subsequently sunk by the Germans—that is how Gulliver arrives in the submarine empire.

The novel is preceded by a preface in the form of an enthusiastic letter supposedly addressed to H. G. Wells. The author here gives a witty statement of his views on women. "When I am alone in a room," he writes, "I am a human being. Let a woman enter, and I forthwith become a man. And I am as much a man as she who has entered the room is a woman."

These Swiftian satires—belonging to Karinthy's *juvenilia*—are naïve works which can be enjoyed today only as something of a curiosity. Strindberg's and Weininger's views are by now antiquated; small wonder that an English version of *Capillaria* received little notice.

Karinthy's pessimistic views about women find expression in several later writings. Incidentally, all his short stories served to demonstrate some abstract idea, scientific thesis or passionately maintained principle, or as a deduction from some experiment or utopian idea. Most short-story writers have the essential gift of narrative, descriptive art, and they may never achieve an abstract formulation of their message. Their theme—and, within it, their message—lives in the story-teller's mind, embedded in and inseparably linked with his memories of real happenings and real characters; there is consequently almost no need for abstraction on his part: the narrative flair and the time-honoured tradition of creative work of this type will take care, as the story unfolds, of the typical, the essential, the things to be represented. By contrast, there are many writers in whose writings realism is supported by speculative elements of a high order. Karinthy belongs to a wholly different category of writers. He tells parables, expounds theories, and it is to develop these theories that he casts about him for stories, characters and situations. He does not portray flesh-and-blood characters, nor does he bother to give a description of *milieu* beyond what is absolutely necessary for achieving his effect. This passionate and dialectic way of seeing things has no use for details, and filters them out of the picture. What he writes is not—nor was it intended to be—realistic in the customary sense of the term. He brushes aside the laws of mundane reality and—sallying forth into fantasy or dream or technology or lunacy, or moving on some of the "planes" of time, or, quite possibly, without any apparent reason, but simply taking his theme for granted—searches for more remote, more universal laws, for which his characters are merely props. Mostly, the abstract quality of his characters is indicated by their very names. This abstraction is evident, not only on the plane of philosophical themes that probe the boundaries of existence, but also on that of more commonplace themes. Under the title "The Protean Soul" *(Az ezerarcú lélek)*, he wrote a fantastic tale about a scientist who invents and carries out on himself a modern version of metempsychosis. Seated next to his apparatus, he kills himself, and immediately his soul passes into the dead being nearest to him, restoring it to life, and thence into a dried flower. From the flower, the soul finds its way, *via* a number of animals, to a battlefield, where it creates great confusion among the soldiers during a hand-to-hand engagement, by making the corpses jump to their feet, one after the other. Finally, as an enigmatic world power, it appears before the President of the USA and attempts to put an end to the world war. Another weird tale, "The Story of the Mesmeric Death" *(Novella a delejes halálról)*, is about a young man who discovers with dismay that he has developed a capacity for

causing instantaneous death almost against his will, by a mere angry look. One might mention many more stories on similar lines; however, in the age (and, especially, the country) of science-fiction, they would, perhaps, strike the reader as somewhat out of date, even though none of them was written as an end in itself, for the sake of the fantastic, but in exposition of some far loftier thought.

I shall only touch upon two more of Karinthy's numerous short stories. The heart-grippingly beautiful *Circus*—here reproduced—is no less a parable than the other stories; nevertheless, the seemingly rather commonplace clown-theme has a quite peculiar and very strongly personal lyric quality, being a commentary on his own tragedy—and, perhaps, that of his generation. The young man of the dream has to go through an excruciatingly long and arduous training, enduring many sufferings before he finds an opportunity, at a moment of appalling difficulty, to produce the violin he has been concealing under his singlet and play upon it, at long last, the beautiful melody which, long, long ago, he once heard singing and sobbing in his heart. This dream is not just a lament upon a writer's cherished project, unrealized because it is unrealizable; it is a lament upon *all* man's hopes that have never come true, an infinitely sad and gripping story and a beautiful symbol—perhaps one of the highest achievements in short fiction this century has produced.

The thematic kinship between Karinthy's *Circus* and Franz Kafka's celebrated two-sentence story, *In the Circus Gallery*, is striking. In both stories, the theme is the human anguish that lurks behind the performance, the invisible and greater achievement. Although this similarity of themes is wholly fortuitous (for there is no evidence to suggest that Karinthy knew Kafka when writing *The Circus*), this short story may supply eloquent proof to English readers that Kafka's and Karinthy's anguished, modern visions spring from a kindred intellectual make-up.

The other short story adds yet another touch to the image of Karinthy, evoking, as it does, the author's youth—a theme he treated innumerable times and in hundreds of different ways, always with nostalgia and lyricism. In "Meeting with a Young Man" *(Találkozás egy fiatalemberrel)*, the author, taking a walk in the streets one afternoon, runs into a young man who is none other than himself as a student. The ardent youth puts some awkward questions to the self-complacent, well-known writer, calling upon him to account for the ambitious plans of his younger days.

"What about your flying-machine?" he said in a husky voice.

"Er... Well," I said, stammering in embarrassment, "Can't help

it... It's been invented. Farman... the Wright Brothers. I wasn't there... But those people have done a pretty good job of it, believe me. Not bad at all, on the whole—er—You can fly it, you know..."

"I see," he said, sneering. Then again he looked at me.

"What about the North Pole?"

I cast down my eyes.

"A certain Peary has reached it. I just didn't have the time.. You were wrong... You can't do everything yourself... I attended the university at the time..."

"Ah," he said.

Then:

"What about Hungary, proud and free?"

"Well, you see... Odd that you should ask that, really... We are working towards that goal, I and other people. Still, it isn't something you can do overnight... After all, you've got to make a living too."

Then this apparition of a young man speaks as follows:

"You shall remember this last meeting of ours. And if you still retain something of me in you, dip your pen into the fire of the westering sun and describe how I have walked out on you, how I have vanished... young, handsome and infinitely free, never to see you again..."

This urge to discover and to see is, more than anything else, characteristic of Karinthy. In his work, he honestly faces all the mysterious and alarming question-marks of life which stare Twentieth-Century Man in the eye on every hand. His *oeuvre* is not based on any coherent system of thought, for he had too much of the author in him to be completely a thinker (as he was too much of a thinker to be a hundred-per-cent writer). But precisely because he stood on the borderland between author and thinker, he was able to put into words, in his peculiar way and at the intellectual level of his greatest contemporaries, the pervading anguish and disillusionment, the beliefs and disappointments, with which the literary masterpieces of the modern world are charged. Unlike Kafka, he comprehended all this in a keen intellectual process, and formulated it in Hungarian, thus becoming perhaps the most European, most universal, writer in Hungarian literature.

Two volumes of poetry—also awaiting adequate translation—are a peculiar alloy of the same intellectual quality and an urge for self-revelation. Karinthy wrote *vers libre* with a quaint, hectic rhythm, poems that contain a good deal of sophisticated play and many ideas, such as are, indeed, foreign

to lyric poetry. In these verses, as in all of his work, the mind reigns supreme; all the same, the true lyric poet does at times break forth with impressive sincerity.

4

In March 1936, Karinthy developed a cerebral tumour. The diagnosis made an operation imperative. Friends and fellow-writers raised a fund to cover the necessary expenses, and Karinthy, accompanied by his wife, left for Stockholm, where the famous Professor Olivecrona performed a brilliant operation and removed the tumour—the size of an egg—from his brain. Karinthy was thus given two more years to live, as well as an opportunity for writing his best and most thrilling book—"A Trip Round my Skull" *(Utazás a koponyám körül)*.

He observes himself with incredible equanimity and precision, from the first symptoms, the first hallucinations, lacing these observations with chatty accounts of his everyday life in the disarming, airily clever manner that is all his own. He tells of how he tried to deceive himself, devising various theories, fantastical explanations of his sickness; and yet all the time he knew perfectly well that something was wrong, very, very wrong. Here is his account of the first time he felt sick.

I had the first attack of vomiting early in April.

Suddenly one morning (the odd thing about it was that it came on an empty stomach), I was seized with nausea as abruptly as if I were surfeited with something.

I told myself that this was impossible, that this must be a mistake, for I had absolutely nothing in my stomach. I tried to think "pleasant thoughts" in an attempt to fight back the "peristaltic movement of the stomach"—this pulsation-in-reverse—as one tries to fight back insomnia. But a moment later, I jumped out of bed and, although still doubting that the disgraceful eruption would really occur, bent over the wash-basin, waiting with my mouth open and saliva running down my chin. The bathroom began slowly to turn round as if I were drunk. But I was not. I observed myself painfully and closely. A crushing pain; my gullet stirred—I began to retch. I tipped my head forward. Again it subsided, but as the nausea did not stop, I had to keep on waiting. It was a long-lasting business. To kill the time, I tried to visualize my organs. I saw the test-tube-shaped outlines of the stomach writhe in pain; the duodenum in a tight spasm, refusing to pass anything downwards. The

regurgitatory overflow of bile had stopped: the contents of the stomach were in turmoil. I wished I were through with it. And what was most disgusting of all—I again caught myself at "play-acting." I have long been observing that in me, have built a whole theory round it; meanwhile, the outlines of a "histrionic view of the world" have emerged—a world outlook, a concept of a world in which nothing "exists" as such, everything is merely "playing a part"; the stars playing a celestial ensemble, and apple-trees playing at being apple-trees. Often have I discovered that my gestures aren't genuine; that I hold my cigarette the way my father used to; the way I turn my head is reminiscent of the movement made by an ex-premier, as he turned in amazement towards us newspapermen up on the gallery when we suddenly broke into an uproar. Only when I am alone do I sometimes become conscious of these self-imposed mannerisms—conscious of and repelled by them. I remember the time when I first boarded an aeroplane. It was a dilapidated old rattletrap, a pre-war affair. When we left the ground, I had to stop talking. My guide was sitting in front of me—nobody saw me. In embarrassment, I drew myself up, gave a little cough, the palm of my hand over my mouth, although I felt no irritation in my throat. After that, I tried to find some place to lay my hands. I placed them nonchalantly on the sill, then alternately in my lap and beat the devil's tattoo with the superior air I had seen Hegedüs put on in a dramatic scene. Even now, as I was waiting for my stomach to rise, standing with my legs straddled and turning slightly sideways as though it were of importance that the "line" should be effective, I brought the palm of my hand to my forehead in a sorrowful gesture—when I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror. Immediately after that, in three or four jerks, I brought up the yellowish liquid, angrily and moaning as if I wanted to get rid of all my entrails once and for all.

At last, he was compelled to consult a doctor; and the circumstantial and secretive examinations were still going on when he had his own diagnosis ready in his mind. He took stock, and read up the pertinent literature. He learned that he had no more than a 20 to 30 per cent chance of surviving, even if he were to undergo an operation; yet nothing could shake his confidence in medicine. He watched his friends and his wife, their secretiveness and sympathy, and they made him smile. For a space, he was able to forget about his trouble: he tried to work and seek refuge in his long-standing habits, but all in vain. His sense of balance and, subsequently, his sight began to deteriorate rapidly. The physicians' verdict was now in: he must

leave for Stockholm. He travelled through Nazi Germany and half of Europe, and by the time he and his wife arrived at the Stockholm clinic, he was hardly able to see. There now followed the operation. For many hours, he was by his senses; clinging desperately to consciousness, his mind went on observing and registering all that was happening around him, and even now, with his cranium opened, he was—playing. The operation was nearing its end when he fainted. Upon coming round, in his bed, he could scarcely believe that he was alive, that his life had been saved. Subsequently, meningitis set in, agonizing fever-dreams tormented him—the strange world of the old fantastic dream-stories was now seething dizzily inside his trepanned skull, in a brain that had once conceived them with such cool objectivity. Then, slowly, he began to convalesce, and his sneaking vanity was gratified on learning that a constant telephone connection had been maintained between Stockholm and Budapest throughout the operation, that his state of health had been reported on hourly in the Hungarian newspapers, and that he had been much written about in the Swedish press too. He wrote to his son in Budapest: "Take care, son, for I may drop in any minute. I am all right except that there is a large hole at the back of my head. That is where I put my handkerchief." After leaving Stockholm, he paid a short visit to Sir Alexander Korda in London. Korda was a close friend of his and had been one of those who helped to finance the operation. Karinthy was happy that death had granted him a respite, and no sooner had he got back to Budapest than he buckled down to writing this book, the story of his great encounter, rather late in life, with Reality.

That encounter had begotten a masterpiece.

The chapter presented in this issue speaks, we believe, for itself. Karinthy's book is a dazzling piece of literary bravura, and a fore-runner of the much-debated "micro-realism" of our time. The theme lies in the human being —on this occasion, in his body, *i.e.* in the skull; but its treatment, its development, the by-plots and variations, are accompanied by an ominous rolling of drums: a life is at stake here. To this rolling of drums Karinthy, like the young hero of *The Circus*, balancing above the grave, climbs higher and higher up the pole and, having arrived on top, surveys the swinging makeshift edifice far below him which has been his life. And while hovering up there aloft, he does produce his violin.

His death came unexpectedly two years after, with his mind full of plans and themes and unfinished business, in growing solitude and increasing black despair under the sinister shadow of Hungarian Nazism and approaching war. During the 'thirties he bravely protested in many of his writings against the cruel stupidity and barbarism of fascism, but the futility of

his protests made him ever more desperate. The last book he read was Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*. His bizarre idea that he would appear on the screen and speak on a gramophone record at his own funeral (he had a contempt for ceremony and looked upon death as something quite natural and expedient) was never carried out.

"A Trip Round my Skull" is one of the unfading masterpieces of Hungarian literature. Like several other of Karinthy's writings, of which German and French—and, in a few instances, English, Swedish and other—versions have been published, the "Trip" has not been particularly successful anywhere. This may have been due to a variety of reasons: inadequate translation, the wrong work published at the wrong historical or literary moment, or certain views of Karinthy's that have been gathering dust—it does not really matter which, for those initial failures of long ago do not alter the essence. We are nevertheless now having another try at presenting Karinthy, for it is our belief that, in him, we can give Europe a very European and very modern author.

A SELECTION OF THE WORKS OF FRIGYES KARINTHY

THE CIRCUS*

No doubt, it was a passionate yearning that drew me to the circus, but perhaps I longed just as much to play the violin; I got the violin first, however, and I was not taken to the circus; so this may be why from time to time I kept now and then dreaming of the latter. Once I saw that circus far away, behind the hills, and I felt as if somebody was leading me there by the hand. Another time I was standing in the very middle of a great unknown city; yet there it was—the same circus, the same entrance and the lobby with doors opening in opposite directions. This time I might even have had a ticket and gone in, but, at this point, my dream became confused, and again I was left outside.

At last, I dreamed the dream out to the end. There I was standing at the entrance, behind the box-office, and a limping, bearded, excited man, the manager of the circus stood next to me, drawing aside the gaudy coloured curtain with one hand and gabbling loudly: "Come in, gentlemen, come in, this way, please, just step in, the show is about to begin, this way, this way, please!" People were streaming in, no end of people, a motley crowd, domestics, soldiers, well-dressed women, well-shaved men—pushing one another, laughing and chatting at the tops of their voices. I knew very well that the manager would spot me immediately. He noticed me indeed and, grabbing my arm, asked angrily: "Hullo, hullo, have you got a ticket? If not, out with you!" My heart died within me, I began to stammer that I had no ticket, that I did not want to enter as a spectator anyway, but here, look at my violin, I want to... and I desperately showed him my violin, which I was carrying under my arm. He bent down close to my face and waited angrily till I had finished stammering that I had no ticket but had composed a song, all by myself, on my violin, and if he would but let me in, I should play it to the audience. At this he laughed so loud that I could

* A short story, from *A lélek arca* ("The Countenance of the Soul"), the collected short stories of Frigyes Karinthy.

see right down his throat, as into a deep, deep tunnel, and then he said roughly: "Young fellow, you are off your beam, your head is surely full of steam." I found this a very witty piece of poetry and saw that the manager was flattered by my involuntary acknowledgement. He gave me a pat on the back and told me to wait a moment, something could be done about it perhaps, anyway we would talk it over.

Later on he actually came into the dark gangway where I was standing all a-tremble, and said with a patronizing air, that fiddling was just gobbledegook. I understood immediately that he had not much confidence in my prowess. I protested vehemently, whereupon he became serious and told me, well, all right, we might as well have a try, but first he had to speak to the superior military authorities where I could get a stamp as an imperial and royal hoity-toity. Till this was arranged, he would like to show me the whole circus from behind the scenes—the actors, the animals, everything—so that I should have an idea what it was all about and what the audience wanted.

My heart beat with joy and happiness at the thought that I was in on the show at last; nevertheless, I was scared too. Tightly pressing the violin under my arm I endeavoured not to forget the melody. The manager led me past many many curtains on which all kinds of pictures were painted. High above, men in red garments were working. I expected to see actors and lady riders now, but no! a broad, high staircase came next. The manager scampered up the stairs so quickly that I could hardly follow him. Then we passed through rooms hung with velvet drapery. By mistake I opened a door, through which poured a deafening din, and I saw a swarm of human heads inside. The manager shouted at me to close the door immediately. That was the audience, he said, waiting for the performance, and it ought not to see what was going on here.

Then he opened a small iron door. An enormous, semicircular hall spread out deep below us. In the middle of this magnificent hall with its fountains and palms, a good-looking man with taut lips and wild eyes was in the act of strangling a woman. Her throat gave forth only heavy, rattling sounds. It was horrible to behold. I began to scream and curse, and demanded that the woman be freed from the man's grip. But the manager held me back. "You fool," he said, "don't you see, those are my actors, it's only a play; besides, they are not human beings at all, they are only wax-dolls, like in a wax-cabinet." I looked more closely and saw that the woman's face was quite unnatural and that her eyes were of glass.

I was ashamed and began to speak of something else, but my heart was still throbbing wildly. Now the manager led me into a big, untidy room,

where gaudily dressed boys and girls with made-up faces were sitting on benches like in a school-room. This was the school for clowns. I too had to sit down on a bench, and the manager called one pupil after the other to the teacher's desk. One of them came up walking on his hands and intermittently striking the floor with his head. He had to repeat this act. Then the manager called a tall man who drew out a knife and ripped open his own breast. Lungs and blood and guts streamed out of the wound, and the man collapsed with a loud groan. The manager nodded approval.

"That's good," he said, "they'll like that."

The suicide went back to his place, took needle and yarn from his bench and sewed up his chest, hissing and grimacing all the while. Now I saw that his chest was stitched together in ever so many places.

He was followed by others who distinguished themselves in a variety of ways. There were ventriloquists who imitated human and animal voices with such admirable accuracy that I could hardly believe my ears. One of them impersonated a child so perfectly that tears rushed into my eyes when his voice became that of a dying child; but looking into his face I saw with amazement that his eyes and mouth remained motionless. Another one created the illusion of a crying and scolding woman. He was succeeded by other imitators of women's voices; lewd, hoarse laughter struck my ears; and I saw threatening eyes glowering in the darkness.

Then the manager glanced into a book and called me by my name. I rose from my bench, his eyes measured me from head to foot, and he shot this question at me:

"Well, what can you do?"

I pointed to my violin and again stammered something about the melody I had composed. A burst of laughter rang through the room, and the manager furiously banged his desk.

"Do you still want to annoy me with that damned violin of yours?" he asked. "What rubbish!"

I wanted to tell him that the melody I had composed was quite exceptional and that I should like his permission to play it. However, he hailed one of the boys and ordered him to show me the musical instruments.

I was taken to another room. Enormous engines and tools stood there, each representing a musical instrument. Gigantic trumpets emitted a deafening thunder when the bellows to which they were attached were compressed. Triangles as large as a room were sounded by means of steam hammers. On top of an enormous kettle drum trained elephants moved in a circle, beating the drum with their feet. There was also a prodigious organ driven by an electric machine which simultaneously operated thirty

pianos and a thousand steel-whistles, ranging in size to the bulk of a factory chimney. The conductor was standing on a high bridge; as he threw out his arms, a single chord blared forth, producing such a blast of wind that I thought I would be swept away. Before each musician there was a keyboard like that of a type-setting machine. They all were wearing spectacles and kept peering at the score.

Giddy and my ears roaring I now found myself in another room where the manager already was waiting for me. I told him I had seen the musical instruments but did not know any of them and was unable to play them. He shrugged his shoulders and said he regretted very much, but in this case I was a goner. Then we were standing before two doors covered with curtains, which led into the theatre. Through one of them the actors, wearing a thousand masks, were hurrying towards the stage. Each time the curtain flapped, the twinkling of varicoloured lights could be seen. I wanted to go in, but the manager told me that as I did not know anything, it would perhaps be better if I visited the mortuary first.

We entered the other door. A dark gangway led down to the cellar. Flickering gaslight was hissing far away, in the dense and foggy shadow; niches opened on both sides. Grimy-faced servants in white aprons were moving in and out. I was seized with fear and did not dare to look in. At the end of the gangway the manager stopped and talked to somebody. I looked around surreptitiously: all along the wall long tin tables were lurking, on which naked corpses were lying in rows; old people, children —I even caught sight of preserved parts of long-deceased bodies. A suffocating, heavy smell of formalin streamed out of the depth. I espied yet another completely dark gangway leading downwards. The manager was speaking about me; he seemed to be recommending me to the doctor with a view to my staying there. The doctor was looking in the direction of the dark gangway.

At this, I implored them not to compel me to stay there; I told them I would rather—if there were no other choice—learn something which would enable me to appear on the stage. They wagged their heads, and the doctor remarked that only acrobatics would do as the audience was already impatient.

Now they took me high up, into a kind of attic. Through little vent-holes I could see the town way below. Long, narrow ladders were leaning against the walls. Ropes, bars and nets lay strewn about, and youthful acrobats, in pink tights, were practising on the ladders. A ladder was placed before me, and I was told to climb up. As I reached the top, the ladder was swung out over the street —I held on tight and looking down could see the whole town with people running about the streets like ants. Then, screaming faintly, I lost consciousness.

But there I was again, and for many a week and month I continued to learn and practise. Up and down the ladder I climbed, and when this went fairly well and I was able to stand on the very top, they reached up a chair which I carefully balanced on the highest rung and then climbed onto myself. Later on, we did the same with two and even three chairs. What seemed like an age went by in this manner.

And then, at long last, I stood on the stage—but my face had become thin and wrinkled and caked with rouge, like those I had seen at the beginning. It was as though I had been with the circus for many, many years, and I knew every nook and corner in it. I was wearing pink tights, and I prowled about in the semi-darkness of the side-curtains in a state of great fatigue. Perspiring servants were running about with carpets. I heard a continuous wearysome humming, but I was too tired to want to know what it was. Suddenly a sickeningly bright light broke in upon me—and before my eyes the velvet curtains parted. Beyond, a sea of hands came into view. There was a brief clapping, followed by an expectant, whispering silence.

There I stood, all alone, on the carpet in the broad, white light of the stage. I ran to the centre with noiseless steps, the cone of the searchlight following me everywhere. With snake-like movements I bowed repeatedly towards the boxes, on either side. Then I got the ladder and quickly, without making a sound, and so easily that I did not even feel my body, I climbed to a height of four storeys. Up there I cautiously crawled still higher up a single thin pole, swaying a bit until I got my equilibrium. Next, a table with iron feet, placed on the end of a pole, was reached up to me. I grabbed the table and supported two of its legs on the top rung of the ladder. Then climbing upon the table, I stood up straight, carefully keeping my balance. Now three chairs were set one above the other, and I could hear a contented murmur from below as I climbed up the structure. The legs of the last chair pointed upward, they quietly swayed to and fro, as with bated breath I set an enormous cube point downward on the end of one of the legs. The whole construction was lightly throbbing under me as if the beating of my pulse were running right down to the lowest rung of the ladder. Then slowly I crawled up it. I reached the pinnacle and relaxed. Hot drops of sweat slid slowly down my face. All my muscles were taut as a bowstring and trembling. I waited till the structure stopped swaying, then, in a deadly silence, I straightened out, opened my garment, and drew out the violin... With a tremulous hand I laid the bow across the strings... now, groping with my foot, I cautiously let go of the pole... bent forward... balanced for a few moments... and, making use of the silence

of terror, which tore open the mouths and gripped the hearts in the depths below me, slowly and quivering I began to play the melody, which long, long ago had resounded and sobbed in my heart.

BARABBAS*

And at sunset on the third day, He stepped out of the narrow opening of the vault, and started quietly down the road. On either side of the road were gutted ruins from which smoke was rising. Sprawled on the bottom of the dry ditch He found the first of those who outside the house of Pilate had shouted the name of Barabbas: with blackened tongue, the man was howling at the ruddy clouds.

He stopped in front of the man, and softly said:

"I am here."

And the man looked up at Him, and broke into sobs.

"Rabbi! Rabbi!" he cried, weeping.

And gently the Master went on to say:

"Cry not. Arise and come with me. For I will now go back to Jerusalem, and go to the house of Pilate, and I will ask a new law upon myself and upon you who chose Barabbas and unto whom Barabbas hath done these things."

And the wretch rose to his feet, and he clutched at His garment.

"Master!" he cried, choking with tears. "O Master, I am coming. Tell me how I shall save myself! Tell me what I am to do! Tell me what I am to say!"

"Say thou nothing," He said gently, "but what thou shouldst have said three days ago when Pilate came out upon his porch and asked you, 'Which of the twain will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, the murderer, or the Nazarene?'"

"O, fool that I am!" cried the wretch, beating his head with his fists. "O what a fool I was to cry Barabbas! Barabbas, who hath reduced me to such plight!"

"It is well," the Master continued kindly. "Come thou with me to the house of Pilate; and mind thou nothing and heed none but me, and when I make a sign, cry out whole-heartedly and with all thy breath, 'The Nazarene!' as if thou criedst 'My life.'"

So the man followed Him.

And on their way they found another unhappy creature, from whom Barabbas had taken away his house, his wife and his child, and whose eyes he had caused to be put out.

* A sketch from Vol. V, of Karinthy's collected works.

And gently He touched the man's brow with His hand, and said:

"I am he. Come with me to Jerusalem, and when I shall touch thee with my hand, cry thou 'The Nazarene!' as if thou criedst 'Give me my house! my child! my sight!'"

Now the man burst into tears, and followed Him.

And they found yet another man, and this man had his hands and feet tied with a rope which was slung around his neck. This man Barabbas had thrust, face downward, into a putrid swamp, among lice and reptiles.

And He went up to him, and undid his bonds, and said unto him:

"I know thee. Thou wast a poet, and thou wouldst proclaim the rapturous soaring of the spirit. Come with me, and when I make a sign, cry out, saying, 'The Nazarene!' as if thou criedst, 'Let there be freedom of the Spirit and of Thought!'"

Now the man kissed His sandals, and did but plead with his eyes, for his mouth was yet filled with mud.

And they proceeded on their way, and more and more that were maimed and crippled and halt, as well as miserable lepers, joined them as they went—people whom Barabbas had ruined. And each of them, severally, beat his breast and wept, and beseeched Him to make a sign for them when they were to cry 'The Nazarene!' as if they cried 'Let there be peace! Peace upon earth!'

And at nightfall they came to Jerusalem, and came to the house of Pilate.

Pilate was seated on his porch, and was supping in the company of Barabbas, the murderer.

There they sat, fat men with shining faces, drinking heavy wines and eating dainty meat from golden dishes; their scarlet robes shone far and wide.

And the Nazarene, at the head of the multitude which followed Him, went up to the porch, and, raising His transfixed hands, gently began to speak, saying:

"The feast of the passover is not yet ended, O Pilate. It is the custom and the law that at the passover thou release unto the people a prisoner whom they will. The people wanted Barabbas, and I was crucified. Yet I have had to rise from the dead, for I saw that the people knew not what they were doing. Now this multitude behind me have known Barabbas, and they now want a new law. Therefore shouldst thou ask them anew, as is written in our books of law."

And Pilate reflected, then shrugged his shoulder, and he went to the edge of the porch, marveling as he saw the multitude, and spake:

"Whom, then, will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or the Nazarene?"

And now He made a sign.

And then there arose an uproar, and the cry went forth from the multitude like thunder.

And the multitude shouted, "Barabbas!"

And they looked one on another in alarm, for they had severally shouted "The Nazarene!"

And the Master became pale and, turning, looked upon the multitude.

And he did recognize of each and every one his countenance; but, in the twilight of the eve, those many faces merged in a single Visage, one enormous Head, which was grinning stupidly and malignantly and with impudence at His face. Its blood-shot eyes were blinking, and evil-smelling saliva was running from its mouth; and the grating roar "Barabbas!" which issued from its throat sounded as if it were a rattle saying "Death!" "Death!"

And Pilate cast down his eyes in embarrassment, and said unto Him, "Thou seest..."

And He nodded His head, and quietly went up the stairs, and stretched out His hands toward the executioner, that he might bind them.

I AM FOND OF ANIMALS*

The little rabbit caught my fancy as soon as they put it down in the kitchen: its sweet, silly little head, its frightened look and smooth, soft hair appealed to me. I felt that peculiar tender and protective love so well known to young lovers who have had to do with kittenish little women. I don't want anything from you, you frightened little white rabbit. All I want is to caress your white fur—to stroke it downwards, tenderly, so it will please you. I'd like to take you in my lap and stroke your head to reassure you and make you feel at ease and safe, so you will understand that you have no cause for being frightened, nothing to be scared of, for I am here, taking care of you, protecting you.

This is what I felt, warmly and altogether unselfishly. I melted in this protective, selfless and devoted affection, and reached out for the little white rabbit, meaning to stroke it. Yet the little rabbit—frightened as the wee beast was—flattened itself against the floor in terror, then darted out from under my hand, and slipped under the kitchen-cabinet.

'Come, come, you little fool,' I said to it, wagging my head. 'What a sweet, silly, frightened little rabbit you are! So you believe I am out to hurt you, to catch you, to seize you greedily and slay and eat you, because I

* A humorous sketch from *Az egész város beszéli* (The Whole Town is Talking About...)

am stronger than you? But can't you understand that I'm not going to do anything of the sort? Of course, I'm stronger than you and could do all these things to you. But don't you see, that's just what I don't want to do to you. On the contrary, I mean to be kind and tender to you. I want to fondle you, I want to forget myself, forget about my rights, my desires and pleasures for your sake, want to stroke your back, so as to soothe your thumping little heart and make you feel at ease. I want to caress the delicate, charming, sensitive, timid little being that is you.'

I was thinking these thoughts, moved to the depths of my soul, and started nudging the little rabbit with a poker, trying to make it come out from under the kitchen-cabinet, so that I might stroke it. At first the little beast would shrink back to avoid the poker, its nostrils quivering in nervous alarm; suddenly, it made a jump and, scuttling across the kitchen floor, hid in a corner.

I followed it and crouched down beside it warily.'What a pity,' I said. 'So that's the sort of silly-billy you are. Why, bless my soul, you're shaking more violently and look more scared than you did just now! It's not surprising, of course, considering your biassed and narrow intellect, which suggests to you that the doggedness I have been following you with can only lie in the greed of the ferocious beast of prey, and which is incapable of comprehending the loftier moral sense and altruism of one who is stronger than yourself. Well, now I really *must* lay hold of you and stroke your back! I couldn't abandon you right now—not with you entertaining such notions about me, with this image of myself as a blood-sucking tiger impressed on your mind. I have *got* to make you realize how utterly wrong you've been to think that my motive in trying to seize you is to bite through your throat, and not, as it really is, only to fondle you unselfishly, to make life more pleasant for you, expecting neither gratitude nor compensation for doing so.'

Cautiously I stretched my hand out and was already touching its neck with my fingers, when with a desperate jump it wrenched itself free, emitted a choking whine, and, with sprawling legs, panting, and frightened to death, disappeared under the stove.

I caught my breath and felt a rush of blood to my head. Here I was faced with what seemed to be unparalleled stupidity. What was I to do? Give up? But if I did so it would believe it had been right in supposing that I had intended to eat it or slay it, and that, having grown tired, I had abandoned my intention for the time being.

I lay down on my stomach before the stove and peeped under it. There it was, cowering, hunched up, with unspeakable terror gleaming in its dark

eyes as its glance met mine. Now I got annoyed in earnest. 'You ass,' I said, exasperated. 'Can't you believe in anything that's beautiful and sweet? Can't you believe in selflessness, in tenderness? Can't you believe in charity that expects no gratitude? How shall I bring it home to you, you unhappy creature, that the way you look at things is absolutely despicable and mean? Of course, your foolish and wicked little head is teeming with base and brutal and immoral notions about biting and beating, about the malevolence with which the strong destroy the weak. Oh you miserable little brute! Now, will you believe me that there *is* such a thing as harmony, heart-felt, lachrymose emotion, which at the sight of weakness, poverty and helplessness overpowers the soul? I am going to prove to you that there *is* such a thing, if only because of your confounded pig-headedness!'

This time I made a sudden and angry snatch at it, straining every muscle and turning purple, my tongue hanging out. I stumbled, fell, and followed it on all fours under the table and behind the tub. I banged my head against the door-post, tore my jacket, and gnashed my teeth. Once I managed to grab the creature's ears, but it tore itself from my grip, panting and loudly squeaking, bit my hand, and took refuge in the larder, behind the log pile.

There it is now. And I'll have to scatter the whole pile if I am to find it. But, by Jove, I will. I will, if it's the last thing I do! I'll pull it down, and I'll catch the beast, grab its ears, snatch it up in the air, swing it about, dash it against the wall and smash its skull! The stupid, stubborn, asinine head that will not understand that all I want is to stroke it.

THE GOOD STUDENT IS QUESTIONED*

The Good Student's place is in the front row: there he sits, flanked by a boy on either side—the Good Student Steinmann. His name is something more than a mere word denoting one individual. It's a symbol. This name is known to as many fathers as there are boys in the form. "How come Steinmann can learn it?" thirty-two fathers ask thirty-two sons at home. "You'd better ask Steinmann to explain," the fathers advise, and the sons do go and ask Steinmann. Steinmann knows everything in advance, even before it has been explained. He is known to be a regular contributor to mathematical reviews, and knows mysterious words such as are taught only in the university. There are things which we other fellows know too; but the way Steinmann knows them—why, that's the sure, the only correct way, the Absolute Way of knowing those things.

* This and the following sketch are taken from *Tanár Úr kérem* ("Please, Sir"), a collection of Karinthy's humorous sketches about school-life.

Steinmann is questioned.

This is a moment of extraordinary solemnity. Master has been taking an awfully long time studying his form-register—a deadly suspense vibrates over the entire form. When, at some later date, I read the history of the Reign of Terror in France and came to the passage where those of the prisoners of La Bicêtre who have been sentenced to die are called upon to step forth, this was what I always imagined it to have been like. The gasping for breath in a last, blood-hazed effort of the brains—we have two seconds yet: during this time, with lightning speed, each boy recites in his mind the propositions of the geometrical progression. 'Please, sir,' you say to yourself, 'I—I *have* prepared my lessons.' 'Dear Sir, I beg to inform you that as my son was feeling sick yesterday, he was not in a position to prepare.' One boy bends over his copybook, ostrich-fashion, to avoid being seen. Another stares master fixedly in the eye, trying to mesmerize him. A third, a nervy chap, this one, becomes utterly unstrung and closes his eyes: let the axe fall on his neck. In the rear row, Englmayer goes into full hiding behind Deckmann's back: he's not here at all, thank you, and hasn't heard about anything; let them put his name down among the absent pupils, put him on the list of the dead and let him be forgotten—peace to his ashes; he has no desire to join the battle of public life.

Master turns two pages, maybe he has reached letter K. Altmann, who at the beginning of this term had his family name changed to the Hungarian Katona, now bitterly regrets this rash act. Soon, however, he draws a deep breath: suddenly master stops leafing the pages and shuts his register.

"Steinmann," he calls quite softly and surprisingly.

A deep sigh of relief. An atmosphere of solemnity; a sense of the extraordinary. Steinmann rises quickly—the chap next to him jumps up and stands modestly and politely aside while the Good Student clambers out of the form: like some bodyguard, he is a silent and secondary participant in a momentous event.

Master too is solemn. He sits on his chair sideways and, putting his fingertips together, reflects. The Good Student advances to the blackboard and picks up the chalk. Master reflects. So the Good Student picks up the sponge and starts rapidly wiping the blackboard. The act is charged with immeasurable dignity and self-confidence: it is meant to convey that he has plenty of time, he doesn't have to rack his brains and is not funked; that he's always prepared and that, even while his questioning is impending, he tries to do something useful for society—indeed has the time to think of public tidiness and the peaceful evolution of mankind—and wipes the blackboard clean.

"Let me see," says master, meditatively drawling out the words. "We will find some interesting problem..."

The Good Student coughs; he does so politely and with infinite understanding. Yes, of course, some interesting problem, something to suit the interesting situation. As he now gazes at master, seriously and with warmth, he resembles a lovely countess who has just been proposed to by a count, and who, before replying, looks with profound understanding and sympathy into the count's eyes, well aware that this look enthralls him and that he already senses with tremulous joy that the answer is going to be a favourable one.

"Let us take a cone," says the Count.

"A cone," says Steinmann, the Countess. But even this is said with so much understanding and intelligence as to make it clear that nobody else knows how very real a cone it is that we are taking. I, Steinmann, foremost student of this form, am taking a cone, having been charged by the community as the most qualified person to perform this act. As yet I do not know for what purpose I have taken this cone, but you may rest assured, all of you, that whatever happens to this cone, *I* shall be there to tackle it.

"Or rather," says master abruptly, "let's take a truncated pyramid."

"A truncated pyramid," echoes the Good Student, even more intelligently, if possible, than before. Why, his relations with a truncated pyramid are just as firm and friendly, if condescending, as they are with a cone. What, to him, is a truncated pyramid? Ah, you can't possibly mislead him: he knows very well that a truncated pyramid is just as much a pyramid as any normal pyramid—an ordinary pyramid such as even an Englmayer is capable of visualizing—with the only difference that another pyramid has been cut off from it.

The performance is brief. This is a colloquy conducted in clipped sentences: Master and Good Student understand each other. By and by, they drift into intimate dialogue—the rest of us have long ceased to follow them. It is now a matter between those two—two kindred souls communing with each other before our reverent eyes, in the ethereal atmosphere of differential equations. In the middle of a sentence, it strikes master that they ought not to be conversing at all, that this is supposed to be a test, a judging of the pupil's progress. The Good Student doesn't even have to finish the sentence. Why finish it? Has there remained a scintilla of doubt as to his ability to finish it?

Modestly and demurely, the Good Student sits down in his form. The next moment, he listens with keen interest to the deplorable stuttering of the next chap to be questioned. A particular word spoken by the latter sends a sarcastic and discreet smile flitting across his face, and furtively he

tries to catch master's eye, in an attempt to exchange glances with him once more. This sarcastic smile is designed to indicate to master that he is fully aware of the blighter's talking perfect rot, and that he knows very well what he ought to have said.

THE BAD STUDENT IS QUESTIONED

No, he couldn't possibly guess that it was coming to-day. Ah well, he did have it coming to him, of course, he did. What's more, he even dreamed something like it last night—but in his dream he was questioned on Hungarian. True, it seemed as though Mr. Fröhlich was in charge of Hungarian too. In his dream he dispatched the whole matter promptly—he answered questions about parallel lines and was awarded a One Minus.

When his name is called, he does not believe his ears. He looks about him: some miracle may yet come to pass; maybe it was mere hallucination, a nightmare, that he heard *his* name called, and presently he will wake up from this dream. He now scoops up a lot of copybooks from his desk and, while walking down the short lane between the rows of forms, is turning over in his head: "Ayplusbeebyayminusbee equals aysquareminusbeesquare." He's going to be questioned on that. He feels sure that's what he's going to be questioned on. "If he asks any other question, I'll change schools and pass a supplementary exam and then take up a military career."

Meanwhile he stumbles and drops his copybooks. While he is busy picking them up from the floor, the customary laughter—this time unbanned, for the Bad Student is beyond the social pale and may therefore be sneered at freely—peals forth behind his back.

Master sits down and lays his notebook on the desk. He looks at the boy. Convulsively, the Bad Student keeps repeating in his mind "Ayplusbee. . ." He picks up the chalk. Master eyes him.

"Have you prepared anything?" he asks him.

"Yes, sir, I have."

Oh yes. Why, of course he has. Even the convict who's been sentenced to death prepares himself for what is to come: he receives the extreme unction and has his hair shorn off.

"If so, please write."

The Bad Student turns to face the blackboard.

"Beesquareminusplusminussecondrootbeeminusfourayceebytwoay."

Submissively the Bad Student begins to write, echoing the figures. He keeps writing, and sees the proposition just as he saw it at home when he

fell asleep over it without having gained the faintest idea of what the whole business was supposed to mean. Yes, he has some vague idea that this is some quadratic equation. But as to what it'll all work out at... Well...

He writes at a leisurely pace, a fine calligraphic hand. He draws the stem of the number 4 thicker. He carefully wipes a bit off the fraction-line—to this end, he makes a special trip to the window to get the sponge. You gain some time, doing so. The bell may ring in the meantime. Or something may happen. His performance on the platform isn't going to be a protracted affair, anyway. Now he'll just chalk up this one thing more, and then lay on the sign of equality, taking his time. Yes, so far he's been doing it like other, better beings; like any good student. Now he still adds "a^2." In the military school (the thought flashes across his mind) you have to get up awfully early in the morning. But then, they make you a lieutenant in the end. You may get posted to Fiume.

All this while he has been writing in a leisurely manner, and he's not through with it yet. An outsider who might happen to be watching the scene might be led to suppose that this is a good student proving his mettle at the blackboard. For one who is in the know, however, to see a fellow taking such infinite care in delineating the tail-piece of the figure 2 is significant enough. Deadly silence reigns. Master is sitting stock still. Now you simply have to say something.

"The equation of the second degree..." the Bad Student begins intelligently, narrowing his eyes and watching the blackboard intently.

"The equation of the second degree..." he repeats, in the manner of one who repeats his words not because he doesn't know what he's going to say but rather because from the vast storehouse of things he has to say he wishes to select and weigh that which is most correct.

Master, however—oh, he is only too well alive to the meaning of it all.

"Call that prepared?" he snaps harshly and dryly.

"Please, sir, I *have* prepared my lesson."

Now *that* he did get out with lightning speed, in a voice that was trembling with murderous defiance, with desperate rebellion.

Master (with sweeping gesture): "Well, let's have it, then."

The Bad Student draws a deep breath.

"The equation of the second degree is derived from that of the first degree by multiplying the equation as a whole..."

Now he's talking. He is saying something. He was expecting to be interrupted in the middle of his second sentence—and steals a glance at master. The latter, however, stares, with a set face, neither approving nor refuting him. He does not speak. Yet the Bad Student knows very well that what he is

saying cannot possibly be correct. Why on earth doesn't master say something then? This is terrible. His voice begins to falter. Suddenly, he perceives master picking up his notebook. At this he turns pale and rattles away at a dizzying clip:

"The equation of the second degree is derived from that of the first by... Please, sir, I *have* prepared my lesson."

"Ernő Polgár," master announces in a loud voice.

What's that?

Is another chap already being called upon? Is he himself finished and done for? What's this? Is it just a dream?

"The equation of the second degree..." he begins anew, menacingly.

Ernő Polgár briskly climbs the platform and has already picked up the other piece of chalk at the other end of the board.

"The equation... Please, sir, I *have* prepared my lesson."

He receives no reply. He now stands there, alone in the midst of the crowd as on an island. He doesn't go back to his place yet, for no one has told him yet to get back to his place. He feels hollow and disreputable, a social outcast. He hasn't been told, no, not a word. His questioning hasn't ended yet. Should he now walk back all the way between the rows of forms? No, he prefers to hang on here, looking silly, his faltering hands messing about with the wreckage of the unfinished equation like an aviator who has crash-landed, over the cracked cylinders of his engine. Meanwhile the other boy has begun to speak. He is talking about some parallel lines. That too sounds so odd, so strange... like everything they have been studying here for years... studying cheerfully and buoyantly and boisterously... and of which he has never recited anything, having coasted along on the few detached sentences he has managed to pick up.

And so he stands and stands, hoping against hope and politely listening to what the other boy is saying. Now and then he nods approval so as to indicate, in this way at least, that he has prepared his lesson, that he 'knows his stuff.' At times, he even timidly chimes in, indulging in the self-deception that the question has been addressed to *him*, but only in a low voice so he won't be sent back to his place. Now he discreetly stops, looks and listens. He leans forward. He takes part in the show, passes on the chalk, and in general dances attendance upon the other boy. He even prompts the fellow, loudly, with the design not of helping but of showing master that he prompts and therefore knows his lessons. In a word, he refuses to say die.

Suddenly, his strength ebbs away. He stops short and once again thinks of the military school. Like distant words the noises around him reverberate

in his gloomy mind... the crackling of chalk... faces become blurred, and, for a moment, there looms up before him a clear vision of the Infinite, of which the other chap has just declared that it is the place where parallels meet. He sees the Infinite... a big bluish thing... a small house on one side bearing the inscription, at the top, "Entrance to the Fourth Infinite." Inside the building there are clothes-stands and on these the Parallel Lines hang up their hats, after which they enter the room, sit down in their forms and cheerfully greet one another. The Parallel Lines, yes. *They* meet in the Form of the Infinite, of Understanding and Kindness and Brotherly Love—the form he will never make. That "upper form" which, because of "unsatisfactory progress," he will never move up into.

MR. SELFSAME*

or Psychophysics of the Friction
between the Upper Strata of Society
and the Mass Psyche

(Being an exhaustive study of the causes of social struggles, in two volumes)

Volume One

Mr. SELFSAME *(clutching the handles of the door of a tramcar, his feet planted behind the sign on which the legend 'Full up' informs the public that not more than another twenty-five persons may now board the tram, presses his forehead against the pile of crushed corpses before the battle positions on the platform.)* What d'you mean, there's no more room? There certainly is—if you'll just crush up a little! It's an outrage not to let a chap to get in. Why, I've just as much right to get in as you people who are inside already! Awfully sorry I've trodden on your hand, sir, there's a war on, you know. Now if there's no other expedient, we shall have to use force to assert our rights! If the management sit back with folded hands while some can get in and others can't—well, then it's we who'll set things right. D'you think I'm not in a hurry same as you are? What d'you mean, you boarded the car at the last stop? A fat lot I care! You've been riding long enough! Get out! Jabber as much as you like—the issue isn't who's been standing there longer and who hasn't thanks to God knows what corrupt favouritism, but rather who is clever enough and tough enough to be standing there! Get out of my way!

* From a collection of Karinthy's humorous sketches, entitled *Hökön színház* ("Farcical Theatre").

Down with the car-driver! Down with fat-guts! Up the revolution! Cha-a arge— —! *(In a sweeping charge, he pushes his way onto the platform. The car moves off.)*

VOLUME TWO

MR. SELFSAME *(at next stop, coming forward to edge of platform, harangues the crowd that is surging up the steps.)* Now, now, gentlemen! Please! For heaven's sake, don't you see there's no more room in here? Why, this platform's on the point of breaking down! So stop pushing and jostling like so many dumb sheep! Where's your human dignity, gentlemen! After all, we are human beings! Why, even brute beasts know better than to board a tram that's full up! For goodness' sake, gentlemen, let's maintain law and order or we face the annihilation of all that wise government has created for the benefit of the Hungary of to-morrow and for constitutional development within the bounds of law! Patience, gentlemen, patience! Wait for the next tram. Patience exercised with competence and system is sure to bear fruit in good time, is sure to bring us a better future—always, of course within legal channels. Think of the civilized West, gentlemen. Look at the noble example of Germany, at the National Parliament. In the name of the body politic I call upon each of you, gentlemen, peaceably to disengage his solar plexus from the other's and to wait for the next tram! Long live our conductor! Long live our beloved driver, who has shown such commendable wisdom in guiding our car in these days of hardship! Long live the Government!

EMILE ZOLA: OIL*

A Novel

I

Gervaise came home by way of Rue de Puante, at a quarter to six. She had spent the afternoon at the cattle market—a fact proclaimed by the penetrating smell of blood that lingered about the hem of her skirt; at one of her elbows, a bit of reddish-brown offal, clinging to a hair half a centimetre long, was dangling rhythmically.

* From *Így írtok ti* ("The Way You Write"), a volume of literary pastiches.

Her head thrust forward, Gervaise now entered the public lavatory and arranged the keys.

Gervaise's mother, a fishwife in Plaussans, was daughter of the swarthy Rougon; she was twelve when, on a misty morning, the deputy clerk of the village turned her over on a sack. Then she came to Mourmelon, and here she became big. Her brother, Claudius, third son of the other Mourmelon family, and the painter of later years, lived at the time in Rue de Foutoche, Antwerp; one night, he was awakened by a sharp pain in the stomach, but after a while it passed. Their aunt, the lame-legged Fouan, also had a delicate stomach; later, she moved back to Plaussans. It was here that Gervaise was born.

She now quietly sat down, adjusted the faucets, pushed the doors shut, then, slowly, swept the premises. Nocturnal Paris was stirring from its slumber, and a russet dawn was spreading from the direction of the Public Circumlocution Office in Rue de Dounan. From the grocer's shop across the street—topped by a signboard, foxed and frayed, and bearing the proprietor's name painted in blue, ornate round characters running from left to right, one character succeeded by the next—came the aroma of blue vitriol. Farther down the street, three metres beyond the stairs, there was a slightly worn cobble-stone, surrounded by several other cobble-stones. At the right-hand corner of this stone, peering back over his shoulder towards the cathedral—visible here through Rue de Bombarde—and twirling his moustache, stood a tuberculosis microbe.

Gervaise was drawing her breath in the calm posture of mature women with a slight cheese odour about them. She wiped the backs of the seats, rubbed the glass door, on which the legend 'Gents' had become faded, then impassively sat down in her customary place.

Her sister, Nana, had come up to Paris a few years before, in the last days of the Empire, and set up as a linen-draper in the Bowels of Paris, Labour, Germinal.

Suddenly, she had to jump to her feet—her privacy was intruded upon by a strong, husky voice. It was Caboche, nicknamed Skinny-Lips because his elbows constantly stank from a piece of leather. He had brought the oil, and entered the lavatory crabwise.

"I've brought the oil, Ma'am," he said, and the whole place resounded with his own voice, which issued from his powerful and somewhat frayed-out throat, through his mouth. "Blast them dirty pigs! They sure have made a mess in here with their belching hind-mugs."

His grandmother had come from Plaussans, at the time of the second Empire, and gone back to where she had come from.

Caboche now set about deodorizing the place in a thorough-going manner. First, he daubed the upper portion of the grey wall with oil, inhaling with relish the heavy odour of oil, which had become his second nature. Whenever he smelt oil, he would go berserk, losing control of his senses: on such occasions the brute in him would be awakened and, beating with his elbows a bony tattoo on the soles of his feet, he would assault underdeveloped young girls in the street. He had a great liking for this kind of work, and he smeared on the oil at an even, measured pace. It was much to his mind, this whole gaudy-coloured edifice, which was frequented by all Paris, and where ordinary workers in overalls queued up with well-dressed civil servants and high-ranking military before the door—please do not close, it shuts by itself. Here, all the vice and pomp of the late Empire paraded before his gaze: this was a place whose attraction proved too powerful for anyone to resist. Here everybody dropped in, here all conventions and tawdry ornaments were thrown off and was revealed in its poignant naturalness the true and unadulterated wretchedness of life, a fine and loathsome wretchedness without deception or betrayal; if not to your liking, your money will be refunded.

Caboche now finished his work. Gervaise was standing on one side, and she felt something warm and soft in the region of her back. On a sudden, they were seized with shuddering. The man hesitated a while, then suddenly grabbed her by the nose: in this fevered moment, he saw in her nothing but flesh. For a few moments they struggled, cheek-bone against cheek bone, flailing each other's heads with outstretched, flapping noses.

"Damn those dirty swine," hissed the oilman, "for making such a mess of the whole place!"

And at the gloomy back of the lavatory, amongst old faucets and oilskins, the oilman turned Gervaise over on the stopper of a carbolic acid jar.

Their male cousin was born at Plaussans, and joined the army in 1823 as a volunteer.

2

Gervaise became big at the end of February. The little drab edifice in Place de la Gloire did a roaring trade, and her family had before them the prospect of modest and enduring well-being during the second period of the Empire. In early March came the mobilization—General Neippery issued posters calling up the young people. Caboche was called up; and in the dimly lit dog's hair shop in Place Square, some very queer shadows could be seen stealing towards the conveniences in the dusk. Old Fouan had developed

a rather odd sort of gait: there was some talk about some loathsome disease he was said to have contracted in the shoulder joints, and the people on the first floor jestingly dubbed him 'Old Rotting Chest.' On such occasions, his husky voice would be heard cursing.

"Why can't them r. . . . . s h. . d their t. . . . . s!" * he would cry. "Why, all the world knows that it was just for f. . . . . 's sake that Liza Hobble-Stumps l. . ed her eyes!"

This, at least, was true, that at dusk, when the mad March winds were pregnant with the stench of rotted violets which they were bringing from the direction of the acacia grove, sold at an exorbitant interest and itself slightly decayed—that, about this time of day, the eyes of the unnaturally bloated Liza would get suspiciously rheumy. Apart from that, life ran its smooth and tranquil course. Oh, by the way, Mother Germinal had had some sort of rash break out on the sole of her foot, and this she was continually scratching away at, for the sake of realism.

One day Gervaise returned to her home earlier than usual and found Caboche at work with the oiler. The man had lately become totally addicted to this practice: he flung himself heart and soul into the job, and, his eyes clouded and damp, was laying those streaks of oil on thick. His legs as well as his clothes had got completely saturated with the heavy odour of the stuff, and he inhaled it with ardent passion. His reason, his mind, it seemed, was on the point of giving way. He shot a drunken look at Gervaise, and touched her on the toe. For a minute, Gervaise felt dazed and weak, and she leaned closer to the oilman. Their knees came into contact—but at this moment, someone hurriedly opened the glass-door, and so no piece of naturalism came to pass between them. Patience, please!

33

With the approach of summer, Gervaise had to go and purchase a stock of sanitary paper; and she was passing through the forest, coming from the direction of Versailles. The air was close and sultry; flowers of all sorts and denominations were breathing secretions of scent; and larks suffering from venereal diseases were whimpering on the branches of the trees. Yet from Paris, the breeze brought an invigorating fragrance of vitriol.

However, in one of the Class A compartments of the house on Place de la Gloire, the chain snapped, and through the crack in the sewage-pipe the

* *The words marked by dots are unprintable. The honoured reader is invited to fill in whatever foul words he may please.* (Author's note)

whole matter flowed into the pan and, mingled with oil, trickled down the side. By the time Gervaise reached her home, the lavatory was chock full of naturalism. This misfortune was the consequence of extravagant, formidable and irresistible oiling, which threatened to bring the family to the brink of catastrophe. This ghastly, dire calamity occurred on July 1st. On the same day, a certain Moltke reached Sedan; a certain Bismarck insisted on reparations; and a certain Europe—you know, the one somewhere near the Atlantic—was on the eve of a world crisis; and other, equally insignificant pieces of romanticism were taking place. Well, as has been said, the whole matter trickled down, mixed with oil; and a piece of the pulpy mass got under Gervaise's nails. That day, at the grocer's, Old Fouan's rat started to retch.

Her mother was born in a gutter, at Plaussans, and she was a cousin to Nana, a Parisian cocotte. She had come to Paris ten years earlier.

"That old X...n!" yelled Caboche, with a drunken belch. "I wish they'd pl.... his z.... for him!"

And he pushed off.

60

Two years after, Gervaise and her family were compelled to move out. Frightful, excessive oiling had absorbed everything—the greasy liquid soaked into the walls and sapped the flooring. This deplorable and fatal passion of a debauched, degenerate and sybaritic generation to use oil for deodorizing naturalism had come home to roost at last, with a vengeance. One day Caboche collapsed in a pit. He vomited, and was oozing oil from his every pore. He was taken to hospital.

110

As Gervaise entered the hospital ward, Caboche was crying—tears of oil. Two nuns were supporting him, surrounded by three corpses that had turned green and mouldy, at the Morgue. The whole place was pervaded by a horrible stench.

It was evening when Gervaise got back into the street. She stepped into a barrel of oil. From everywhere, people smelling of oil came dragging their limbs—the grim poison had soaked into all the walls of Paris and trickled down from the top of the Eiffel Tower. With unsteady, oilshot eyes, she dragged her frame along for a while, then collapsed in a pot-hole.

Now there arose a murmur that swelled irresistibly into a roar, coming

from the boulevards, from the forests and from the crepuscular sky—the squelchy noise of oil being sucked up and absorbed; of oil, which now drew a yellow, decayed and destructive pall over the putrid carcass of Paris. Of oil, which people had wanted to use for deodorizing It, and which now engulfed and drowned everything—Life and Death, Poverty and Romanticism.

And under the Pont-Neuf, quietly and in a pose of disdain as if nothing had happened, a third Realist was in the act of discharging his candidly human duty.

AVDELNING 13*

After being given this unambiguous information, I seem forthwith to have sunk into a deep sleep. I couldn't remember a single thought from the night before, nor had I woken up once during the night—I had slept for ten solid hours, with my sense of time paralysed. Now it was morning. I awoke to a realization of being wheeled down the passage. I felt not a bit heavy with sleep—perhaps I was only too sober and alert, with no trace of emotion or impulse in my mind. This was a real morning mood—free from the spell of midnight mysteries, almost sardonically cool. I was not thinking of anything, just observing.

The surgery they wheeled my stretcher into I had seen from the outside a few days before when carried past it: its door was surmounted by a number 13 so large that, starblind as I was, I had been able to read it. I was now lying on my back, peering up at the ceiling, waiting in an environment of meticulous cleanliness. There was some coming and going around me, and softly spoken words came to my ear. I thought this whispering odd. What on earth were they whispering for? Why did they have to be so tactful? After all, I hadn't been brought in here to be handled with tact.

I saw the waist of a white overall approaching me. I looked to neither side, as I was not anxious to see any faces. I was now wheeled into the room. Two pairs of hands seized me by the feet and shoulders, and transferred me onto a very narrow table that looked like an ironing-board, which my stretcher had been pushed alongside of. Immediately, they turned me over on my stomach, with my head drooping forward over a small oval hollow supposed to facilitate breathing. I tried to nestle my cheeks and nose in, knowing that I was going to spend the next few hours in this position. I tried to accommodate myself to the situation and survey the terrain.

* From *Utazás a koponyám körül* ("A Trip Round my Skull"), being the story of a brain operation the author had undergone.

Peeping sideways to right and left, I could see the corners of the sheet, but hardly anything beyond. I layed my arms along my trunk.

The whispering started again, close above my head, and this time the sounds came softly but more distinctly. Suddenly, the whispering stopped. I felt the tickle of cold steel against the back of my head, then the thing began whirring with insidious speed. I recognized the sound—my hair was being shorn off, they did not stop at the nape as the barber does when trimming one's hair. The electric clippers went right over my skull, cutting long lanes through my hair. After that, they beat up lather on it, and the razor, moving gracefully and swiftly, darted back and forth over an already bald skull.

For some minutes, nothing stirred. I was listening to the footfalls.

Now came a discrete prick on the crown of my head. Must be a shot they were giving me, I thought. Was the professor already there? It seemed likely, for I perceived two white overalls hovering on one side. Something dull was now applied to my skull. Now, it would seem... Whew!

An infernal din. Shrieking, with an accelerating screech, ever faster and ever harsher, shrilling at an ever higher pitch, an enormous steel trepan was sinking into my skull. There flashed across my mind the thought, 'It's the electric trepan!' So this had been the reason for all that tactful whispering! Like the sound-box of a 1,000-h. p. engine that's gunned into speed, my head resounded with shrieking and thunder. These infernal crashes and peals, this cataclysm—how could anyone endure this? It didn't even occur to me to note whether it hurt or not.

The noise stopped abruptly, with a jerk. The trepan had got through, and so its tip was revolving idly. I felt something warm gushing soundlessly on the inside; through the open hole, the blood was flowing inwards.

The stillness lasted for only a minute. A couple of centimetres further on, there came the thump of the trepan, and away it went again. I watched this second boring more coolly, without the shock of surprise. Jerk, stop, blood gushing inwards. Then it was as if they were fumbling with some pipes.

What's that? No more drilling? People were dashing about the room; the two white overalls had disappeared. Suddenly, the table moved off.

I was being wheeled softly along through open doors, down passages. Two lifts, one down, the other up. Where might they be taking me to? I saw some rugs running past. Now an iron door slammed shut, and I found myself in a spacious room—you could feel that by the cool air.

There were some whispers and footfalls. Someone turned me on my side. They fastened my head. Some plates were now pulled down from the ceiling, and brought in front of my face. There was a flash of violet light; after-

wards it went dark, then light again. They turned me on my back; again fastened my head.

Ah, I was in the X-ray room! The ceiling here was full of rigging—rods and curtains and girders—as in a stage-loft. Everything pulled down to you from aloft in a simple, clean and elegant way—no machines, no torture-boxes on the floor. I realized that, once again, I was in soft-spoken, smiling Lysholm's department. They were taking pictures. So that was why they had bored holes into my skull: they had drained the liquid from the ventricles of the brain and filled them up with air—that's what all the fumbling had been about. This meant that I still had to face the trepanning itself.

They kept turning me over and over and adjusting things and taking photographs for a very long time. How long was this to go on, I wondered. At times, I would sight whole figures gliding across my range of vision, but Lysholm was nowhere to be seen. Quarters upon quarters of an hour went by.

At last the table creaked: they started wheeling me back to the operating-room. Passage—lift—passage—lift. We were back again. I heard the door being shut, then was wheeled under the lamp.

Minutes passed. They were probably looking at those photographs. Now someone walked up to me. Once again I was lying on my stomach, with my face over the trough. Someone stuck thick adhesive tapes to both my temples, tightened them, and attached them to the edge of the table. My head had been fixed into motionlessness: it was locked as firmly as in the neck-hole of the guillotine. Staring downwards, I beheld a pail, its bottom as yet empty. A twitch passed over my hands and feet—they were being secured with straps on either side. I tried to move them—they wouldn't budge a jot. I couldn't even wriggle. Well, to keep this up for a longish time was going to be pretty difficult. I was breathing evenly, economizing my air.

They were fumbling about my neck and back. I knew what they were doing, had seen them do it before—the assistant sisters were putting cloth round the area to be operated on. I could hear no gurgling of water, although the time had come for the surgeon to wash his hands. Possibly, he was having a chat with the other doctors. In the ante-room, while I was being examined, he had probably lit a cigarette and cautiously placed the butt on the rim of the ash-tray when they brought me back. They then would put his hands into rubber gloves, tie a damp sterlized face-mask across his mouth and nose, and buckle the little electric lamp onto his forehead.

There was a profound silence. Faint pricks, in a circle. All right, that'll do. My scalp wasn't sensitive anyway. Nor did it hurt; I only felt, quite

distinctly, how the fine blade, tracing out a circle, marked off a large patch on my skull. After that, following the same path, it ran round the whole length of that line of demarcation. At the back of my head—one long slash. It did not hurt, but I felt it. Forceps rustled, one after the other, quite a lot of them. That took a long time. I tried to peep sideways, and managed to reconstruct a piece, the size of a handkerchief, of the lower part of the white overall that was hovering in front of me. It was dotted with black spots like a scarf with polka dots. Of course, arteries do not flow—they squirt blood in fitful jerks.

Things were being gently shoved, turned aside. The cranium must by now stand revealed, the fascia, covering the back of the skull, have sprung back. I heard the thump of the trepan—now for the third time.

"Well, goodbye, Fred," I called out quite loudly, and was not surprised to hear no answer.

The shriek of the saw was now more infernal and more tenacious than ever before. 'What's this? Can't it saw through?' I tried to tauten my neck. I had an idea that I ought to cooperate, pressing my head against the trepan, stiff and at right angles to it, or else my skull would split wide open. I was completely deafened by the din. Now it grew somewhat fainter—the hole, it seemed, was being widened. At last, it stopped.

Stopped at last. High time, too. Don't you think, Professor, that there's been enough of it? Because, you see... I myself have had just about enough.

I was in a brash and taunting, almost cantankerous, mood. I was completely conscious, and filled with a ferocious contempt—for myself.

There was a powerful, violent yank. He had, it seemed, hooked the forceps in the hole. Strain, press, crash, wrench! Something broke with a dull crack. A moment after, the same thing again. Strain, press, crash, wrench!—many, many times in close succession. These continual cracks were like a tin being opened, the crashes that followed them, like laths wrenched one by one out of the side of a nailed-up case. I knew he was breaking off large pieces of bone. He was inching backwards. This last one seemed as though it had been the top vertebra—long it had wobbled, stubbornly refusing to give way, until it was finally wrenched off.

The brutality of the operation thrilled me. I gave myself up to it with savage delight, almost wishing I could collaborate. Panting, I urged the professor on, in my mind: I became infected with the rage of destruction. Go ahead, I goaded him on. Chop away! Crush it even more! Pitch into it! Smash the whole thing up! Now for that vertebra. That's right. Now again. Get a good grip on it! Twist—It's got to go! Ah, it's gone, you see? Go right ahead! Go it, you butchers!

I was panting. A red mist blurred my sight. Had I happened to hold in my hand an axe or a crowbar, I would have gone banging away, hacking and slashing at everybody, myself, anyone, in an ecstasy of insane convulsion.

And then, through my rage, I heard a voice that was soft and attentive and full of humane feeling, speaking quite close to my ear. It was so polite and tender, almost caressing—like a firm and cool hand that, soothingly, brings under control a raving madman; or like a northern knight pacifying, with sword in hand, an African heathen.

"Wie fühlen Sie sich jetzt?"

Was that Olivecrona's voice? It must be, although I did not recognize it—never before had his voice sounded (nor did it sound ever after) so gentle and sweet and encouraging; so full of cautious sympathy and understanding. So *that* was the kind of man he was? Or was it only that his mask muffled the sound?

I felt deeply ashamed, very deeply indeed. At the same moment, I felt a pang in my opened-up head, and was amazed to hear myself, instead of wearing angrily, answer in a polite and bashful tone of voice:

"Danke, Herr Professor. . . es geht gut."

The atmosphere had changed. The cranium having been opened, all became comparatively quiet. But this quiet was not reassuring. Suddenly I felt weak and was at the same time seized with alarm. Good gracious, I thought, I must not lose consciousness! What was it he had said to my wife in connection with some other patient? 'I don't narcoticize Europeans. With a patient that is awake, the risk is twenty-five per cent less.' Yes, we were here working together, he and I, so I'd better be as careful as he was. Here, the thousandth part of a millimetre mattered. The moment I lost consciousness, I lost my life also.

I will therefore listen attentively. I've got to want, got to produce, attention. I've got to generate thoughts, mechanically, intelligently. I've got to stay conscious. Now let me see. I am awake. I know where I am. I'm being operated on. Now he is probably opening up the cerebral membrane, proceeding smoothly, at a steady pace—one slash, one pair of forceps and so forth—like a dressmaker.

Logically and yet unexpectedly, I was now reminded of Cushing, whom I had once seen performing an operation in an amateur film. Yes, that had

been a nice, clean piece of work, I had said on that occasion: 'In the spacious kitchen of a first-class hotel, the white-robed chef is cleaning brains: he is going to fry some brain croquettes.' No, no, this is idiotic. Let's think of something else, quick. Now what is this all about? Yes, that's it, if I can now find out where I may have mislaid my fountain-pen, in my room, in the drawer of my bed-table, then I am conscious. No, no, that's no good, either. Better take that... yes, that ballad, I can also measure the time by it—it takes a quarter of an hour, from beginning to end, and that's something anyway. Presently, I begin: 'In his castle's vaulted hall Childe Pázmán paces up and down...'

"Wie fühlen Sie sich jetzt?"
"Danke, Herr Professor, es geht..."

Phew! that was not my voice anymore! It was a high-pitched, thin voice that answered the question, and it came from far, far away. I'll stop this: I'll answer no more questions. Why keep frightening myself needlessly?

And anyway—anyway, we must have got quite far by now. How long have I been lying here? My feet have gone to sleep and there are pins and needles in my arms. Why don't they loosen those straps ever so slightly, just a shade? Do they think I'd throw my arms about or overturn the table? Nonsense! Don't they see that my limbs... are getting... strangulated?

The pump again. They're pumping something again. Something being tapped. Something making a sucking noise. How long is all this pottering supposed to go on? Oho, gentlemen, I have been politely keeping my peace, as you have seen. Still, how long is this scraping supposed to go on? Perhaps you will be good enough to... er... give *me* a bit of information also. After all, I too am here, if you don't mind my asking, and, I must say, I too have some interest in knowing just how long this soft and sludgy rummaging's supposed to go on.

Yes, I. Me. This fellow here. I and you, gentlemen, have we ever been—shall we ever be as close to each other again? For I know very well that by now you've got through to the brain. It's on the brain you're now fingering something, having once more drained the liquid so as to have access to the brain... My brain. It's probably throbbing.

Hurt? No, it doesn't.

My brain doesn't hurt at all. An instrument has dropped on a glass-plate with a harsh clink—that does hurt, yes. And a fleeting thought, which is neither here nor there, and which I am unable to suppress, that too hurts. It's striving to take hold of my attention, I force it back, and that hurts.

No, my brain does not hurt. Hurt? But isn't this more dreary than if it hurt? I'd rather it did hurt. More bewildering than any pain is the improbability. It is improbable that you are lying on a table, with your skull open and your brain revealed for all the world to see. It is improbable that you should be lying here alive. It's improbable, not right, not proper that you are alive all the same. Not only alive but awake and thinking. It isn't becoming. Not nice. Not natural. Just as it wasn't natural then... at an altitude of five thousand metres... a very heavy object... and not come tumbling down... as it ought to have... No, no, gentlemen... What was it the little duckling said... gently and abashed... as they bent its neck backwards? 'That knife, it doesn't belong here... Somebody'll have to pay for this.'

Don't whisper, gentlemen. I could hear every word you are saying if I didn't feel ashamed of listening. Don't whisper, please. I can hear your whispers grow faster and faster. Faster and faster and more and more vexed. And unashamed. Stop whispering, please. It's not done. I feel ashamed—can't help it. Come on, come on, cover up my naked brain.

That must have been about the time they took the band off Olivecrona's forehead and he slipped a microlamp into the cavity and, by the light of it, lying on the slightly redder right cerebellum, underneath the second lamina of the *pia mater*, beheld and then gently felt the tumor. It was eleven o'clock. The operation had been going on for two hours.

The English version of Frigyes Karinthy's writings is the work of István Farkas, with the exception of The Circus, *which has been translated by György Welsburg.*

ON THE TRAIL OF AN OLD HUNGARIAN MASTER

by

MIKLÓS BOSKOVITS

In the course of the Middle Ages the mining towns of Northern Hungary acquired considerable economic importance and various royal privileges owing to their considerable silver, gold and copper production, notable even by international standards. They maintained direct commercial contacts with Vienna, Brno-Brünn and Cracow, as well as several Italian towns, and evolved a lively cultural life of their own. Their role assumed particular significance and their connections grew increasingly widespread at the close of the 15th century, when some of their mines came into the hands of the Fugger banking house, which derived a considerable part of its bulky income as a result of their modernization.

It was at one of the oldest of these mining towns, at Selmecbánya (now Banská-Stiavnica, Czechoslovakia)—that the altar-piece to be discussed, a remarkable achievement of Hungarian Gothic panel painting was produced. Having been looted by political adversaries in the middle of the 15th century and ravaged by an earthquake soon after, the town could not attain full bloom before the end of the century. Its enriched bourgeoisie then began to build a new church which was dedicated to St Catherine in 1500, though it was only completed in the first years of the 16th century. The tower was finished in 1505, the vaulting of the side-aisles in 1507, and the ornate high altar was probably set up in the same decade.[1]

Owing to lack of accurate data the subsequent fate of the altar is veiled in obscurity. *Canonicae visitationes* dating from the 18th, even the opening

[1] The contemporary *Consignatio der Bullenbriefe* of Selmecbánya, 1500, records a pardon "auf Katherinen Kirche und die neuen Altare, die darinnen erbaut seien." Another record has come down to us granting pardon at the Holy Trinity altar in St Catherine's church. The fact that the pictures to be discussed show the date of 1506 by no means implies their having belonged to the Holy Trinity altar, since their size is more suitable for a high altar.

Cf. J. Breznyik: A selmecbányai ágost. Hitv. Evang. Egyház és Lyceum története [History of the Lutheran Church and Lyceum of Selmecbánya.] vol. I. Selmecbánya, 1883, p. 24, ff.

of the 19th century, make mention of a high altar with sculptural decoration, which was soon demolished without leaving any trace. It was only in the 1930's that the statue of the "Holy Virgin," carved in wood and still preserved in the church, and the statues of St Catherine and St Barbara housed in the local museum, were identified by István Genthon as parts of the decoration of the altar screen from the vanished high altar. Genthon has also attempted to reconstruct the altar with the aid of six panels, four of which were transferred from the church of Hont-Szentantal (now Svety Anton in Czechoslovakia) to the Christian Museum of Esztergom, one was brought from Tópatak (now Studenec in Czechoslovakia) to the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, while one is still to be found at the church of Svety Anton. Since that church was built as late as 1592, and that of Tópatak only in the 18th century, in all probability these panels of equal size and kindred style, dating from the opening of the 16th century, formed part of one polyptych and may have been removed from the neighbouring town of Selmecbánya.

The altar screen of the high altar in St Catherine's church at Selmecbánya may thus be supposed to have contained the triad consisting of the above-mentioned three statues, an assumption that is supported by the size and quality of the statues. As regards the adjoining wings, the data provided by the old *canonicae visitationes* are perplexing in that they allude to sculptural decoration without mentioning any pictures. This peculiar circumstance has lately been elucidated by Miklós Mojzer, who discovered traces of gold painting and the emplacements of wooden pegs on the backsides of some of the Esztergom panels. Two of the pictures—those representing "Christ Carrying the Cross" and the "Crucifixion"—seem to have been adorned with relief work fastened to the guilded ground on the backside with the aid of wooden pegs. In the course of further examination this hypothesis was supported by the fact that blurred contours of the former decoration are sporadically discernible on the backside of the panels. Hence the scenes representing "Christ Carrying the Cross" and the "Crucifixion" may be supposed to have been on the outside of the wings, so that when the poliptych was open only the statues and the reliefs on the wings were visible, but when the altar wings were closed, on the outer sides of the panels scenes representing "Christ on the Mount of Olives" and the "Resurrection" could be seen on the two so-called fixed wings. These may have constituted the lower series of decoration, with the space higher up in the middle presumably occupied by the panels representing the "Visitation" and the "Nativity of Christ", while the sides may have consisted of the lost panels—the "Annunciation" and the "Adoration of the Kings."

These paintings of Selmecbánya have been referred to by Hungarian scholars on many occasions as the finest relics of old Hungarian painting and by German art historians as outstanding masterpieces of German Gothic painting. In any event, they deserve particular attention, not only for their intrinsic worth as master-pieces of a hitherto unknown painter, but also as precursors of the *Donauschule* in the treatment of scenery, and as compositions that render the drama of the passion with a profundity approaching that of Grünewald, while, at the same time, merging into admirable unity the tender lyricism of late Gothic art and the realistic trend at the dawn of the 16th century.

The "Visitation," preserved at Budapest, is undoubtedly the most lyrical painting of the whole series.[2] Unlike other contemporary compositions on the same theme, the master surrounded his figures with a landscape, so that the tiny buildings, lending the background a romantic atmosphere, only served as decorative elements. The two women actually meet in a flower-garden, whose plants, designed with evident zest for narrative and botanical accuracy, fill the foreground with an abundant ornamentation. The background is more animated. The alternation of trees, bushes, and rocky summits draws a capricious line in front of the golden ground, while the boldly winding road, the range of hills, and the riverside scenery lead the eye along an undulating line into the distance. The two female figures fit into the scene with utter naturalness; the rich folds of their ample garments, their flowing kerchiefs and wind-swept hair merely intensify its vividness. Mary's posture, as she reposes after the fatiguing journey, leaning in a characteristic Gothic attitude of inimitable grace on her left foot, as well as Elizabeth's gestures, as she gently leans forward—thus exactly complementing Mary's attitude—conform to the prevailing tone, setting off the placid, serene expression of the two faces and the harmony pervading the soft, noble gesture of the hands.

The Hont-Szentantal picture of the "Nativity of Christ"[3] shows a more modern method of composition. The position of St Joseph, Mary and the Child is determined by a diagonal line drawn from the right upper corner to the left lower one; involuntarily the spectator's glance follows this imaginary line along the columned space drawn with the aid of Renaissance perspective. The other half of the picture is taken up by the scene representing the adoration of the shepherds, where the figures in devout prayer, harking to angelic voices, attract the eye towards the hilly background with its magnificently life-like little scene of a grazing flock. St Joseph's characte-

[2] Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, N° 2151, 139 by 95 cm (25 3/4 by 37 1/2 in.)
[3] Svety Anton (Czechoslovakia) parish church, 123 by 79 cm (48 1/2 by 31 in.)

ristic head, expressing anxious solicitude, his curious contraposto, and Mary's enchantingly humble figure, which seems to float above the fantastic folds of her attire, are the most beautifully solved artistic details of the composition. Strangely enough, the painter did not avail himself of the compositional opportunities of the architectural space created by himself. The Holy Family and the inquisitively peeping animals are concentrated in the foreground. Apparently the painter did not wish to complicate the scene by fusing it with that of the shepherds, presenting a separate action in the middle space, yet he also considered it unsound to isolate them entirely. Thus, unlike in other similar compositions on the same theme, the shepherds are left kneeling uncomfortably on the stone parapet enclosing the architectural setting, a situation that arouses a feeling of insecurity in the spectator.

The Christ Child's figure lying in front may also have caused the painter difficulty, owing to the inevitable view from above, this he sought to avoid by delineating the infant in profile as if seen from a different angle. All these features permit the inference that the master of the pictures under review, although conversant with the compositional principles of Renaissance painters, found the less restrictive methods of Gothic painting instinctively more attractive.

The spatial arrangement of the panel representing "Christ on the Mount of Olives" is also not completely reassuring[4]. The dynamical composition of the group of weary apostles sleeping in the foreground compensates for the incongruous effect of Christ's disproportionately large figure, as well as for the expression of the face, so alien to the master's style—the result of repainting at a later epoch. The recumbent figure of St Peter at the bottom initiates the compositional system, which finds its continuation in the varied attitudes of the apostles St John and St James, slumbering in a sitting posture, and the tense figure of Christ, with arms raised, and terminates in the figure of an angel emerging from the rocky peaks and offering the cup of sorrow. To the closed, approximately triangular composition a complementary episode is added in the left background where the traitor Judas is to be seen stealing in through the gate of the Garden of Gethsemane with grotesquely exaggerated gestures, at the head of the guards and the High Priests. He and his company initiate the story of the Passion, which develops into full tragedy in the panel representing "Christ Carrying the Cross."[5]

The painter lets the spectator approach quite near to the scene, which consists of relatively few figures. The attention is drawn immediately to

[4] Esztergom (Hungary) Christian Museum, N° 55,101, 157 by 79 cm (61 3/4 by 31 in.)
[5] Esztergom (Hungary) Christian Museum, N° 55,102, 142.5 by 88 cm (56 by 34 1/2 in.)

the main point of the composition—the figure of Christ, almost collapsing under the weight of the cross; the eye then travels upwards along the perpendicular line marked by the supporting right arm and along the cross pointing in the same direction. The whole gesture, the impetuously raised arms of the guard standing at the head of the procession promote the progress of the spectator's glance along this line, for, while his feet are seen to step forward, his trunk is turned back. (The hands of the figure holding the cross and treading on Christ form an artistic counterpart to this attitude.) The line of the ladder and the look of the soldier turning back next cause our attention to shift for a moment to the group of Mary and St John, constituting a closed compositional unit; it is then guided back to the figure of Christ by the sad glance of Mary and the serious, observant look of Simon of Cyrenea. Every movement, each emotion reflected by the faces, enhance the tension of the dynamic composition, involving both the immediate sufferer and the group of those contemplating his anguish. Only the right upper corner contains an episode-like, sketchily executed scene—the thieves being dragged to the place of execution—in continuation of the story.

Though by no means less animated, the "Crucifixion"[6] is far simpler in construction. On one side of the Cross situated in the front centre, there are the figures of Mary, St John and a holy woman; on the other stand the pagan captain and a soldier. The painter has omitted all the other customary figures of traditional iconography, confining himself to the most essential. Each of the side groups constitutes a closed unit, but the pained, almost reproachful look of John the evangelist, and the recognition manifested by the face and attitude of the captain dressed in splendid oriental garments, direct attention to the principal figure.

In this picture Christ is not the suffering divine man who has found peace in death, but a shatteringly human corpse. The face frozen into the horrible expression of agony, the mouth stiffened in the last wail of woe, the rigid look of the eyes, with only the whites visible, are reminiscent of scenes known from contemporary picture serials of the *Danse Macabre*. His strained body is taughtly stretched on the cross, in the most literal sense; the fingers stiffen in the convulsion of death, clawing the air in desparation, a gesture that is terrifyingly echoed by the claw-like branches of the bare trees in the background. The passionately undulating folds of the loin cloth flow around the tormented body, their confused flapping repeated in the flag held by the guard on the right. (The oxhead seen on this flag, which is

[6] Esztergom (Hungary) Christian Museum, N° 55,103, 142 by 89 cm (56 by 34 3/4 in.)

found to recur also on a flag in the "Christ on the Mount of Olives," may have been important to the painter as the crest of his client.) In this instance the unity of the composition is not disturbed by any episode, only the averted head of the flag-bearing soldier—whose strikingly characteristic features may conceal the portrait of the donator—points away from the tragedy of this mercilessly realistic delineation of death.

The "Resurrection"[7] is again composed of several units. In front the somewhat disproportionate figure of Christ stands on the pedestal of his sarcophagus and is surrounded by soldiers in attitudes ranging from deep sleep to sudden startled wakefulness, offering an excellent counterpart to the slumbering apostles in the Mount of Olives scene. The figure of the crouching soldier at the right lower edge of the picture is of peculiar interest: the expression of his fear-distorted face, with the gaping mouth, is further emphasized—to the point of grotesque humour—by the still wider opening resulting from the raised vizor of his helmet. This is an example of the painter's remarkable power of characterization. In the left upper part of the picture the "Descent from the Cross" is presented with expressive vigor. With quick strokes of the brush, apparently dictated by his temperament, the master rather outlined than accurately depicted the group of women surrounding the limp form of Christ, using casual patches of colour to evoke an environment suffused with the sombreness of Good-Friday, while the corpses of the thieves are shaken by the wind like helpless puppets. Alluding to further events in the history of the "Resurrection," several women may be seen along the winding path, approaching the lonely grave with their jars of unguent. The master of the series put his mark, M. S. 1506, on the inner side of the pedestal supporting the sarcophagus. This signature, discovered in conjunction with the restoration carried out in 1915, refuted the attribution of the Hontszentantal and Tópatak panels to such well known artists as M. Z.[8] or Jörg Breu the Elder[9] and brought up the still unresolved problem of the artist's true identity.[10]

[7] Esztergom (Hungary) Christian Museum, N° 55,104, 156 by 78 cm (61½ by 30¾ in.)

[8] *Cf.* H. Voss: Der Ursprung des Donaustiles. Leipzig, 1907, pp. 111—114.

[9] *Cf.* E. Buchner: Der ältere Breu als Maler, in: Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Kunst, vol. II. Augsburg, 1928, pp. 316—327.

[10] Of the literature outside Hungary dealing with the art and problems of Master M.S., in addition to the works already mentioned the following are the most important: E. Heidrich: Die altdeutsche Malerei. Jena, 1909, p. 262 and plate 65; B. Leffler: Ungersk. Konst. Stockholm, 1928, p. 13; O. Benesch: Die fürsterzbischöfliche Gemäldegalerie in Gran, in: Belvedere, VIII, 1929, p. 69; J. Hofman: Staré umeni na Slovensku, Praha, 1930, p. 47 and plate 32; S. Genthon: Meister M.S. Ungarische Jahrbücher (Leipzig-Berlin) XII, 1932, pp. 28—39; K. Divald, Old Hungarian Art, London, 1931, p. 155. ff. and plate 145; A. Hekler: Ungarische Kunstgeschichte, Berlin, 1937, pp. 79—80, plates 109—111; E. Horváth: Il rinascimento in Ungheria, in: Annuario (Roma) III, 1939, p. 124. and plate LV; K. Sourek: Die Kunst in der Slovakei, Prag, 1939, p. 56., plates 331—332;

Zoltán Miklóssy has tried to elucidate the question with the aid of documentary evidence.[11] A Selmecbánya record from the year 1507 mentions a painter, named Sebastianus, who had been robbed and killed. Miklóssy's hypothesis, identifying the painter of the above described pictures with Master Sebastian is a pleasing notion, since such a sudden death would explain the absence of any trace of further work by Master M.S.; moreover, the murdered painter having been robbed of money points to the possibility that he may have completed a major commission. It is, however, scarcely credible—and unprecedented in the Middle Ages—that a painter should have added the initial of his profession *(Maler,* or *Meister* or *Magister)* to his monogram. Until the discovery of more reliable data, all notions about the identity of M.S. will therefore have to be based on formal analysis concerned with inquiry into relationships of style.

In the study of the painter's artistic relationships an important finding was reported by Edith Hoffmann, who discovered the model of St John in M.S.'s "Christ on the Mount of Olives" in one of Dürer's engravings.[12] Such borrowing is known to have been a common occurrence in the history of Gothic panel painting. Plagiary in the present sense of the word was unknown in those times; without a second thought artists found it natural to apply in their works a happy idea of composition or a figural motif found good in the work of another.

The increasing popularity of wood-cuts provided painters with opportunities for borrowing from the works of far-away masters not known to them personally. Panel painting of Hungary—and of other countries—shows numerous instances of borrowing being carried to the very verge of accurate copying. With outstanding masters borrowing, however, was usually confined to some typical motifs; instead of taking over the exact composition, they preferred to apply their individual conception in a kindred spirit.

In view of sundry available data revealing the connections between

F. Thieme—U. Becker: Künstlerlexikon XXXVII. Leipzig, 1950, p. 435; D. Radocsay: 450 Jahre Meister M. S., in: Acta Historiae Artium (Budapest) IV, 1957, pp. 203—230 and reproductions 1—17; A. Stange: Deutsche Malerei der Gotik. Österreich... München-Berlin. 1961, 152.

In his comprehensive work; A középkori Magyarország táblaképei [Panel Painting in Medieval Hungary.] Budapest, 1955, pp. 423—424, (with short summaries in German and Russian), D. Radocsay gave a bibliography which may be regarded as complete up to the time of its publication.

[11] Z. Miklóssy: Sebestyén festő [The Painter Sebastianus], in: Magyar Művészet (Budapest) III, 1927, pp. 479—480.

[12] E. Hoffmann: Jegyzetek a régi magyar táblafestészethez [Contributions to Old Hungarian Panel Painting], in: Archeológiai Értesítő (Budapest), L, 1937, 6. — Dürer's woodcut referred to (B. 13) was produced around 1498, elaborating on the left side a female figure taken from Schongauer, which was borrowed also by M.S. (from the engraving designated B. 24) *Cf.* H. Tietze: Der junge Dürer, Augsburg, 1928.

North-Hungarian painting and Nuremberg art,[13] it would seem justified to continue the search for the origin of M.S.'s style in this field, the more so since the engravings of Dürer contain other figures resembling those encountered in the works of our unknown master. For instance, the splendid Mantegnesque figure of the executioner in the Dürer woodcut designated B. 120, representing the martyrdom of St Catherine, was adapted by M.S. to form the figure of the guard dragging along Christ in the Carrying of the Cross, with the difference that instead of a sword he was made to hold a rope in his raised right hand. On the other hand, the basic idea underlying this composition is much nearer to Dürer's wood-cut designated B. 10, representing also the Carrying of the Cross. While employing elements of form or composition reminiscent of Dürer in some of his pictures, it is nevertheless a fact that the painter of the altar of Selmecbánya, in others, *e.g.* in the scene representing Christ on the Mount of Olives, painted exactly the reverse of what may be seen in the great Nuremberg master's wood-cut on the same theme (B.6), thus pointing rather to its prototype than to the finished woodcut. This circumstance suggests the idea that the components of M.S.'s style may in part have been the same as those that affected Dürer in his youth and that investigation should concentrate on what may have been common sources rather than on any direct influence of Dürer.

The first to be considered is Martin Schongauer, whose workshop was visited by Dürer a year after the master's death, in 1492, and of whose works to be seen in the church of Kolmar Dürer made a number of drawings.[14] Schongauer's wood-cuts do indeed contain elements which may have inspired the imagination of M.S. The right-side group in the panel of the "Crucifixion" preserved at Esztergom, for instance, displays a noticeable relationship to Schongauer's woodcut marked B. 22, in which, it is true, the pagan captain turns to face the spectator, yet his garments and the motif of leaning with his left hand—holding a glove—on a pointed sword, as well as the soldier with the averted head, carrying a shield and a lance, denote that the painter must have known this plate. Moreover, it is particularly noteworthy that the panels of the altar of Selmecbánya show a closer relationship to some of the pictures made by Schongauer for the altar of the Dominican church at Kolmar than to his woodcut on the same theme. It may well be, for instance, that the model of the composition

[13] E. Hoffmann: A régi magyarországi táblafestészet nürnbergi kapcsolatai [Correlations of Old Hungarian Panel Painting with Nuremberg], in: A gr. Klebelsberg Kuno Történetkutató Intézet Évkönyvei (Budapest), III, 1933; and D. Radocsay: A középkori Magyarország... [op. cit.], p. 157.

[14] *Cf.* E. Flechsig: Martin Schongauer. Strasbourg 1951, p. 378.

of "Christ on the Mount of Olives" is to be found right there, in the Kolmar panel, where the host emerging at the gate of the Garden of Gethsemane appears in a form almost identical to that used by M.S. Another picture of Schongauer's, furthermore, appears to be the remote prototype that inspired M.S. in composing the "Nativity of Christ."

Thus our master may be supposed to have been familiar with the art of Schongauer not only from his widely known woodcuts—which, however, naturally does not imply the assumption of any direct disciple-master relation between the two. Although Schongauer rarely undertook work outside his home country, there are data to confirm his having carried out commissions in Swabian regions, in the precincts of Ulm. A painter trained in these parts may be surmised to have drawn directly on the art of the great master of Kolmar. In the Ulm circle of Bartholomäus Zeitblom a panel may be found showing, in artistic conception and emotional atmosphere, an affinity to the pictures of Master M.S., as well as a proficiency derived from studying Dürer's arrangement of figures.[15] The place where M.S. obtained his artistic training may, however, have been located elsewhere in Swabia. While the earlier attempt to include the pictures of Budapest and Hont-Szentantal in the life-work of Jörg Breu is untenable, the insistence on the relationship of the two panels to the Augsburg school was undoubtedly correct. Especially in the "Visitation" panel of the altar at Herzogenburg, produced by Breu in 1501, an extraordinarily varied treatment of scenery,[16] reminiscent of M.S.'s rendering of the same theme, and a delicately balanced harmony of landscape and figures may be observed. The affinity exhibited by the two masters in the creation of types is equally noteworthy; it is strikingly apparent in the "Adoration of the Magi" at the museum of Lille, a picture which Genthon declared to be the handwork of M.S. himself.[17]

The artistic language of the master who painted the altar of Selmecbánya may hence be traced to various pictorial dialects,[18] and even if the final solution has not yet been found, the art historians concerned will sooner or later unravel the problem. On the other hand, certain conclusions may be drawn regarding his mysterious personality from the influence of Master

[15] The reference is to picture No 246 at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg which A. Stange attributes to a certain "Meister der Enthauptung des Johannes" (Deutsche Malerei der Gotik, VIII, Schwaben in der Zeit von 1450 bis 1500, München-Berlin, 1957, plates 34 and 70.)

[16] Reproduction in: E. Buchner, op. cit. plate 197.

[17] The picture (180 by 82 cm) (70 3/4 by 32 1/2 ins.) at the Musée de Lille is listed as the work of an unknown German master who worked at the beginning of the 16th century. In line with the majority of researchers, the author of this article does not regard this as the work of M.S.

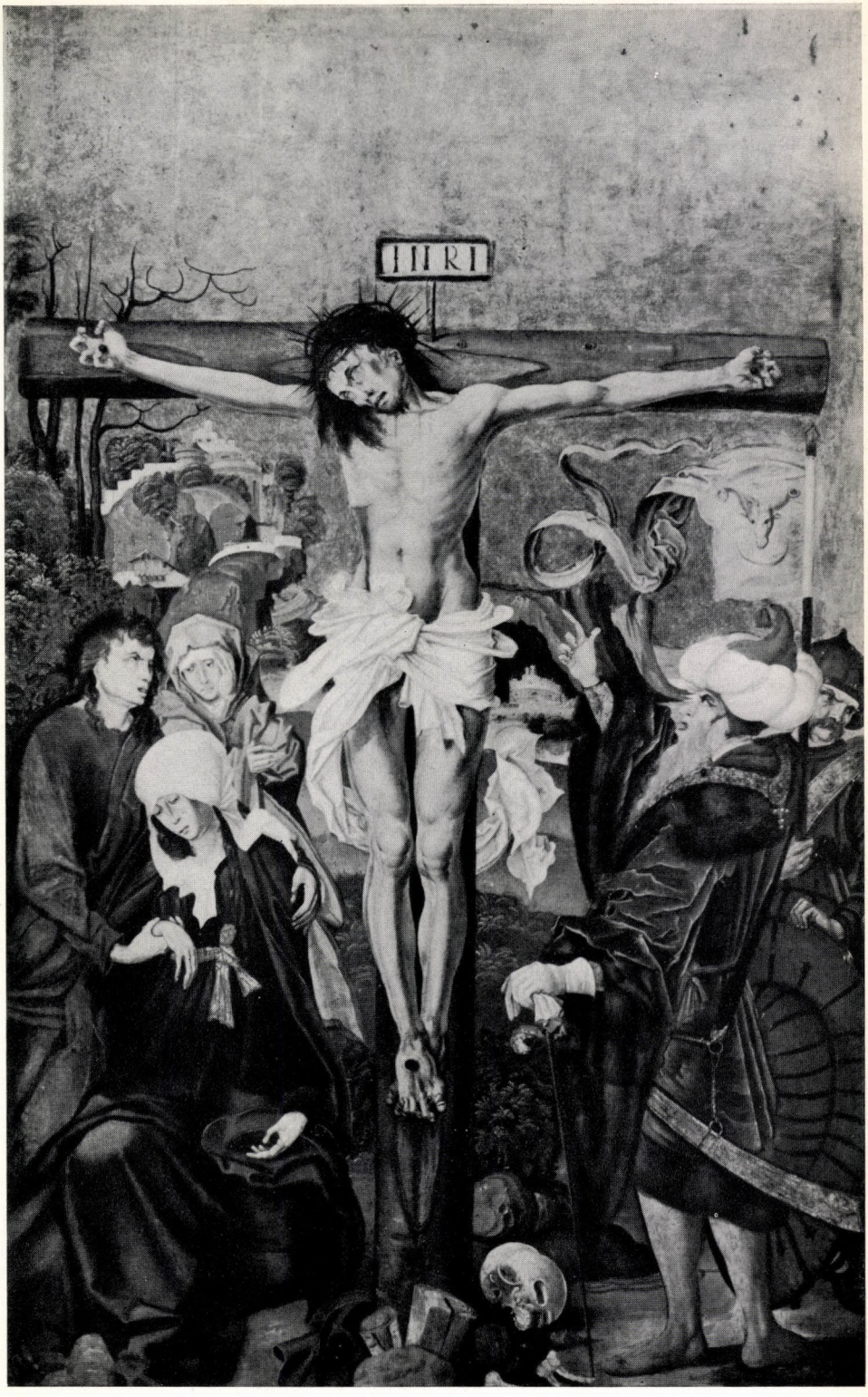
[18] In many respects the pictures produced by the Memmingen workshop of Bernhard Strigel exhibit a remarkable stylistic relationship to the pictures of Selmecbánya.

M.S.: Detail from the Resurrection

M.S.: Detail from the Visitation

M.S.: Visitation

M.S.: Detail from the Crucifixion



M.S.: The Crucifixion

M.S.: Christ on the Mount of Olives

M.S.: The Carrying of the Cross

M.S.: The Resurrection

M.S. on panel painting in Northern Hungary. His influence indeed was astonishingly slight. Slovak and Hungarian students of art history have been able to identify the effects of the master's style in no more than a few panels of modest quality,[19] supporting the assumption that the trend he initiated in Hungarian painting was continued at best only by members of his workshop, while he himself may not have done any further work in the country. As mentioned before, several students have explained this circumstance by the master's supposed early death.[20] Apart from the tragic fate that overtook the painter Sebastian, no additional evidence has been revealed in support of this hypothesis, and it would be preferable to look for an explanation elsewhere.

It has already been mentioned before that only one part—perhaps the smaller part—of the altar in St Catherine's church at Selmecbánya was pictorial work, while the sculptural part, as surmised from the three statues of the tabernacle, was connected by much closer ties with the development of Hungarian art.[21] According to medieval customs, contracts for commission were concluded with the head of a workshop, and not separately with the painter and the sculptor;[22] one is thus tempted to assume that in the present case the workshop was headed by a sculptor, a master who was well known by the works he did for the townships in the vicinity.

A noteworthy stylistic affinity is clearly discernible between the sculptural and pictorial parts of the altar, which presents new problems. It is possible that this affinity is simply due to kindred education of the two masters,[23] a suggestion that seems highly plausible. However, it is not impossible that the leading master who accepted the commission planned the whole altar himself—a common occurence in those days—which would afford a ready explanation of stylistic similarity. The question of what was contributed by assistants in completing the altar constitutes a further complication. The painting of eight rather large-size panels meant much work for the artist, certain parts of the panels were therefore entrusted to assistants —a matter of course in medieval workshops. The qualitative unevenness encountered in M.S.'s pictures also bears witness to contributions by several

[19] *Cf.* V. Wagner: Vývin vytvarného umenia na Slovensku, Bratislava, 1948. p. 46.

[20] *Cf.* D. Radocsay: A középkori Magyarország..., op. cit. p. 156.

[21] *Cf.* D. Radocsay: Adatok a magyarországi táblafestészet történetéhez [Contributions to the History of Hungarian Panel Painting], in: Művészettörténeti Értesítő, Budapest, IV, 1955, p. 49.

[22] *Cf.* E. Flechsig: op. cit. 361.

[23] Concerning the stylistic roots of the Selmecbánya Statues of St. Catherine and St Barbara, *cf.* I. Balogh: L'Origine du style des sculpteurs en bois de la Hongrie médiévale, in: Acta Historiae Artium (Budapest), IV. 1957, p. 234 and G. Barthel: Die Ausstrahlungen der Kunst des Veit Stoss im Osten, München, 1944, pp. 49—50. and 63.

hands. They cannot, of course, be distinguished mechanically.[24] There can be no doubt that all the extant six pictures are the fruits of the same conception, and all contain elements providing proof of work by one and the same artist. There are, however, pictures where in the solution of some parts it is manifest that the executive hand was not that of the painter of the whole series, and that the disciple failed to carry out to the full the original idea.

When the pedestals of the columns in "Christ's Nativity," shortened by linear perspective, assume the peaked shapes of plum-stones instead of being elliptical, and at the feet of the magnificently designed Holy Virgin and St Joseph the body of the Christ Child seems to float uncertainly in space, when, beside the admirably proportioned figure of Christ in the "Crucifixion," the eye is distracted by a particularly clumsy, large-footed Christ in the "Resurrection"; or when, compared to the gracefully streaming kerchief of the "Visitation," a mantle may be observed falling into relatively arbitrary, affected folds in the "Resurrection"—the cooperation of an inadequately trained assistant may be taken for granted. Another example will produce further evidence that the master did not work alone on his panels. Both in the "Carrying of the Cross" and in the "Crucifixion" the artist painted T-shaped, so-called "tau crosses," and, in the background of the former, similar crosses set up in advance for the thieves may be seen on Golgotha. In the background of the "Resurrection," on the contrary, the body of Christ is taken down from a cross of traditional Latin type, while the thieves hang on Y-shaped, so-called thief's crosses. It is almost certain that one and the same master would not have committed such an inconsistency, even in an admittedly insignificant detail.

So far we have concentrated on tracing the external features of Master M.S.'s style. Let a few words be said about certain inner characteristics of his art. As has been often emphasized, the altar-pieces of Selmecbánya, particularly the scenes from the "Passion," are marked by dramatic interpretation, by intuitive re-living of the events and emotions represented, one might say by identification with them.

The imagination of medieval man is known to have been strongly influenced by the performance of mystery plays. In their primitive dramatization, these plays were based on generally known picture types in the field of religious painting; at the same time, they were enriched by colourful elaboration of the details of events and the insertion of episodic incidental

[24] A. Hekler op. cit. pp. 79—80, has attributed the two scenes on the Life of Mary and four pictures of the Passion series to different masters.

scenes to such an extent that they, in turn, exerted an influence on painting[25]. At the time when the Selmecbánya pictures under review came into existence, passion plays had become an old tradition in Hungary, about which —apart from isolated references in earlier centuries—successive data are available beginning with the year 1439.[26] The first record on the performance of religious plays at Selmecbánya itself has come down to us from 1476, but since mystery plays had been presented also much earlier in other mining towns, presumably this was not the first occasion.[27] The parts of the plays that were presented in the market-place of the town *(theatrum urbis* as the inhabitants called it) were played by respectable members of the guilds, and a large number of participants, if not among, the actors then among the audiences, must certainly have included both buyers and makers of altar-pieces. The popularity of mystery plays in the mining towns is evidenced by the early development of popular versions, against the vulgar and profane spirit of which the church saw itself compelled to protest already in 1460. They nevertheless survived, though in a strongly changed form, at small mining villages until the opening decades of the present century.[28]

The locally developed traditions and pictures of the mystery plays may be supposed to have influenced contemporary conceptions of the history of the Passion, and those who ordered pictures may have insisted on the painter's compliance with conceptions that had become traditional.

The connection between painter and client must have been pretty close at the time, particularly in a relatively small town like Selmecbánya, where the donator of the altar could keep an eye on the artist's work and even direct it to a certain extent. If not in style, then in the spirit of representation, M.S. therefore undoubtedly conformed to the traditions observed in the mining towns of Northern Hungary.

What may those mystery plays have been like? Only a few details have become known from indirect references. At the archives of Bártfa (now Bardejov in Czechoslovakia) a revealing *Theaterzettel* has been preserved from the middle of the 15th century, on the basis of which we may conclude that it was prepared for a grand Easter play. The plot of the play apparently

[25] There is an extensive literature on the correlations of medieval drama and painting. Here we wish to draw attention only to the concise summary, specially useful in connection with the present paper, by H. Paulus: Die ikonographischen Besonderheiten in der spätmittelalterlichen Passionsdarstellung Frankens. Würzburg, 1952.

[26] *Cf.* I. Ernyei—G. Karsay (Kurzweil): Deutsche Volksschauspiele aus den oberungarischen Bergstädten, vol. II, Budapest, 1938, p. 490. Data are to be found regarding Hungarian Passion plays dating back to the twelfth century.

[27] *Cf.* J. Ernyei—G. Karsay (Kurzweil): op. cit. p. 116; and J. Ábel: Bühnenwesen zu Bártfa im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert, in: Ungarische Revue (Budapest), IV, 1884, p. 670.

[28] *Cf.* J. Ernyei—G. Karsay (Kurzweil): op. cit. vol. I. pp. 122 and 156, ff. *et passim.*

followed the story of the gospel, which was, however, interrupted by two comic episodes, with the addition of topical references.[29] (For example, those doomed to hell included a representative of every guild in town.) The 54 characters of the play bear witness to the relatively extensive cast. The play began with the Jews maintaining a vain watch over the corpse of Christ, because they cannot hinder his rising from the dead. In this connection the comic scenes resulting from the astonishment and terror of the armed guards can be easily imagined, and M.S.'s picture of the "Resurrection" may be regarded as echoing such a scene. There is evidence in other pictures too of the effect exerted by performances of Passion plays. In the first place, mention should be made of features which do not figure in the text of the gospels, such as the maltreatment through kicking of Christ on Calvary, or some dispute between the soldiers and the group of Christ's relatives, clearly to be seen in the same picture of M. S., and finally, the fact that St John is represented as speaking to his dead master under the cross.

In this connection it is worthy of mention that the sensitive manner of representation, manifested especially in the power of expression displayed by faces and hands, without the use of extravagant gestures—particularly in the last two pictures—suggests the agency of another factor, that of the mystic Passion literature of the time. The often movingly suggestive Lamentations of Mary and other meditations on the sufferings of Christ in Hungarian literature from the close of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries demonstrate that the mystic conception, spread in Italy chiefly by St Bonaventura and in Germany by Heinrich Seuse and others, was widely popular in Hungary even among circles of the population that were ignorant of Latin. A book-list of 1501[30] provides proof that the parochial library at Selmecbánya contained a German version of Seuse's *Horologium Sapientiae*, the influence of which may also be traced in numerous works of contemporary German art.[31] M. S. must have been familiar with these and similar texts, which sought to rouse the imagination to a realistic appreciation of the events in the Passion by giving dismayingly graphic descriptions of Christ's wounds and the various stages of his agony, while evincing occasionally a

[29] *Cf.* J. Ábel: op. cit. and B. Pukánszky: Geschichte des deutschen Schrifttums in Ungarn, vol. I Münster in Westfalen, 1931, p. 93. The antecedents of the drama in question are surmised by various scholars to have been derived from the Innsbruck "Osterspiel" of 1391, but the Vienna Passion plays dating from 1472 also display a noticeable affinity.

[30] *Cf.* E. Iványka: Két XV. századi plébániai könyvtár [Two Parochial Libraries from the 15th century], in: Századok (Budapest), LXXII, 1938, p. 137.

[31] *Cf.* M. Grabmann: Die Kulturwerte der deutschen Mystik des Mittelalters, Augsburg, 1923, p. 29. and the references cited there.

predilection for dramatic details of Mary's coarse treatment by the guards. The popularity of these writings among the bourgeoisie of the mining towns must have induced the master to adopt their spirit in his work.

Thus the origins of M.S.'s art in all probability lay beyond the borders of medieval Hungary and should perhaps be sought in Swabia. He may have worked as a young artist in Selmecbánya, since his activities were apparently bound up with a large local workshop and extended over a relatively brief period, at least to the extent that their influence can be checked. We do not know whether he wandered elsewhere after 1506, or whether—as the majority of Hungarian students assume—he died there. The external traits of his style strike one as unusual and peculiar in the painting of the mining towns. The essential content of his art is, however, marked by the specific features of German-Hungarian-Slovak culture, typical of Northern Hungary, and forms part of the blossoming of Hungarian Renaissance art, which, though drawing on numerous sources, achieved ever greater unity, until its development was cut short at the fulness of its promise, in the third decade of the 16th century, by the disastrous defeat at Mohács and the ensuing Turkish rule.

PERSPECTIVES OF MODERN OPERA

AS SEEN BY A DRAMATIST

by

MIKLÓS HUBAY

I

The art of our century is still more or less in the position of a throne pretender whose claim to legitimacy is constantly being subjected to doubt (in Hungary perhaps more consistently than elsewhere). Behind it looms the 19th century, like an aged queen-mother who actively continues to rule over the minds of her subjects with a far from nominal power. As if the art of the 20th century were a retarded minor strongly in need of tutelage, 19th century taste has extended its regency into our own century.

While Wagner's operas, to mention but one example, took from five to ten years to reach Budapest from Bayreuth, Bartók's "Miraculous Mandarin" required twenty-five years to cover the distance from Rákoskeresztúr (the suburb where Bartók lived) to Andrássy Road (the site of the Hungarian Opera House). What is still more important, it was with their contemporaries that both Wagner and Verdi had to compete for acceptance of their music by directors, critics, and audiences. On the other hand, Bartók (and this, of course, applies also to Alban Berg, Stravinsky, even to Ravel and Debussy) had to struggle for a place under the sun, isolated amidst a repertoire crammed with 19th century compositions, with singers accustomed to a widely different style and before audiences with widely different training. In his day Berlioz looked upon his remote predecessor, Gluck, as an ally; the adversaries to be vanquished were the living, Meyerbeer and Gounod. This complies with the law of natural selection. However, in the 20th century, modern trends do not vie with one another; on the contrary, they attempt—in close alliance or in parallel efforts and with varying success—to compete with 19th century music, omnipresent on opera and concert programs, on the air and in the ears. The fate of those sons who in the prime of life have to prove their capacity in the face of their fathers—or their grandfathers—can hardly be said to reflect a wholesome picture.

A debate on the justification of modern art invariably reminds me of an excellent scene from Georges Neveux's play, *Le Voyage de Thésée.* Seven self-assured youths of Athens clatter into the town of Minos. Soon they lose their way in the winding alleys.

"Where exactly is that labyrinth?" they ask the Cretans loitering about.

"You have been inside it for a long while. The whole town is a labyrinth."

It is the same with the art of our century. We have been in it for a long time, but we go on asking where it is.

2

Perhaps no evidence in justification of an artistic trend can be more convincing than the presence of a similar tendency in another branch of art. That is, for instance, how 20th century architecture and abstract fine arts find mutual vindication one in the other. Correlations of a like nature may be traced in our century between good drama and good music. The works that resulted from collaboration between Ramuz and Stravinsky, Béla Balázs and Béla Bartók, Claudel and Honegger, Cocteau and Poulenc may be cited as examples.

This, as we know, was not so in the past. The libretto itself hardly ever possessed any literary value. The writer either adapted the work of a classical dramatist, as did da Ponte that of Beaumarchais or Boito that of Shakespeare, while the original play continued its own career independently of the libretto, as does any classical novel today from which a scenario has been written. Although in such cases the libretto had some literary value, it was a borrowed value. Or else the writer invented the libretto himself, in which case it was usually so conventional or such a makeshift of props that without music it was utterly worthless and useless. (Take, for instance, the "Pearl-fishers"; everybody knows its arias, but does anybody have any idea why its figures sing the words they do? Last year, when an eminent amateur group of the post-office employees performed it, they complained that, while they did not mind the absurd situations, since such things do occasionally occur, the librettists had to their dismay interspersed their words with studied nonsense to prove their ingenuity.) These old "original" libretti served to provide opportunities for the composer to present in due order the overture, arias for soprano, tenor, and bass, duets, tercets, sextets and choral parts, and at the same time to let the music reflect the protagonists' state of mind in the heat of love and revenge, in idyllic moods or resolved to face death.

Librettists and composers of opera were rarely of the same calibre. (It would be too much to say that Richard Wagner, the librettist, was inferior to Richard Wagner, the composer, but it is nevertheless true that the libretti of Wagner's music-dramas would in themselves be unable to hold their own on the stage.)

Growing numbers of 20th century operas have, however, been composed to original complete—and by no means conventional—plays. In the modern music-drama, both dramatist and composer have to fight their own battles for expression, each with his own weapons. By their aspirations these two branches of art would appear to be striving for the restoration of an ancient balance, endeavouring to recapture the happy moment in the evolution of new forms that witnessed the birth of the Greek tragedy, with its accompaniment of magnificent choruses. This moment has been recalled ever since by every great epoch in the history of the drama. Shakespeare brought the magic of music to his stage, as did the aged Racine when after a long silence he produced his dramas dealing with the fate of the Jews.

In Platon's myth, man and woman seek each other with such unquenchable desire because once they had been one; in the same way the joy of consummation fills the theatre when true drama and true music meet in it. Only the 19th century carried the principle of the division of labour to the point of excluding music from "real" drama, while refusing to admit literature to the musical stage.

And yet, was it not just at that time, around the turn of the century, when naturalism (implying absence of music, objection to music) had obviously triumphed on the dramatic stage, that the greatest plays nevertheless betray a stealthy and persistent nostalgia for music? Take Chekhov. Sounds that die away, the twanging of broken strings, the spell of distant singing—how often are they to be heard on his stage! (In his excellent book on Chekhov, Ermilov compiled a list of these rudimentary musical moments in the playwright's works.) Think for a moment what happiness the sound of the long-silenced piano would bring on that stifling night in Uncle Vania's house, when all the imprisoned female souls are waiting to be redeemed. The situation in that society doomed to grey mediocrity would change at one stroke. There is, however, no delivery for anybody. Everything continues unaltered. From the adjoining room the tyrant shouts: no music!

The 19th century remained.

For in that epoch there was no delivery for the theatre either. The longing for beauty was suppressed in the souls of Tchekhov's heroes and heroines, while the nostalgia for music became ossified in the bourgeois theatre.

The drama, thirsting for the music that naturalism had deprived it of,

can today hardly absorb enough music to satisfy its needs. This is shown not only by the vogue of musicals but also by the fact that dramatists like to write plays in which conversation alternates with singing.

Dramatists evidently understand that the teachings of the muse of music will carry them farther in their own craft.

In this connection I should like to say a few words about my own experiences, about what it means to a dramatist when, besides writing dialogues, he provides opportunities for music in his play.

3

A previous issue of *The New Hungarian Quarterly** contained my one-act play, "Three Cups of Tea" (C'est la guerre). This short play was conceived —as Nietzsche would express it—in the spirit of music. In the spirit of music alone.

Emil Petrovics was very young (if I am not mistaken he was studying at the Academy of Music) when he entrusted me with the unwonted task of writing a one-act play with few characters, in clear situations, devoid of any psychological shades, actuated only by such simple and ever elemental emotions as love and hate, jealousy and revenge. The action too was to be unequivocal: kisses, violence, death. Moreover, he added another queer demand: the sound of some mechanical music should be heard from outside.

I must confess that I was deeply impressed by these musical requirements, which affected and indeed inspired my pen. We dramatists had been forgetting that a good plot consists of kissing, violence and death, and that a really good dialogue creates tension even though not one word of it is comprehensible.

I hailed Michelangelo's maxim: let the statue be rolled down the mountain-side; whatever is broken off was unnecessary anyway. Let our plays be set to music, and what the composer cannot use was unnecessary also in prose.

The success of my one-act play even as a prose piece must have been due partly to these musical requirements. They guided the writer back to the most secret and ancient sources of drama.

And at the Opera House, where the writer's words are accompanying the singing voice only as a shadow, the play is not lost. On the contrary, it comes into its own even more, since its situations and characters become more intense and vivid. And these are dearer to the author than the words he has written.

* See Vol. II, No. 4.

Don Fernando's Lesson

(Intermezzo)

His name, reminiscent of an operatic hero, I encountered while reading Stendhal, who mentions it in his "Promenades en Italie." Stendhal refers to Don Fernando as a personage everyone should know about. Well, I did not. He may have been a grand seigneur of Naples, perhaps a prince of the Neapolitan Bourbons, or an ex-king. So I know only what I have learnt from Stendhal, namely that Don Fernando lived on the Island of Ischia in voluntary seclusion, because he hated the Bonapartes and the French. That was where Stendhal called on him with a letter of recommendation in his hand, on March 21, 1817.

This misanthropical gentleman of the *ancien régime*—previously unknown to me—has through Stendhal taught me a very instructive lesson on the essence of music, more specifically on that of stage music, dramatic music.

Don Fernando hated the French (which is strongly suggestive of his Bourbon descent) but adored the theatre, the opera. On the Isle of Ischia there was, of course, no theatre of any kind. (What was there, indeed, on that island at the time? "Hardly any trace of civilization," says Stendhal, and continues with evident satisfaction, "...it is a great advantage when popery and its rites constitute the whole of civilization.")* Thus Don Fernando, for his own consolation, reared larks and nightingales in immense aviaries. How could the warbling of birds replace music to this lonely connoisseur? Because—he explained—both music and warbling were made up of a series of emotional outbreaks and incidental interjections: "une suite d'interjections." Then, he continued, "...an interjection is a cry of passion, never of thought. Thought can produce passion; an interjection, however, is invariably elicited by emotion, and music could never express crude thought."**

Don Fernando (who after all may be supposed with greater likelihood to have been a scion of that second royal family of Naples once related to Prospero), this hopeless opera lover of Ischia, fancied that in the morning song of his birds imprisoned in cages he could recognize the wonderful falsettos of contemporary star singers of all three sexes. Don Fernando may have been crazy. At the time of Stendhal's visit he had been living on the island —at hardly four hours' distance from Naples—for twelve years, chiefly in

* "Presque pas de trace de civilisation... grand avantage quand le papisme et ses rites font toute la civilisation."

** "...une interjection est un cri de la passion, et jamais de la pensée. La pensée peut produire la passion; mais l'interjection n'est jamais que de l'émotion, et la musique ne saurait exprimer ce qui est rêchement pensée."

the company of birds. His interjection theory nevertheless seems to ring true—at least from the viewpoint of drama, for the most ornate tirade will fall flat unless it storms into the play as a single interjection, with the unequivocal directness of action and readiness to face death.

Stendhal is said to have known very little about music, though he wrote books on the subject and his other works also reveal that he was obsessed by music. I have confidence in all that he has to say of music, since I know even less about it than he did.

4

A series of interjections—this was the method by which I endeavoured to create opportunities for music when writing a *musical* at the request of a new theatre with modernist aspirations. I am not familiar with the western models of this fashionable form; it is long since I have been to the west, and they are not performed here, on account—I have been told—of the high royalties for stage rights. I have consequently been compelled to turn for models to somewhat older *musicals* which may be presented in our theatres without any restrictions imposed by stage rights: to Shakespeare's comedies and plays. This may have contributed to my laying the scene of the Hungarian musical in an environment that was as lonely an island in society as Prospero's realm or the forest of Arden: a *home for Hungarian poets* during the last war. Hiding-place and firing position, ivory tower and beacon all in one, a place where one could forget reality and delineate a new aspect of reality. It goes without saying that this musical—which I wrote together with the poet István Vas, who not only composed the verses but whose rich and beautiful life virtually served as a model for the drama—could not be a comedy, but became a tragedy. Moreover, it is a tragedy rendered more serious by politics. (Let me remark here that politics, *i. e.* the problems of *power*, have always occupied an extremely important position in every noteworthy drama, from the tragedies of the Athrides and Labdakides, through the dramas of the Lancasters and Yorks, to Ibsen and Shaw, Brecht and Miller.)

From the musical I have learnt that *interjections* are not incompatible with *philosophy*. As an example let me describe the scene in which we came perhaps nearest to realizing our artistic ideal: the poet and the girl he loves hide in an empty, deserted flat, with their friends; an officer, a murderer, who used to be a frequent visitor of the former owner of the flat, also takes refuge here, to change his clothes and get away. For ten minutes the fate

of a fascist murderer is in the hands of the humanist poets assembled here. In these ten minutes the poets have to pass judgement on a real murderer, aware of the certainty that this decision will determine their own lives. If spared, the murderer will kill them. These ten minutes are filled with the impulsive cries of the poets, diversified by drums that evoke the rattle of machine guns threatening all of them.

"He who seeks your life is also human."

The reply is

"To me he is not human who holds a gun."

Thereupon

"Let your ultimate weapon be the critique of Pure Reason."

Then

"Handsome though the ideas
Of Diderot and Cicero may be,
To stab, cut, and strike
Remains the *ultima ratio.*"

The poets naturally allow the murderer to escape, thereby enabling him later to become their murderer. This singing scene particularly convinced me that at the appropriate moment the music could be an excellent simultaneous vehicle for the *impulses* springing from the tension preceding decision and for the *thoughts*—touching ultimate problems—that make decision difficult.

5

The low opinion we have of our age and our contemporaries is graphically illustrated by our assumption that people dressed like ourselves are unfit for appearing as heroes in an opera. Allegedly, one cannot sing in everyday clothing.

I have been strongly tempted to disprove this superstition. I have tried to refute it in a one-act opera and a musical tragedy. Now I am going to fight it with a three-act play intended to become the libretto of an opera.

As I already know from experience, this is not a new goal for the playwright, it only demands concentrated consistency in writing the play. Every scene must be kept on the level that may be denoted as *cantabile.*

In the theatre realism and naturalism are said to have renounced music because in real life people do not speak to one another by singing. I am inclined to think, rather, that they had to relinquish music because of having given up in advance the very situations in which singing is at home

on the stage, regardless of what happens in similar cases in life. They had foregone the truly dramatic situations and the tense moments which call for maximal fulfilment in intensity and time.

For three quarters of a century musical forms preserved the tradition of these moments of fulfilment. In the meantime drama tried to dispense with them, while musical drama could not do without them. The dramatic intensity which renders singing on the stage natural has been preserved in isolation on the musical stage, but here too it has broken away from general development, to live on in hackneyed patterns and conventions.

It is my conviction that in the last third of the century we shall achieve dramatic literature to which music will be joined as naturally as it came to be associated with the Greek drama at its inception. In the meanwhile music may serve to gloss over the deficiencies of a play; however, it will also serve increasingly to teach dramatists how to proclaim their message by more dramatic means of expression.

*

Let me allude here to the first scene of the opera in the making referred to above. Being the initial scene, it is also the most difficult one, demanding the truest singing. The scene is laid in the ceremonial hall of Budapest University, where oil paintings, allegorical statues, and Latin inscriptions furnish an environment not unfamiliar to opera-goers. The windows of the hall have been smashed, splinters and stones rain into the room, while, outside, fascist undergraduates demonstrate against the Rector Magnificus. Inside a pair of lovers are exchanging kisses; these two young things do not heed the flying stones, the rhythmic and primitive shouting; both are longing, with insatiable avidity, only for proofs of life. To show her love, the girl, who is the Rector's daughter, stops before the window, exposing herself to the shower of stones. At the increasingly loud outcry of the angry crowds of demonstrators the Rector comes in from the adjoining room, wearing the historical attire which, though a nuisance to a modern man, he has to wear in his office. One of the daily papers has just published an article by the Rector against the war and the German alliance. Hence the demonstration. The baroque scenery and baroque attire which serve to accentuate the feudal anachronism of these institutions, furthermore the girl's love for a communist student and the father's quixotic fight to make Hungary back out of the German alliance, provide the opening of the drama, creating a colourful atmosphere congenial to singing; as to authenticity it is by no means remote from the Hungarian situation in 1942.

THE FRIGHTENED THEATRE

by

J. C. TREWIN

In the last issue (N° 5)of *The New Hungarian Quarterly* Péter Nagy discussed the "Anti-Theatre." It was an extremely interesting and cogent article; I think that it may be of special interest fifty years ahead when historians look back as they are entitled to do (but, say some in the theatrical *avant-garde*, we are not).

At present, in the English theatre, few young dramatists even glance over their shoulder. It is as if they feel that Coleridge's "frightful fiend doth close behind him tread." Young playgoers are in the same state. I have just been writing the history of a famous provincial repertory theatre which its founder intended to be "a revolving mirror of the stage." Reasonably, he wanted the best plays of all periods to be revived. When I mentioned this to the director of another theatre, he said, a little sadly: "The young people in my audience think anything is out of date that was not written yesterday." It can remind us, I think, of Maurice Colbourne's comment on Bernard Shaw in the 'Nineties (I quote from the 1950 edition of *The Real Bernard Shaw*): "Ever industrious, ever anxious to be in the vanguard of the New, he always seemed fearful of being left behind. The glimpse he gives of his room in Fitzroy Square in 1897 is of a factory working overtime in the remanufacture of ideas. 'Whilst I am dressing and undressing I do all my reading. The book lies open on the table. I never shut it; but put the next book on top of it long before it is finished. After some months there is a mountain of buried books, all wide open, so that all my library is distinguished by a page with the stain of a quarter's dust or soot upon it.' The impression is not one of restlessness but urgency as though the spinning of the earth was something he ought to try to keep up with... He always walked as though he had an appointment with himself and might be late for it."

That, in a sense, is a familiar tale, though there are no Bernard Shaws at

present. The besetting worry of the theatre during the last ten years has been a fear of being thought reactionary, behind the times. In consequence, any new playgoer hardly knows the names of the older dramatists; the only writers discussed fashionably are either some of those Mr Nagy has mentioned, from a specific coterie, the anti-theatre, or others, home-bred rebels, who have been swept in on what has been called, rashly, the New Wave. Waves ebb; other waves form; and at the moment there are certain signs, on the incoming tide, that a somewhat older form of drama may not be as permanently outmoded as we had thought. It is, indeed, the direct narrative-play.

Mr Nagy has said rightly about the "anti-theatre"—one part of the new school—that unequivocally it has helped a few playwrights of indisputable gifts to express themselves. That is so. I daresay that in time to come some of these dramatists will survive in record—though how long is anybody's guess—even if the plays of their early years have vanished. What we are wondering about now is the trend of the theatre in the next ten years or so. It cannot live only on plays of non-communication, written in a secret idiom that soon palls when a few attempts have been made to solve the code. It cannot live only on angry polemical plays composed of invective and little else. It cannot live on the more arid experiments.

It seems to me that the theatre must seek to remember a little more of its past, and to put on more plays with a full stream of narrative and some sense of coherent construction. These qualities do not necessarily exclude ideas. Ideas are expressed as strongly in a coherent setting and a solid frame as in the whirl of space, the clutter of abstractions. Why be afraid of a narrative, of a recognizable beginning, middle, and end?

This theatre of rebellion, this theatre of a disregard for form, the theatre in which curtain-rise (assuming that there is a curtain to raise) has often meant another haphazard puzzle for a patient audience, is in itself the kind of anti-theatre Mr Nagy speaks of when he writes of the elimination of "all that the development of characters and of their mutual relationship has involved for drama since the Greeks, or at least since Shakespeare."

A normal theatrical audience cannot really be judged by the audiences of the experimental theatre clubs. But it is odd that so much writing for and about the stage in England seems to be addressed to the members of these clubs. That is why, outside London where playgoers have fewer chances to keep up with the movement of the theatre, we find that writers whose work is hardly ever seen locally are discussed with an intense and anxious interest. These are the men who are spoken about in London, so they must be the men of the moment, and it is important to keep up-to-date. The gulf

between the modern theatre and the theatre of only ten years ago grows wider and wider until what lies on the other side of the gulf is practically forgotten—its good things as well as its bad.

A book on modern dramatists, published in London during 1953 and highly topical at the time, appears now to be a strange museum-piece. What is one to think of a work that does not mention, even in a footnote, Beckett, Pinter, Osborne, Adamov, Ionesco, Wesker, Arden, Genet, and the various dramatists, whether of the anti-theatre or of the theatre of rebellion, that are now paramount?

Still, it is now becoming clearer that some playgoers would like to meet again the play of plot (which does not cancel out the play of ideas), that there is a wistful desire to be told a story—one of the earliest of human wishes. It is noticeable that, though the Press was not unanimous, the most popular play in London this spring is *The Affair*, adapted by Ronald Millar from a novel by C. P. Snow and composed on traditional lines. Moreover, historical drama, biographical drama, is again in favour: not just novelette-history but work in which a dramatist and his audience can meet, with some preliminary knowledge shared, to debate a person or a period. And at the experimental Royal Court, owing to the failure of a very poor revival of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—the English Stage Company's first luckless venture into Shakespeare—the theatre is reviving not one of its more advanced plays, but a comedy called *The Keep* by a Welshman, Gwyn Thomas: a man who has something of the verbal relish of the Irish master Sean O'Casey, if without O'Casey's burning eloquence.

There is no need whatever to go back to the worst traditional forms. Many plays of the nineteen-twenties and thirties are dead ashes. But various other plays of the period, if revived, would be found still valid in the theatre. We need dramatists who do not hesitate to use the best of the old techniques to express contemporary moods. It is just as wrong to suppose that the entire drama of thirty years ago was acted in "lounges," with French windows, by young men and women carrying tennis racquets, as it is to suppose that the entire drama of today need be acted in back alleys, and before kitchen sinks, by young men and women shouldering a grievance.

All I ask, as a playgoer, is that the theatre keep its proportion. New ideas, new methods—agreed, a stage without these cannot develop, even though a current vogue for doing away with dialogue does not get us very far. It is, though, merely wasteful to put the entire past into a bag and fling it into a dustbin. If we look at the recent record of the London stage, the experimental clubs apart, it will be seen that the straight plays most in favour have been the least feverishly pretentious. It is noticeable, too, that

the authorities of the influential Aldwych Theatre (the London home of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre of Stratford-upon-Avon) are choosing for current performance not one of the anti-theatre problems, but Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle.*

Obviously, in any kind of serious theatre, the playgoer should be asked to think. But it is not right that he should merely be baffled; that young people should grow up with the idea that a play is a haphazard concatenation of abstract symbols. There is an old story of a villager who was asked his opinion of a sermon, and who replied: "It was too plain and simple for me, sir. I like sermons best that jumble the judgment and confound the sense." I do not think that those are the kind of sermons (or plays) we need in a theatre where the dramatist has to make his impact at once on playgoers who are not likely to visit the same play twice.

I am not asking—Heaven forbid!—for a wholesale return to the pre-war world, but I am asking—as I think playgoers are beginning to again—for a little more consideration from dramatists who have something to say, and who refuse to say it intelligibly; who have—in Mr Nagy's words—"contempt for all those forms that they have inherited from their forbears," or who (like Shaw long ago) try to keep up with the spinning of the earth. Protest by all means, but any protest is more effective if it is understood immediately. And I do not believe that playgoers who enjoy various forms of theatre should be accused sternly of something called Directionless Eclecticism.

At the moment the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan are much in the news because the copyright on Gilbert's libretti has expired and directors can stage the operas in various new ways. Presently they will be reaching *Princess Ida* and Lady Blanche who lectures at the women's college of Castle Adamant. She says resolutely:

> I propose considering, at length,
> Three points—the Is, the Might Be, and the Must.
> Whether the Is, from being actual fact,
> Is more important than the vague Might Be,
> Or the Might Be, from taking wider scope,
> Is for that reason greater than the Is:
> And lastly how the Is and Might Be stand
> Compared with the inevitable Must. . .

To which the Princess replies, a little alarmed, "The subject's deep—how do you treat it, pray?": and, later, "Pray you, bear in mind who highest

soar fall farthest." Lady Blanche sounds to me like one of the too anxious innovators in our contemporary drama, and the Princess like an anxious playgoer.

Time must be the arbiter. I cannot help feeling that, in fifty years, much of the frightened work of 1962 will be as dim as the work of 1912 is today—or, for that matter, of 1952. But what will be the mode of 2012? And who will have influenced it? Shaw? Chekhov? Fry? Adamov? Brecht? Ionesco? Any article must tail off into a bristle of question-marks. Tonight's new play is itself a question-mark. What, I wonder, will it be?

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QUO VADIS EUROPE? (1926)
ON DEMOCRACY (1946)
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ECONOMIC PLANNING IN GHANA
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THE VISUAL POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD
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TIVADAR CSONTVÁRY, THE PAINTER
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HUNGARIAN-BRITISH RELATIONS IN THE SPHERE OF FINE ARTS
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HAMMERSMITH
(Chapter of a Book on an Imaginary Voyage)
by József Lengyel

ORDERLY RESURRECTION

A short story

by

ÁRON TAMÁSI

I

May is lovely everywhere, and lovelier still in the Bishop's grounds. Particularly, so early in the day, around sunrise. The dew laughs in sparkling drops as if Our Lady had thrown down a handful of precious pearls in the night. The flower-beds are choirs, chanting their colours in tune, and the lilac blossoms, smothering the length of the fence, are humming their whites and purples. High upon the roof of the Bishop's three-winged palace the returning swallows sit in the breezy light, singing with pink throats, each tiny body for all the world like a fledgling priest, singing his first Mass.

Nothing in human form comes rumbling in for a long while.

Then a short man in top-boots enters through the vaulted door-way. He has a ruddy face, mustachio, and a feather in his perky hat. He whistles and taps his cane on his riding boots.

This is the bailiff. He is called Demeter, and is two in one: a Magyar when he curses, a Rumanian when he scolds.

With short, strutting steps he makes straight for the farmyard. He halts before the stables and raps out:

"Old Énekes!"

Waiting a second or two, he calls again: "Énekes!"

An old man comes running out of the stable—slight, scraggy, a peasant in tattered clothes. His thin hair is long and white; white, too, are his brows and his shaggy mustache. He holds a book in one hand, which he is awkwardly trying to hide.

"At your service, Sir," he says.

"What's the book you've got there?" Demeter nods at it.

The old man turns sideways, as if the book might be there.

"The one in your hand," Demeter snaps.

"This?—'The Blessed Virgin's Flower-garden'," declares Old Énekes.

The bailiff points up at the lilac trees.

"And isn't *this* flower-garden good enough for you?"

"It is, indeed, but out of mine here I'm used to saying my prayers."

"Well, I never..." Demeter laughs. "One might think there are enough people in this palace to say prayers."

"There's never too many to do what is right," says the old man meekly.

"Is the manure carted out?"

"It is, for certain."

"And have the horses been curried?"

"I was just making ready to do that."

"What, with the book here?"

"Not with that, with the curry-brush, Sir."

The bailiff takes his "Flower-garden" away, asking: "Have you got more such books?"

"Why?"

"Never mind why. Bring out the lot, and quickly! No more of your praying away precious hours. Eins-zwei!"

Clouds drift over the old man's blue eyes, fear hems in his kindly face. What is he to do? To tell a lie is to go against his pure heart, yet his books are dearer to him than bread. He would love to curl up like a hedgehog, but there is nothing thorny in his make.

"Begging your pardon, Sir, but it's not the four-in-hand that does it."

"What does it, then?"

"Salvation, and the good life hereafter."

Demeter laughs heartily.

"So that's the horse you put your money on!"

Old Énekes flicks up his hands, as though to stand off the Evil One.

"You'll only give comfort to the devil with words like these, Sir."

"You're crazy!"

"Me, Sir?"

"You—you, who else?"

A smile twitches on the old man's lips, and his eyes glint in impish innocence.

"It's not the man who wants to have a good life here on earth that is clever, but the one who is out for a happy life in eternity..."

The bailiff, who had got a laugh out of this too, is looking for a suitable answer, but before he can say anything, a boy dashes out of the cow-shed, shouting happily.

"Daddy, Dad..." He chokes as he sees the bailiff standing near his

father. Hunching his shoulders, he gives a little chuckle and tries to slink back into the cow-shed.

"Hi, you!" Demeter calls him back.

The lad comes forward and stands in line beside his father. He is a growing boy, slight and lively. He does not take at all after his father. Nor are his eyes blue, but black, small and so alert that they never stop roaming. His forehead juts out, he is fast-spoken and quick of wit.

"And you—were you also saying prayers?"

"Not me—and who was, anyway?"

"Your Dad."

"He'd better, he works with the Bishop."

"And whom do you work with?"

"I work with the cows."

Demeter roars with laughter. The boy's smart.

"What a son you've got there, Daddy Énekes—what a little—!"

The old man puts his arm round the clever lad.

"A good father need have no bad son," he says.

"Nor a rich man bad money," the boy chimes in.

This goes down well with the bailiff too.

"Come on, let's have another," he eggs on the boy kindly.

His father also prompts him.

"Say something clever now, Péterke!"

"Not even Mass is said for nothing," Péterke announces.

"Alright, ask for something."

The boy sizes up Demeter, turning over in his mind what to ask of him.

"Let's see now, what book is that?"

"You can have it!"

Péter takes the book and looks closely at the title words.

"That's ours!" he says and hides it behind his back. He looks up at the bailiff archly and remarks: "It's the ignorant that need books in the first place, not learned men like yourself."

"So I'm a learned man, am I?"

"Each is learned, selfsamely."

"And what does *that* word mean, 'selfsamely?'"

"It means that the ass knows how to bray, and the horse how to run."

"And me, what do I know?"

"How to make the ass bray, and the horse run."

"And what do you know?"

"I know that there are at least two legs to each ass."

"And your dad, what does he know?"

"My dad, he knows that we be not three here, but four."

The bailiff looks round but sees only the three of them.

"And who be the fourth?" he asks.

"God," replies Péter.

Demeter is much surprised by the answer. Right off he does not know what to say. He sniggers and fidgets, ill at ease. He ends up by whacking his riding-boots with his cane and throws in gruffly:

"That'll do."

He walks on, giving a vicious kick to the odd pebble or twig. He turns back suddenly.

"This yard here is a regular garbage heap." Words fall over each other, as he splutters: "It really can't go on any longer, Old Énekes! I've put up with a hell of a lot. But what about the new manager who is due here today? He'll wipe the floor with you when he sees this filth—and how! This is no place for saying prayers and indulging in learnedness, here you've got to work. Understand?"

Péterke looks at his father reassuringly, but seeing that the old man remains silent, he takes it up himself with Demeter.

"No need to lecture us."

"What's this you say?" Demeter barks, taking a step forward.

"Péterke is no more than a child," the old man says for an excuse.

But the boy steps up bravely to Demeter and speaks.

"I say that there's no need to lecture us in such anger, since it is us that did the work in this yard till now, and no-one else."

"How dare you talk back like this?"

"I say well, since it's me that does the sweeping," says Péter and without waiting for another word, makes off towards the cow-shed.

Demeter follows him with a bilious look, then he turns on the old man, growling like a dog:

"Get along with you too!"

Old Énekes answers not a word. He bends his old head and slouches off.

"Have everything spick and span by eleven o'clock!" Demeter shouts after him. Then he, too, leaves the yard.

All is silent for a while.

A swallow flies away from the edge of the roof. One by one the others follow, circling fast and flying far.

The sun rolls up in the sky and bursts over the blackyard, a mighty torrent, rushing in. It swamps the yard, turns pebbles and chaff into gold and polishes up the beads of dew.

Soon Péterke slinks out of the cow-shed with his broom, stops and

takes a quick look around. The bailiff is nowhere to be seen. His face brightens. He claps the broom over his right shoulder and sets out for the stable. He stops in the doorway and sees that his father is painstakingly currying one of the greys.

"What a pity that poor horse can't talk," he says.

"Why?" asks the old man.

"If he could talk, he would ask you not to curry him, Dad."

The old man gets on with the work in hand.

"Now be a good boy and do the sweeping," he says at last.

"It'll only stir up the dust."

"Go along, now! Didn't you hear what the bailiff said?"

"Were I the bailiff I would also say a lot of things."

"If this is how you obey, there is a poor future before you on this farm."

Thereupon Péter takes the broom from his shoulder and props it up before him, as a shepherd would his crook. Turning something over in his mind, he puts on a serious expression and speaks as if he were addressing an audience:

"It's not working out at all the way you say it is, Dad. For on this farm here, and elsewhere too, the way to get on is the way I do things, not the way you do them, Dad. This book here—who got it back? Wasn't it me?"

"That was clever," says the old man. "Now go and sweep up, there's a good boy."

Péterke has the answer ready:

"Catch me sweeping you, silly old yard!"

"You are in a mighty rebellion!"

"So I am. And so should you be, Dad, for the tongue will ever get more done than a pair of industrious hands. There's proof, and most of all you've proved it yourself, Dad. For you've grown old here in this farmyard, and where did it get you? Not very far, for you were ever silent and never idle."

"Look not for justice here on earth," the old man remarks sadly.

"And why not?"

"There is none."

"The devil there isn't!" Péter contradicts. "Justice there is, for sure, and not one single justice only. There's a couple of them. For there is a rich-justice which the rich man buys himself with money, and there is a poor-justice, which the discerning man gets for himself by the use of his brains."

The old man listens placidly to the speech of the outspoken lad. He thinks of God and of eternal life, when each shall gain his reward according

to his merit. He has nothing to say, he curries one horse after another, meekly, as though preparing to go with them into the hereafter.

Péter in his turn tires of making speeches, and goes out into the yard. Humming a tune, whistling idly, he shuffles back and forth. Now he picks up a shaving, now flings a pebble beside the fence.

Just whiling away the hours.

At last the new manager of the estate makes his appearance. He is a tall, distinguished looking gentleman. He wears a fine blue suit, and carries gloves and a walking stick. Demeter paces at his side, gesticulating and talking incessantly. They are now here near the stable when they stop short.

"Énekes!" cries Demeter.

The old man steps out of the door.

"Péter!" cries Demeter.

Péter also steps forward.

Like a couple of recruits, the two of them stand in line before the two gentlemen.

"This is the coachman, and that's his son," Demeter introduces them.

The manager looks the two hired men up and down, and turns to the old one:

"What's your name?"

"Ferenc Énekes, at your honour's service."

"And yours?" he asks the lad.

"Mine's Péter, witness the bailiff."

"Why need he witness it?"

"So he should also have a part to play."

The manager turns with a faint smile to Demeter, who remarks:

"This brat has always something up his sleeve."

The manager pats Péter on the cheek and dismisses him along with his father.

"The old man looks reliable to me," he says.

"Quite reliable," says Demeter, "but not much use. He's old and feeble-minded, poor soul..."

They do not view the horses, nor the cattle. They stand talking a few minutes longer, after which the estate manager takes his leave.

"Now then, Daddy Énekes, how do you like the new manager?" Demeter asks.

"He seems a kindhearted, distinguished man," replies Old Énekes.

The bailiff guffaws.

"Just imagine. Came out of jail six months ago. Then he, the Jew he is, comes here fawning on His Eminence. And what with him saying as

how he's seen the light eternal, he switches to the Catholic Faith, and here he is estate manager to the bishopric. Now, I ask you!"

"The Lord rejoiceth more of him than of the ninety-nine that went not astray," says Daddy Énekes.

Demeter is furious.

"Like hell He does!" Then he adds, hurriedly: "See you have the large coach ready by five o'clock. Understand?"

"Yes, Sir, at your service."

Again the bailiff whacks the leg of his top-boot as he goes off.

Daddy Énekes gets ready. He greases the harness and shines up its brass buckles. He washes and polishes the coach. He hums sacred tunes to himself and is filled with bliss.

At five in the afternoon Demeter and the estate manager take their seats in the well-sprung coach. The old man drives the two greys cheerfully, heading for the episcopal estate. As they arrive and the passengers alight, the manager turns to him genially.

"Don't you ever spit, daddy?"

"I'm not one for smoking a pipe, Sir."

"But even so, after all, you're a coachman."

"All my born days I drove the horses without spitting, Sir."

"And you never curse, either?"

"That I would never do, your gracious Honour."

"What kind of a coachman are you, then?"

"Just an old coachman, please your Honour."

A week later a new coachman is put in charge of the greys.

He is young, strong and a ruffian.

He spits and curses.

He bawls at the old man and hustles him. When no-one is looking, he kicks him.

Péter sees how matters stand and boils with rage.

"I'll thrash this dirty scoundrel, Dad," he says.

"Don't son. God will set all things right."

"I wonder."

The old man falls sick. His bed is made in a corner of the stable, on a rickety old contraption.

The new coachman cannot stand the sight of him even there. He flings the curry-brushes at him, and every now and then the shovel and the pitchfork.

On Friday he tips him head over heels into the corner, together with his bed. He spills him out like so much garbage.

Péter gets out his jack-knife.

"I'll cut out his guts," he flares.

The old man lifts up both hands and implores.

"Do not hurt him, son!"

He can scarcely get the words out.

"Beyond, there . . . justice . . . will be done."

Next day he dies in silence.

Half a day and a night long he is left to lie in the stable.

Péterke and the horses keep vigil over him. The stable flies cover him, and the ordinary flies from out-doors and all kind of fancy and gaudy flies. They settle on his composed, serene face and lay their eggs on it.

Then he is buried.

2

He lies in the proper graveyard, where everyone is buried.

Somewhat to the back of it, near the mighty fence.

His coffin is knocked together out of thin pine boards. It is unpainted, with large cracks through which to watch for the resurrection.

His grave is shallow and the earth presses gently upon him.

Ferenc Énekes lies among great ecclesiastics and great nobles, among the rich and the blissfully poor.

He lies and waits.

The days pass in peace, without noise or fuss.

He waits for the break of the light eternal, and the coming of justice.

His colour deepens by degrees, and his patient longing wastes him away steadily, bit by bit.

Irretrievably, he slumps inwards.

He ferments, according to the laws of transformation.

The fly eggs on his face hatch and indulge in childish delights. Vermin frisk about, hurtle and buzz round his face as though it were a pleasant ground of rolling hills. They climb over his nose and ears and slide impishly down into the vale of his cheeks.

They are of many and many a kind, much as in human society.

They come grey and spotted, checkered and striped. The finest is a dandy green fly of metallic sheen. He is snobbish and darts about to show off his magnificent colour. He is finicky, refusing food, contemptuous as it were of Ferenc Énekes—a mere peasant.

The rest fall to it the more greedily.

Through the cracks in the coffin the odour of their feast wafts abroad

into the soil. And mainly upwards to the surface, where it intoxicates the stray flies. The fertile mother flies are drawn along in swarms. Drooping, they lay their young, who, spying out for an entrance the dew worms' tunnels and cracks between the clods, close in for the attack on Énekes.

The red-bellied, black-striped beetles cut their way up from below, scratching and splitting up the clay, sappers of the graveyard.

The old man experiences a time of fierce onslaught.

A dance is on.

Graceful little moths make free with him, gambolling about.

Next, in the soggy ammonia stench, come the tissue-eaters—hard-working, determined insects.

Last of all, the nimble mites which turn the old man into a neat skeleton.

Silence takes over.

Time alone ticks, like an unfathomable and perfect clock which has the Sun for its main wheel and for its lesser wheels the stars.

Its seconds measure the centuries.

Its minutes are millennia.

Ten minutes make a million years.

Its hour is eternity.

It ticks, and its hand, like a comet's tail, moves on, from hour to hour.

It is close on midday.

The hour strikes, resounding across infinity.

The angels form ranks as on parade.

The stars dance like dew drops on the lilac bushes at dawn.

God steps into the middle of the world.

The Day of Judgement has come.

The Earth, like a child's ball, bounces over into another universe.

Gay, beauteous angels step up onto it and sound the trumpets.

The world is ringing with their blasts.

Light pours down, like a rainstorm.

The graves burst open and cry out in joy.

The trumpets blare away, like unquenchable laughter.

The dead awake and throng out, frolicking.

Péter's eyelids pop open. He sits up. Sensing some miracle, he quickly takes stock, glancing round. He discovers his old father lying at his side and he is filled with joy. He draws himself up from the hips and has another look. He sees the receding walls of the grave, and flowers, such as no eye has ever seen, at its rim. He sees the soft fragrant light welling in from above. And he hears the trumpets' blast.

"This is it," he says. "There's never been the like."

Granning his father's collar-bone, he gives it a shake.

"Dad! Dad!"

The old man does not feel at all like moving.

Péter shakes him harder.

"Get up, Dad, they're blowing their trumpets for all they're worth."

At long last the old man's eyes open, slowly. He sees the downpour of light, and is worried for having slept too long, and he a hired man. Hastily he makes the sign of the cross, as he used to do when he was alive.

"This time it's called for, Dad," says Péter.

"What is?"

"Crossing yourself."

"Why that?"

"'cause it'll stand us in good stead."

The old man has no notion at all of what a great day he has woken to. Péter greets it with a laugh and looks on in delight.

"It's a fine day, isn't it, Dad?"

Énekes looks right and left in wonderment.

"I have never seen it so fine," he admits.

"From now on it will be like this for ever," Péter points out.

"Where do you take that from?"

"That's what the trumpets say. Don't you hear?"

"I hear them all right," says the old man, "but I thought it was the gentry going out with the hunt."

"Now it's us going out hunting, not them."

"How's that?"

"'cause this is not their day but our day."

The old one is still drowsy, and has not managed yet to come back into being. Péter grabs him by both shoulders and gives him a mighty jolt.

"It's the resurrection, Dad!" he shouts.

Énekes gasps for breath, and the hollows of his eyes fill with tears. He weeps for joy, like a child.

"Now is no time for crying, but rejoicing," Péter instructs him.

The old man wipes his eyes with his skeleton hands. And presently he asks.

"Where is God?"

"Out in the yard, likely."

"Then let us go straight before Him!"

"Yes, right there," says Péter, standing up. Then he thrusts his hand in the old man's armpit and helps him up.

"How do we get out of here?" Énekes wonders, looking up at the sheer walls of the grave.

"Quite simply," says Péter, and he pushes the old man up with ease. Then he jumps out himself, and they set off among the empty graves.

They go on their way, every now and then stopping.

They well over with wonder and bliss.

For the Earth is like the Garden of Eden.

"You know, I did kill that coachman," says Péter.

The old man looks at him, taken aback.

"Not in truth?"

"I did, though."

"And what happened?"

"I was in a dungeon twenty years."

"Then you have endured the penalty."

"That I have. But with Judgement at hand, it is as well to let sleeping dogs lie."

As they cross the cemetery, a lunatic is rushing backwards and forwards, peeping into every grave.

"And whom are you looking for, mate?" asks Péter.

"I'm looking for my wife," says the lunatic.

"And where would she have got to?"

"What with all this mess and insurrection, she's off."

Straggling resurgents make their way along. Some are on their own, others are trailing large families: whole lineages show up.

Two apprentices hurry on, as if they were late for clocking in.

"Everyone is pushing—even here," remarks Péter.

"They are pushing in the right direction, at least," says the old man.

At the approach to the gates there is a great throng. From afar the crowd heaves and whirls. As they come nearer it roars and crashes like the sea. Sworded angels are busy on both flanks and to the rear, maintaining order. An angel of rank shouts his commands in shrill tones above the turmoil.

"Atten-shun! Fall in! Orderly resurrec-shun!" The higher angels stand in a group apart, bearing themselves like a general staff.

Énekes and his son arrive and mingle with the crowd.

The commandant cannot control the flood. He draws his sword, flashes it in front of them and shouts again:

"Fall in! Fall in by rank and title!"

It is a bewildering, strange gathering—bustling and gay, yet alarming. The clicking jaws rap out sounds, and grin when they are at rest. Eye-

sockets stare greedily into the resplendent world. The light plays on the skulls in a great variety of colours. Feet patter, and arms flailing the air whistle like the reed-pipe, shriek like the clarinet or laugh like the recorder.

In the headlong rush the bones jangle in all manner of keys.

There are some jolly fellows playing the zither with their finger-bones on each other's shoulder-blades.

But nothing seems odd to them.

They know each other.

They see and hear.

All things to them come naturally.

Above all, they push on and try to jump the queue.

"But why are they elbowing?" Énekes asks a man nearby.

"Because," says the man, "each wants to get richer than the other."

"How do you mean, richer?"

"Don't you know even that much?"

"I don't know anything. I only just arrived with my son."

"Now listen, you babe," explains the man. "Each tries as hard as he can to be out of that door before the other fellow, so he can stake more claims."

"Claims for what?"

"Well, land, or high timber, a brook for panning gold, or a mining site. Whatever he fancies."

They are forced apart and whirled along.

The angel-in-command bawls at the top of his voice right beside them:

"Fall in! Fall in by rank and title!"

The old man and Péter exchange a glance.

"Funny sort of resurrection!" says Péter.

"It is a bit queer..." the old man admits, then adds confidently: "But it cannot be that merit should count for nothing here."

They fall back slightly to gain a better view and to look for an opening ahead.

"Step into the line!" an angel calls to them.

"We're not in the army here!" says Péter.

An argument starts.

"Upon earth I lived in the service of God," protests the old man. "Now is the time to be given my reward."

"Your name?" asks the angel.

"Ferenc Énekes."

"Your former occupation?"

"I was coachman to His Eminence the Bishop."

"Then better get down to the end of the line."

"Wherefore?"

"Because that is the place where you belong. First come the Bishops, the Canons and the lords temporal. What's the idea? When all's said and done, you are a coachman. You cannot have this new world turned upside down right on the very first day."

The old man is aghast.

"I find it strange," he says.

"Strange or not, get down to the end of the line."

"I beg your pardon, please, in whose name do you speak?"

"I speak for the organizers."

"And God, does he know about this?"

The angel answers, truly shocked.

"Naturally! Everything is done in His name."

"It's very hard to believe," Énekes shakes his skull.

"If you don't believe it, you shall see for yourself," says the angel and goes to fetch the Commandant.

"My hunch!" says Péter and makes a sign to the old man to follow him.

They mingle with the crowd and push as hard as they can.

But the Commandant catches up with them; he grips each by the shoulder, the old man with his right, Péter with his left.

"Do we proceed in order, or do we not?" he turns on them in anger.

Énekes confronts him:

"We do—in the order of merit."

"Then move on to the rear!" The angel hustles them out of the throng and points down the lines.

"Be off!"

Fever heat races through the old man's bones and flames leap from his ribs. His jaw trembles, his neckbones screech. This last injustice gives him miraculous strength. He straightens his back.

He stands like a blazing pine tree.

"I'm not going!" he says, threateningly.

The angel is ready to draw his sword, but Énekes jumps clear.

"You were right, Péter!" he shouts, and with a lightning jerk unhinges his shankbone and swishing it over his head like a flail, cuts down the rows right and left.

"Let 'em have it, Péter!" His roars shake the air.

Péter is already laying about with his shankbone, thrashing them for all he is worth.

Swaying on one foot, they mow down the crowd. It's a howling rout.

The angels sound the bugles to call in God.

God appears; a dead silence sets in. He makes a sign to Énekes and to Péter to click in their shankbones again and to step before Him.

Énekes and Péter obediently do as He says.

"Why are you upsetting the peace?" asks the Lord.

"Because the angel wanted me to stand at the rear," the old man replies.

"And why did you not want to stand there?"

"Because I have suffered and endured all through my earthly life only to gain happiness now."

"And is there no happiness for you in the rear?"

"None."

"Why not?"

"Because I see those ahead of me who have been thieves and evildoers during all their lifetime."

God looks with compassion upon Énekes, and asks him:

"How did I create you?"

"You have created me good and poor."

"Then be good and poor, taking your place in the rear."

Énekes looks at his son, wondering what to do.

"All the same—don't let's go," whispers Péter.

They stand, and do not move.

Sadly, the Lord looks long at them.

"I regret that I resurrected you," He says at last, in disappointment.

"That can be put right," replies the old man, hurt by this time. He calls his son: "Come on, Péter!"

Together they set off, back to the cemetery. They walk back to the grave from which they had risen a while ago, stop at the rim, look down into it. Then both turn round, and wonderfully impelled, as if by a single thought and the same deep undying bitterness, they cry out in one breath.

"And no more trumpeting for us!"

Whereupon they quietly lie down again side by side, scrape back the clods for a cover, and fall asleep for time and eternity.

(Translated by Ilona Duczynska)

THE SAND-GLASS

A Comedy and a Moral Portrait

by

ENDRE ILLÉS

The action takes place at the house of Kristóf Haynal in Buda, from spring to autumn of 1961

ACT I

The study of the composer Kristóf Haynal in his own cottage on the eastern slope of Szemlő Hill, Budapest, high above the Danube.

The larger part of the round room may be seen on the stage. At the rear there are two huge round windows set in lead, with curtains that can be drawn. The material of the curtains is a golden ochre gobelin cloth. On one of the curtains, Amphion plays a flute in front of the rising walls of Thebes. The figure on the other curtain is that of Cassandra, the pessimistic Trojan Princess.

Between the two windows there is a Chinese screen, a red and gold pattern of plants, dragons and mountains, against a black background. The pattern is, however, hardly visible, because the screen is covered with the photographs, letters, telegrams, drawings and small objects hanging on threads, which are fastened to it. The whole screen rustles and quivers; Haynal calls it the "Wall of Memories."

The space in front of the Wall of Memories is occupied by the prodigious table—a transition from the Gothic to the Renaissance. It is rectangular and monumental. This is where Haynal works. On the table there is one candlestick with two branches and another with three, both with candles, moreover a silver statuette of an obstinate camel, a framed portrait of Montaigne and sand-glasses of various sizes. There is a collapsible Savonarola-chair to match the table.

To the right and left there are crowded open bookshelves. The fireplace is fitted into the left-hand wall of books and has bronze figurines and sand-glasses on the mantlepiece. In front of the fireplace there are two large arm-chairs and a small card-table. Like the big table, the two chairs and the small card-table are of the transition period from Gothic to Renaissance.

The right-hand wall of books has a sizable recess where an enormous sand-glass soughs. In front there is a Renaissance chest and on it a pot-bellied stone jar. In the jar, long branches of pink hawthorne blossom.

In the foreground, doors open both right and left.

The room is lit by a wooden chandelier.

*

As the curtain goes up, Kristóf Haynal is alone in the room, seated in the Savonarola-chair behind the table.

Kristóf is still smart of bearing—a pleasant-mannered, gaunt man in his early fifties. He is a composer. His art, erudition and manners have one unpleasant blot: he is a snob. He has consequently not been able to fit into all that has happened in Hungary since 1945. Stendhal concluded one of his novels with the words: "To the happy few." Kristóf Haynal also composes his music to the "happy few." He has always wanted to be one of them; he has sparkled for their sake and lived for them. His father was a prosperous architect. After his years at the Academy of Music, Kristóf went to Paris and lived there for a couple of years.

He fell under the spell of the French "Six"—of Satie, Honegger, Poulenc, Auric and the others. On his return he immediately aroused attention through some smaller works. His one-act ballet was even put on at the Opera. He began to have friends and admirers. The course of his life after 1945 came to a certain extent to involve his exclusion from Hungarian musical life. He adopted a demonstratively offended attitude. His music became a mere reflection of his years in Paris, but one or two of his works are nevertheless played each year even here, and through his good connections he is able to get an occasional piece played abroad. He lives between a successful start, the sweet past, and the offensive present—a nice and comfortable life.

*

The curtain has risen. Haynal is busy knocking on the table with a bronze door-knocker. He presses the anvil against the table-top, then lifts the ring and lets it drop. He repeats this several times, gently and more firmly, with a swifter and a syncopated rhythm.

Shortly Nicolette appears in the open doorway to the left. She is a cheeky-faced, impudently pretty young woman. She is, as yet, as devoid of age, as an ice-cold waterfall tumbling from a cliff. Her father is a doctor who lives in the provinces—he is the neurologist of a small-town hospital. Nicolette was for some time the showpiece of her school, and later of the provincial university. She bewitched everyone with her brains, her charm and her Ariel-like quality. All the little successes that a young girl can achieve, tumbled at her feet. And then she became fed up with it all. The mediocre and the diligent forged ahead of her. Nicolette became presumptuous, aggressive, and expected success to come to her for the asking. In due course she lost all her well-wishers, and friends. Now she shook herself free—and came up to Budapest. Marriage and divorce, a job which she quit, all followed in swift succession. In the meanwhile she several times soiled, then again cleansed her Ariel's wings. She is now twenty-three. Clever and impatient. Self-seeking and impatient. Bored and impatient. Cruel and impatient. Perhaps even depraved by now—and impatient.

KRISTÓF: *(Knocks hard and quickly at the table, then the tempo becomes ever more sporadic and faint, but the sounds unexpectedly leap up again and continue their canter)*

NICOLETTE: *(Stands in the doorway, carrying a heavy tape recorder in her right hand. She does not enter the room, but looks at the man)*

KRISTÓF: *(Gets up, walks over to the chest with the knocker and continues to knock there. He notices Nicolette and stops, with the knocker in his left hand. He enquires in surprise)* Who on earth are you?

NICOLETTE: *(Staying in the doorway)* Nicolette Csíky.

KRISTÓF: And how did you come in?

NICOLETTE: Through open doors.

KRISTÓF: Didn't you meet my butler?

NICOLETTE: No.

KRISTÓF: He's old and a trifle deaf.

NICOLETTE: *(Innocently)* Thank you for warning me. I'll take care to raise my voice when I speak to him.

KRISTÓF: *(Doesn't like the girl's answer. Advances)* Whom are you looking for?

NICOLETTE: *(Also enters the room)* You.

KRISTÓF: Do you know who I am?

NICOLETTE: Kristóf Haynal, the composer.

KRISTÓF: You could have found that out from my name-plate. *(Suspiciously)* Aren't you an insurance canvasser? Because I've had everything insured, both my windows and my life. *(Sardonically)* I was a little overhasty about the latter, because our lives are ensured for us anyway. Don't you think so?

NICOLETTE: You no longer remember your nameplate accurately. All you wrote on it is: Haynal. Moreover I'm not an insurance canvasser. And if you ask me—I don't feel that my life's ensured—against anything.

KRISTÓF: *(After a moment's pause)* What do you want?

NICOLETTE: *(Rather stiffly)* To have a chat with you.

KRISTÓF: *(Frigid once more)* You have mistaken the house, after all. It seems people can walk into my room even if they haven't

a prior appointment, but you cannot have a chat with me without an appointment. Don't be angry, please, if I send you away now. I'm working.

NICOLETTE: But I want to have an official chat with you.

KRISTÓF: Who sent you?

NICOLETTE: The Radio.

KRISTÓF: The Radio? *(He changes)* But why didn't you say so at the beginning?

NICOLETTE: *(Lifts the tape recorder)* Will you allow me to put this down? It's very heavy.

KRISTÓF: Can I help you? *(Moves to take the recorder from the girl's hand, but Nicolette wards him off)*

NICOLETTE: Thank you, I'll manage myself. *(At a loss)* Where can I put it?

KRISTÓF: *(Makes room on the corner of the big table)* Over here, perhaps.

NICOLETTE: *(Puts down the recorder)*

KRISTÓF: What is it?

NICOLETTE: A tape recorder. It's what I work with. *(Looks round)* Will you allow me to sit down too?

KRISTÓF: *(Politely indicates one of the Renaissance arm-chairs)* Your seat.

NICOLETTE: *(Sits down)* I'm a bit out of breath, coming up here from the bus stop.

KRISTÓF: I'm not surprised, the path is steep. *(Lifts the recorder)* This gadget weighs a stone and a half at least.

NICOLETTE: Two and a half. It's an English recorder.

KRISTÓF: Don't be angry if I was a bit surly in my reception...

NICOLETTE: I understand perfectly... You were working. *(A moment's pause)* May I ask why you were knocking on the table? *(Hastens to add)* I'm not asking as a private person.

KRISTÓF: *(Lifts the knocker to show her)* Do you know what this is?

NICOLETTE: *(Uncertainly)* Some sort of ring.

KRISTÓF: It's a knocker. If we were living in the Middle Ages, you would have used one of these pretty bronze rings to knock on my door.

NICOLETTE: The Middle Ages also seem to justify you. Even then it was not proper to intrude on someone without an appointment.

KRISTÓF: An elegant fencer would now lift his foil and say: *touché.*

NICOLETTE: But you haven't answered my question yet. If this ring is a door-knocker, then why did you hit the table with it?

KRISTÓF: Because I was curious to hear its sound. Sounds are the composer's livelihood. *(Knocks with the knocker)*

NICOLETTE: Is this a musical sound?

KRISTÓF: *(Goes on knocking, hard and loud)* A magic sound. No composer has yet used it. I have discovered it. Just when you came, I had decided I would write a ballet of this hoarse, cruel sound. *(Glances at the girl)* Are you surprised?

NICOLETTE: I'm curious.

KRISTÓF: Imagine a medieval front door. A door, as we all know, is a mysterious, demoniac structure. Through the door, you enter somewhere, and where you have entered, you abandon yourself to alien laws. *(Becomes fervent)* Just imagine... People come, they come one after another, young and old, men and women, and all of them want to go in through the door. They knock —but the door never opens.

NICOLETTE: Not even for a tip.

KRISTÓF: *(Impatiently)* This is a demoniac door, you can't get in here. In my compositions man battles against Fate—and man always fails.

NICOLETTE: I see.

KRISTÓF: Imagine the surge of *fortissimos* and the *pianissimo subitos.* Imagine the panting orchestra—six double basses, three Turkish cymbals, two bells! Do you hear those last moments? Do you hear them? When only the naked heartbeat of this knocker survives and knocks and knocks, through twenty full beats, without any melodic support, more and more sporadic, ever quieter,

till finally it heaves a last sigh. Original, isn't it?

NICOLETTE: Exciting. And how did you come across the knocker?

KRISTÓF: I chanced upon it at a second-hand shop.

NICOLETTE: A fine specimen. *(Takes it in her hand)*

KRISTÓF: *(Superciliously)* Oh, it wasn't this one! I don't say that the Hungarian knocker which I found here didn't do for the first sound tests. *(Lifts another knocker from the table)* Look... This is my Hungarian purchase. The one I found in the second-hand shop.

NICOLETTE: This one isn't ugly either. *(Takes this knocker in her hand too)*

KRISTÓF: It isn't ugly, but it couldn't provide me with the ultimate solution. I immediately wrote Mme Rosenau in Paris, you've probably heard her name, you'll find her curio-shop near the Quai Voltaire. She's an old friend of mine and I asked her urgently to send me a genuine French medieval *heurtoir*. It arrived yesterday. *(Triumphantly)* This is it! This is the one whose sound you heard when you stopped in the doorway.

NICOLETTE: *(Plays with the two knockers)* This is the Hungarian. *(Works it)*

KRISTÓF: That's right.

NICOLETTE: And this, the French. *(Taps with it too)*

KRISTÓF: That's right.

NICOLETTE: *(Now taunting her partner)* As though... the French one had a finer sound.

KRISTÓF: *(Swallows the bait)* As though?... As though?... There's a world of difference between them! The sound of this one is poor and unimaginative. The other knocks as hard and as firmly as Fate itself. *(He sounds both himself as he speaks)*

NICOLETTE: That was an interesting and instructive demonstration. *(Opens the recorder and adjusts the controls)* A pity that I didn't switch on the recorder. I ought to have had that on the tape.

KRISTÓF: *(Nervously)* What do you intend to do with that tape recorder?

NICOLETTE: To record our conversation. The Radio has a permanent feature called "The Workshop." We get authors, painters, composers and sculptors to speak—to tell us about themselves and their works. *(Picks up her microphone and starts straight off with the introduction)* Here we are, dear listeners, in the study of Kristóf Haynal, the musician of European fame, the composer of the "Liturgical Symphony," the "Carnivorous Plants" and the "Tragic Concertino."

KRISTÓF: *(In a low voice, gladly)* You know my Concertino for two flutes and two hoarse trumpets?

NICOLETTE: *(Covers the microphone with her right hand)* Hush! You mustn't speak yet. *(Continues with the introduction)* A steep path leads up to the lonely cottage on Szemlő Hill, but these—the solitude and the steep approach—are exactly appropriate to Kristóf Haynal. *(She stops the recorder)* No, that won't do yet. I must look about a bit more in your room, and I must also get to know you better. *(She starts off in the room and stops in front of the vase on the Renaissance chest)* I am ignorant. What flower is this?

KRISTÓF: Pink hawthorne.

NICOLETTE: Why do you stress that it's pink?

KRISTÓF: Because there's also a white variety. But Proust, in the marvellous chapters of *A la recherche du Temps perdu*, sets the pink above the white.

NICOLETTE: Do you like Proust?

KRISTÓF: This hawthorne is my homage and my eternal flame of remembrance, dedicated to the spirit of Proust. *(He sighs)* Once, in better days, I had branches of hawthorne sent me from France, each spring. They came wrapped in cotton wool, in an iced box, by air. I could well afford it. I have friends in France and they always play my works there.

NICOLETTE: Last year, for example, it was the Gregorian Symphonietta.

KRISTÓF: *(Overcome)* Do you even know that?

NICOLETTE: *(Mysteriously)* Everything that I need to.

KRISTÓF: But the French hawthorne stopped a long time ago. Nowadays people would pass remarks... the customs might not even allow it through. *(Regretfully)* This is only Hungarian hawthorne.

NICOLETTE: But at least it's pink. *(Steps to the Wall of Memories and looks at it)*

KRISTÓF: And do you like Proust?

NICOLETTE: *(Indifferently)* I drink sulphuric acid for breakfast. *(She does not even turn round)*

KRISTÓF: *(In confusion)* I don't understand...

NICOLETTE: Oh, don't let's talk about me, but rather about this Chinese screen.

KRISTÓF: *(Proudly)* This is the "Wall of Memories." At least that's what I call it.

NICOLETTE: May I have a closer look?

KRISTÓF: *(Goes up to it)* I'll guide you among my memories. All the beautiful and interesting events in my life have a souvenir pinned to this screen.

NICOLETTE: *(Lifts a letter from it)* This letter?

KRISTÓF: Cocteau's invitation to a fancy-dress party in his studio.

NICOLETTE: *(Reaches for another letter)* This card?

KRISTÓF: Giraudoux thanks me for my congratulations when he was promoted in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NICOLETTE: This silk cord?

KRISTÓF: I brought it with me from the dressing room of Yvonne Printemps, the famous actress. It is the silk girdle of her silk dressing-gown.

NICOLETTE: Oh, you dangerous man!

KRISTÓF: *(Smiles modestly)*

NICOLETTE: But perhaps this much will do, of the Wall of Memories. *(Goes up to the right-hand bookshelf and taps the large sand-glass in the recess)* But what's this?

KRISTÓF: A sand-glass. *(Proudly)* The symbol of my independence. You won't find a single mechanical clock in my house, I only have sand-glasses. This big one was blown to my order at Parád. It takes a week for the sand to trickle down from the upper cone to the lower one. *(Lifts a smaller sand-glass from the table)* In this, it takes twenty-four hours. *(Points at another sand-glass)* This one needs turning every four hours... *(Steps to the mantlepiece)* This one every hour... But there are others for the halfhour, for ten and for five minutes.

NICOLETTE: Is this a philosophy?

KRISTÓF: A bull's eye, my girl. The sand-glass is a philosophy. More exactly, the sand-glass divorces me from the world. I'll tell you how... You see, my big sand-glass doesn't tell me whether it's Monday, Wednesday or Saturday—all it says is that another week has gone by. *(He lifts the largest of those on the table)* And this one doesn't tick away, prodding me that it is 8 a. m., 10 a. m., 6 p. m.—its Puritan message is simply this: twenty-four hours have passed.

NICOLETTE: Is it people that you fear, or death?

KRISTÓF: Isn't it all the same? *(Triumphantly)* With my sand-glasses I live beyond space and time. I have the same units as other people, hours, days and weeks, but I have not synchronized their passage with the world. I am not one of those who live in the flock.

NICOLETTE: *(Takes the small portrait of Montaigne off the table)* Another master?

KRISTÓF: Montaigne.

NICOLETTE: The philosopher, if I am not mistaken.

KRISTÓF: That's right. I only respect Proust, but Montaigne is my master. It was he who taught me that we must retire from public life and be concerned only with ourselves.

NICOLETTE: A sympathetic teaching —the second part at least.

KRISTÓF: Look about you... Having travelled a great deal, never lamented over women, having eaten and drunk well, Montaigne also locked himself into a round room

such as this, among his books. Wars of religion raged outside, people killed each other, but he did not want anything to do with the blood and the struggle. He sat by his writing desk and worked on his own life's work... I have furnished my room in his spirit. His table was like this one, his chairs like these... I brought the furniture with me from Paris in 1938.

NICOLETTE: Did they wrong you very much?

KRISTÓF: *(his face is overclouded)* It is no longer important... Between the two Wars I was the most promising young Hungarian musician... I had studied in Paris, and my works were played all over Europe.

NICOLETTE: And at home you were nevertheless set aside.

KRISTÓF: Only later.

NICOLETTE: Why?

KRISTÓF: Don't let's go into that now... Stendhal concluded one of his novels with the words: "To the happy few." Kristóf Haynal also composes for the "happy few." In 1948 I left the Academy of Music and first withdrew to a quiet room in a museum, then retired.

NICOLETTE: But they still play your works.

KRISTÓF: I'm put on the program of one or two concerts a year—that much they condescend to do. But do you know how I have been classified? In the bottom grade... The bottom one!... Abroad I receive more respect.

NICOLETTE: Then why did you stay here?

KRISTÓF: Once I cannot live in ancient Greece, why should I now be a French, a Spanish or a British citizen?... *(Heaving another great sigh)* I would have liked to live in Hellas, upon a small island in Hellas, even in a mean shack, but with the open horizon about me, the frothy seas and infinite freedom!...

(At this moment the old butler enters, rolling in a tea-trolley, on which there are a tea-pot, two cups, a sand-glass, and an extra little jug with milk)

BUTLER: Afternoon tea, sir. *(Wheels the tea-trolley to the arm-chair in front of the fireplace and sets the tea)*

NICOLETTE: *(Asks in a whisper)* Is he the deaf butler?

KRISTÓF: *(Indifferently, aloud)* Yes.

NICOLETTE: *(Also raises her voice.)* What's his name?

BUTLER: *(Bows)* György. *(He places the two-branched candlestick on the small table and lights the candles. He bows once more and exit)*

NICOLETTE: *(has been looking at him in bewilderment)* Why, isn't he deaf, then?

KRISTÓF: Not all that much. *(Leads the girl to the tea-trolley)* Have a cup of tea with me. You won't be sorry. Its Earl Grey's Mixture. Jackson's, you know. You know it, don't you? The world's finest tea.

NICOLETTE: *(sits down, looks up gravely)* Do you use a sand-glass for drinking tea as well?

KRISTÓF: Earl Grey's requires exactly six minutes' immersion in the scalding water. And this sand-glass takes just six minutes to trickle through.

NICOLETTE: May I have a closer look?

KRISTÓF: Do, by all means... *(Hands the sand-glass to the girl)* It is even lovelier close by. *(Enraptured)* A total blending with nature! As though I were to use the movements of the clouds to measure the hours, or the tide and ebb of the sea to measure the days!...

NICOLETTE: *(replaces the sand-glass on the small table)*

KRISTÓF: *(almost screams)* Oh dear! You've put it down the wrong way round! The sand's trickling backwards! *(Quickly rights the sand-glass)* In Hamlet's words: "The time is out of joint:—O cursed spite, That ever I was born to set it right!"

NICOLETTE: A tragic misdeed, then.

KRISTÓF: Almost. *(Pours out the tea)* If I hadn't noticed, we'd be drinking black tea now... *(Examines the beverage he has poured)* I hope I was in time to save it... That's right, the colour's quite tolerable...

(Pours for the girl as well) Take some milk with it. Earl Grey's needs just two spoonfuls of milk.

NICOLETTE: Thank you. *(Obediently measures out the milk)*

KRISTÓF: The barbarians destroy the complex savours of their tea with sugar, rum and lemon, though the English have taught mankind that tea must only be tempered with milk.

NICOLETTE: *(Takes a sip of her tea as he speaks)* Heavenly!

KRISTÓF: I'm glad you like it. *(He also takes a gulp)* Heavenly...

NICOLETTE: If I light a cigarette now, am I a barbarian?

KRISTÓF: *(Startled)* Why do you ask?

NICOLETTE: I am afraid lest the English may have invented something about this too.

KRISTÓF: The rule is—smoke English cigarettes, if you're drinking English tea. You needn't smile, this isn't anglomania. Nor even that I have lit the candles for tea. The candle flames in the room are not only pretty but also useful. They cleanse the air of the cigarette smoke in the room. In distinguished English homes tea is always drunk like this.

NICOLETTE: I've made a note of it.

KRISTÓF: *(Opens the big silver box on the table)* Passing Cloud?... Medium?... The one is a Wills' brand, the other John Player's. Notable cigarettes. I was sent them recently from Kingston upon Hall. A charming seaside town in the Midlands. They played my trio there in January. The cigarettes were sent me by the grateful first violinist.

NICOLETTE: I'll choose this pretty pink box. It is as pink as the hawthorne. *(Takes a cigarette and lights it off the flame of the candle)*

KRISTÓF: You're mocking me, my girl. You drink sulphuric acid for breakfast.

NICOLETTE: But afterwards I cure myself with sweet syrup.

KRISTÓF: *(Approaches the girl)* You're not a hawthorne, you're a sweetbriar!... You conceal your thorns behind your pretty blossoms. *(Hesitantly makes as though to pat Nicolette)*

NICOLETTE: *(Nimbly evades the hesitant advance)* What is the French name of the sweetbriar? *(She puts the question in quick, snappy tones)*

KRISTÓF: Églantine.

NICOLETTE: The German name?

KRISTÓF: *(Obediently)* Heckenrose.

NICOLETTE: The Latin name?

KRISTÓF: *(Proud that he knows)* Rosa gallica.

NICOLETTE: The Greek name?

KRISTÓF: *(Conceitedly responds)* To agrion rodon.

NICOLETTE: You know everything! *(Impudently)* My microphone can hardly wait to hear you. *(Goes quickly to the tape recorder)* Thanks again for the heavenly tea—and now to work! *(Starts the recorder and prattles away)* Here we are in the marvellous study of Kristóf Haynal, amid sand-glasses and hawthornes, in the company of Cocteau's letters and the dressing-gowns of famous French actresses, beyond space and time. And we'll start straight away by asking the master—what are you working at? *(She lifts the microphone to Kristóf)*

KRISTÓF: *(With grandiloquent solemnity)* You will perhaps be surprised at my answer. Rimbaud, the prodigy of French poetry, wrote his famous sonnet at the middle of the last century about vowels. I consider that the time has at last come for me to compose a rhapsody about the consonants.

NICOLETTE: *(Takes the microphone from him)* Truly—can there be a more exciting, a more timely theme than the consonants? *(Holds out the microphone)*

KRISTÓF: *(Speaking at the microphone)* I can declare with conviction that there cannot be. That which is important in human communications is nowadays entrusted not to the vowels, but to the consonants. In the classical ages, at the time of the playful *bel canto*, the vowel predominated. But in our age, during these years of great

clashes and dramatic declamations, it is the consonants that speed human passions, sizzling, buzzing, detonating, like engines.

NICOLETTE: *(At the microphone)* From this beautiful statement I gather that you do not isolate yourself from the present either.

KRISTÓF: *(At the microphone)* From neither the present nor the past, but what interests me in both is that which is timeless.

NICOLETTE: Now I have a very attractive question to put to you. Would you say something about Béla Bartók?

KRISTÓF: *(Is silent, then says morosely)* It is a hard question—Bartók didn't like me.

NICOLETTE: Then I'll ask something else.

KRISTÓF: *(Nervously)* No, no! We can't leave Bartók out. You just ask your question.

NICOLETTE: *(Starts the recorder)* What memories does Kristóf Haynal, a master of modern music known throughout Europe, preserve of that other great master of modern music, Béla Bartók?

KRISTÓF: *(Replies, speaking at the microphone in tones of devout piety)* When anyone admired and praised Scarlatti's marvellous performance on the cembalo, he always referred to Händel as the unsurpassable master, and respectfully made the sign of the Cross. I can say no more: whenever I hear the name of Bartók, I make the sign of the Cross. *(And he does actually cross himself)*

NICOLETTE: *(Stops the tape recorder)* A pity that that sign of the Cross could only be transmitted if this were television. Otherwise it was a witty and a moving answer.

KRISTÓF: *(Ponders)* No, no it was not good. Could you delete it?

NICOLETTE: At the pressure of a button. Shall I?

KRISTÓF: Please do.

NICOLETTE: *(Deletes the answer)*

KRISTÓF: *(Seizes the microphone. Very emotionally)* Since Bartók is dead, I feel I have been living more negligently. There is no one to take care of me. *(Hands back the microphone)* That much will do. There's no point in humiliating oneself.

NICOLETTE: You're right. *(Stops the recorder)* It'll make a telling end.

KRISTÓF: Is that to be all? *(He is visibly disappointed)*

NICOLETTE: Yes, as far as our little interview is concerned. But I'd like you to say something more. Something nice and charming. *(With a bewitching stress)* For me alone.

KRISTÓF: *(Unsuspecting)* Nice and charming? For you alone?

NICOLETTE: Something I shall remember for a long time.

KRISTÓF: Shall I play you something on the piano? *(Magnanimously)* I'll allow you to record some of my playing on your tape. Let's go to the music room.

NICOLETTE: I know of an even more striking ending. If you'll permit me, I shall now expose my trick to you... *(Resolutely)* I lied to you. I'm not on the Radio's staff. Take a good look... I'm a fraud!

KRISTÓF: A fraud?... *(He can do no more than stammer)* I don't understand... The interview, the tape recorder...

NICOLETTE: The tape recorder belongs to a friend of mine. I asked her to lend it me. She is really a member of the Radio's staff, but of course she knows nothing of my imposture.

KRISTÓF: But then... In that case... Who are you?

NICOLETTE: I introduced myself when I came in. I'm Nicolette Csíky.

KRISTÓF: Is that your real name?

NICOLETTE: The name's real. Only the rest is lies. Please forgive me.

KRISTÓF: *(Is very annoyed)* Why did you do it?

NICOLETTE: I wanted to get to know you.

KRISTÓF: Talk sense, will you please? ...Don't go on playing the fool.

NICOLETTE: And I wanted you to know me.

KRISTÓF: How much did you get?

NICOLETTE: Do you think I've been paid?

KRISTÓF: What am I to believe? You've been hired and sent here...

NICOLETTE: *(Interrupts him)* By whom?

KRISTÓF: My enemies. To trick me... To put me to shame... To record my sincere thoughts...

NICOLETTE: It isn't true!

KRISTÓF: God knows in whose company you'll be replaying tonight what you've fraudulently obtained from me!

NICOLETTE: Would it reassure you, if I were to delete the tape?

KRISTÓF: *(Shouting)* Delete it!

NICOLETTE: *(Deletes the tape)*

KRISTÓF: *(Checks it)* You've really deleted it. *(Is amazed)*

NICOLETTE: Now will you believe me?

KRISTÓF: *(Uncertainly)* I don't know... It's not so easy to believe you.

NICOLETTE: *(Superciliously)* If someone had sent me to play a trick on you, I'd have taken my recorder after the Bartók statements, you might even have seen me down to the garden gate, we would have bidden each other a courteous farewell—and I'd have had my booty: the tape. The hoax would have been a success, we'd have played back as much as we could at some party or other tonight, and you might only have had a phonecall tomorrow morning—possibly the sound of a medieval knocker—to let you know it had been a practical joke. *(Convincingly)* But I've deleted the tape!... What have I got left? Nothing!... Do you believe me now?

KRISTÓF: But why did you put on this act?

NICOLETTE: Well, what could I have done? Should I have stood among the autograph collectors at the musicians' entrance? You wouldn't even have noticed me. Anyway, I don't collect autographs. Or if I'd written a letter? You wouldn't even have answered it. But what could you have answered? I had to break in here to make you notice me.

KRISTÓF: I can assure you, you've made me notice you.

NICOLETTE: You're angry now, but you're wrong, you know. What's happened? We've had a chat, it was pleasant, interesting. We've got to the end of it, we may as well say good-bye to each other.

KRISTÓF: *(Erupts)* What did you really want?

NICOLETTE: I don't know exactly, myself. If you'd given me an opportunity, I'd have confessed that I like you. But we never really got as far as that confession.

KRISTÓF: *(Impatiently)* You're acting again.

NICOLETTE: Why can't you believe what's so simple?

KRISTÓF: You don't even know me.

NICOLETTE: I know you well. I knew the Tragic Concertino and the Gregorian Symphonietta too.

KRISTÓF: Yes, you knew them.

NICOLETTE: But I don't want to deceive you. I won't say your music captivated me so much that I also had to get to know the man. Though I could make such a lovely, rounded story of it... For instance I might say: "I was searching on the wireless and there was wonderful music from a foreign station. I listened to it enthralled, and after the end of the piece I heard the name of the composer—your name." It would have been a nice story, but a lie.

KRISTÓF: Did you hear the Tragic Concertino here?

NICOLETTE: Don't rush ahead, we haven't come to that yet. Last year, or the year before last, you announced a lecture on Galileo.

KRISTÓF: *(Swallows the bait)* Did you hear it?

NICOLETTE: The posters advertised your lecture with the word: Galileo. They didn't say anything else. Everyone thought it was to be about the fashionable Galileo, the scientist. And then you, to the annoyance

of the audience, talked of another Galileo, some kind of ancient musician, whom no one knew.

KRISTÓF: *(Sadly)* It was Vincenzo Galileo, the most important member of the Florentine Camerata Society. It was he who discovered the fragment of the ancient Greek Mesomedes hymn.

NICOLETTE: Péter said it's amazing how many snobs there are in Budapest. For there were some people who hissed and left, but there were others who applauded you. That was when I first heard your name. Only the psychology of the subconscious could discover why, but I remembered your name: Haynal with a *y* in the middle.

KRISTÓF: Who's Péter?

NICOLETTE: My husband.

KRISTÓF: *(Disappointed)* Have you got a husband?

NICOLETTE: Why does that interest you?

KRISTÓF: I thought you were unmarried.

NICOLETTE: *(Thinks for a few seconds. She's going to tell a lie)* Péter was sent out to a congress last year and he stayed abroad. We're divorced now. May I continue?

KRISTÓF: *(Politely)* I interrupted you. I'm sorry.

NICOLETTE: Later I met you again. Or rather not you, but again only your name. I was sitting at the hairdresser's, and there was an elderly doll sitting beside me—one of those clay-pidgeon types, must have been at least thirty. I didn't like the lady at all, she was nervous and also ill-mannered. I heard her tell the hairdresser there was to be a reception at the Belgian Legation, that's where she was to go. When she had gone, the manicure girl whispered to me that the old doll was the mistress of a composer called Haynal, and that she was a pianist. "Well," I said, "they'll have an easy job getting a Belgian visa. I bet they'll be sunbathing on the beach at Ostend this summer."

KRISTÓF: They did actually play a berceuse of mine over Brussels Radio last year.

NICOLETTE: *(Taking no notice of his interjection)* Later I heard women were of no importance to you, you easily got rid of them. I must admit I liked this. I don't like men who pull frothy petticoats over their heads and think the starry heavens are shining above them. May I go on?

KRISTÓF: I'm becoming more and more interested.

NICOLETTE: Then I went to a concert where they played something of yours. Don't be put out at my saying "something." I know exactly what it was. That certain Tragic Concertino. There were about twenty kids there, who enthused. Dizzy Music Academy students in the side gallery. They clapped till you came out. Then at last I had a look at the man who came out and bowed. I won't deny that I liked him.

KRISTÓF: That was last winter. I know exactly—on December the eighth. . .

NICOLETTE: Later I dreamed about you. Now that was not at all to my liking. I ticked myself off: "Surely you're not in love, old chick? Don't be silly, or you'll come to a bad end." But however much I chatted away with myself, I came to be ever more preoccupied with Kristóf Haynal. I made enquiries about you. One day I loitered about here, in front of the house, in case we might meet. That was no good. And yesterday I heard from my friend that she was going to interview you. "Give me the recorder," I said to her. "I'll do it for you." So I did, but you had me delete it.— That's all there is to it. Did I bore you with my romance?

KRISTÓF: *(Harshly)* How do you make your living, Nicolette Csíky?

NICOLETTE: *(The question is unexpected, but she smiles nevertheless)* Now I shall have to disappoint you. My answer is: with this and that.

KRISTÓF: *(Ironically)* This and that.

I'm not surprised; that's the kind of answer I expected.

NICOLETTE: You needn't be rude. I'd better tell you the real source of my living. I'm supported by my elderly father who lives in the provinces. I receive a regular monthly allowance, like the divorced young women of the *ancien régime.*

KRISTÓF: And what do you do with all the time you have on your hands?

NICOLETTE: I learn languages. Do you approve? I'm glad. You know I'm a rough diamond really.

KRISTÓF: There is an exasperating lack of poetry in your style.

NICOLETTE: Why? Because I told you point blank that I liked you? Well, I'll confess... I came here planning to play the part of the innocent maiden. That's how I started, but somehow it didn't go down well. So I preferred to abandon the role.

KRISTÓF: Should I be shocked? I'd rather not.

NICOLETTE: You'd better not! For when you said I was a sweetbriar, you really wanted to kiss me. Of course in a different style, to a pretty Gregorian tune, not the way I approach the business. Do you deny it?

KRISTÓF: *(Heroically)* I don't.

NICOLETTE: A favourable turn. I'd really like to call you Kristóf, but I daren't yet.

KRISTÓF: Do!

NICOLETTE: Kristóf, let's get together, the two of us! What do you say to my offer?

KRISTÓF: *(Frankly)* I'm at a loss...

The stage darkens. By the time it is lit up again a short while later, Nicolette is no longer in the room, Ilona and Kristóf are seated in the two arm-chairs.

Ilona is Kristóf Haynal's divorced wife. He had tried—during the first years of their marriage—to train his wife to become the priestess of the domestic sanctuary, but she had not suited him. Ilona Morvay was the daughter of a country land-owner and only liked Budapest in the winter—even then for no more than two or three months. When she became Haynal's wife, the young composer had just been launched by his first successes, but Ilona did not like the intellectual life and its attendant complexities. She was more interested in the orderliness of her house, in quiet acquisition and family intrigues. They were both disappointed in one another. Their marriage was in any case ill-founded—he had wanted a squire's daughter and a small fortune to satisfy his snobbish whims; the end of the War and the great change shattered his hopes. She soon became disillusioned with him—her homely realism led her to sense the mediocrity of his talents, his financial insecurity, the lie behind the artificial refinement of his civilization. While they had lived together, they had not ceased to taunt one another, but when they parted in 1946 there was no anger between them. Ilona is now a wizened old maid. She has been living in the country for fifteen years, her bachelor brother keeps bees, and she is his housekeeper. They live poorly, and Ilona is a little tired of the countryside. During the past fifteen years Ilona and Kristóf, the former couple, have only rarely met.—Haynal has now asked his first wife to come up to him and help him in his great predicament.

Six months have passed since the first Scene. It was spring then, now it is autumn. The Proust vase stands empty.

The stage is gradually lit. It is an autumn afternoon.

KRISTÓF: *(Is recounting something, of which he is now in the very midst)* I said to her: "I'm at a loss..."

ILONA: Don't go into the details, I can imagine the rest.

KRISTÓF: You're right, the rest is easy to imagine. So that was how she came up to me, and this was our first conversation. "She kissed me, trembling, on the lips. —Thus Galeotto's came to be the book.— That day we read not after this."

ILONA: *(Shuddering)* Kristóf, that's a quotation.

KRISTÓF: Dante used this *terza rima* to illustrate the first kiss of Paolo and Francesca.

ILONA: How many times did I ask you, when I was still your wife, to leave the great spirits. Tags give me a headache. Have you forgotten?

KRISTÓF: Forgive me, Ilona. I did forget.

ILONA: Fifteen years ago we would have been quarrelling by this time. Now you say you're sorry. It was better to be divorced, after all.

KRISTÓF: Don't let's stir up the past now. I want you to help me. Only you can help me, Ilona.

ILONA: You have strange notions. You array your first wife against the second. You were always very comfortable.

KRISTÓF: Go on, scold away. Your goodness is like a scrubbing brush. It makes my skin tingle.

ILONA: Was that a compliment?

KRISTÓF: I was recalling the good old days.

BUTLER: *(Wheels in the tea-trolley with tea, milk and the sand-glass)*

ILONA: Oh, those old sand-glasses! How you annoyed me with them.

KRISTÓF: I'm very sorry.

ILONA: And your deaf old butler. Now that was a good choice. A butler is somehow more distinguished than a wife. When we were divorced, I approved of this János.

BUTLER: *(Has finished his business the while, and is on the way out. He bows respectfully)* György. *(He bows once more and exit)*

ILONA: *(Looks after him)* Has this György had his deafness treated lately?

KRISTÓF: No, it's merely that he insists on his proper name.

ILONA: What do you pay him?

KRISTÓF: He's deaf and old. He can't get a good job. He's cheaper than a char.

ILONA: You've got your wits about you, I see. *(Looks at the sand-glass)* How many minutes for my tea?

KRISTÓF: I've had him brew Hornimann's today. Five minutes. Just time to pour it. *(Does so)*

ILONA: *(Takes a sip of the tea)* If I'm to help you, I must know everything... There's something I still don't understand. What did this woman want?

KRISTÓF: To captivate me. To shackle me. To despoil me. To render me ridiculous. To set me on fire. Whatever you want!...

ILONA: Quite a big choice. But what was it that she used to captivate you with?

KRISTÓF: Her youth.

ILONA: What else did she do?

KRISTÓF: *(Tenderly)* She was immodestly young.

ILONA: It's not her morals I want you to tell me about.

KRISTÓF: She was like a branch of hawthorne in blossom.

ILONA: Another quotation of something. Who wrote that hawthorne branch?

KRISTÓF: Proust.

ILONA: You used to mention him a lot when I was your wife. I don't want you to quote either Proust or anyone else to me.

KRISTÓF: But before Proust, God also wrote the hawthorne.

ILONA: I've no use for Bible texts either.

KRISTÓF: You're severe today.

ILONA: Of course I'm severe. It's no joke being jolted along for six hours on the Dombovár slow train, in this sultry autumn heat. The next time you need advice, send a car for me. But I'm wasting my breath on you!... You never had money for a car—you preferred to buy old furniture.

KRISTÓF: *(In hypocritical tones)* Ilona, did you come by slow train?

ILONA: What on earth could I have come by? I've no money for the express, and hitch-hiking is really not my line. Not now.

KRISTÓF: If I'd have known you were coming by the slow train...

ILONA: You'd have sent me my fare. Thanks, we're not as low as that yet.

KRISTÓF: How are you getting on at home?

ILONA: Poorly, thank you.

KRISTÓF: Your brother?

ILONA: Thank you for your inquiry, he's also poorly.

KRISTÓF: Is he still busy with his bees?

ILONA: There's no need for you to pity him. He's always had others to work instead of him—yesterday it was his farm-hands, to day it's his bees. But don't let's exchange courtesies, let's talk about you. Where's your wife?... *(With sudden suspicion)* Is she in Budapest? Is she here? Can't she eavesdrop on us?

KRISTÓF: We've nothing to fear. She's gone to the country with the car.

ILONA: *(Startled)* Have you got a car after all then?

KRISTÓF: Nicolette wanted it so badly, I had to buy it for her.

ILONA: You bought her a car?

KRISTÓF: I had to. *(He says this very sadly)*

ILONA: Then there's serious trouble here. Very serious trouble, indeed. Go on, quickly... So she came up to you, overpowered you, and you married her.

KRISTÓF: Oh no, it didn't happen all that quickly. First we went to Prague and listened to the concerts of the Prague Spring.

ILONA: And was that where you gave in?

KRISTÓF: No, not yet. Only after Juliet's monologue.

ILONA: Who's that?

KRISTÓF: Juliet... From Romeo and Juliet.

ILONA: Do you want to do some more quoting?

KRISTÓF: I must. Without Juliet's monologue I can't tell you the story of that night.

ILONA: *(Exclaims)* Oh, I see now!... I understand everything!... That little beast has found the key to you.

KRISTÓF: *(Nervously)* Key? What key are you talking about?

ILONA: You just go on... It'll all be plain in a moment.

The stage darkens

By the time it is lit up again, Nicolette is sitting in Ilona's place, in a long, white nylon night-dress that covers even her bare feet. Nicolette has changed—she is modest and polite, only occasionally letting her former cheeky voice be heard.

On the small table in front of the fireplace there is a bottle of red wine.

Kristóf is just drawing the curtains across the windows.

It is night-time, the lighting is by the chandelier

NICOLETTE: *(Watches Kristóf's movements)* That's Cassandra, the pessimistic Trojan Princess.

KRISTÓF: *(Glancing at the gobelin figure)* That's right, Cassandra. *(Steps to the other curtain)*

NICOLETTE: And that one's Amphion, who could move rocks with the music of his flute and thus built the walls of Thebes.

KRISTÓF: *(Has completed the job and advances to the table)* How well you know it all.

NICOLETTE: I'm learning my lessons. Believe it or not, I like learning. My professors adored me, I was the pride of the University.

KRISTÓF: *(Lifts the silver camel from the table)* If you're such a good student, I'll reward you by telling you the story of this silver camel. Take a good look at it!... It used to misbehave in the rooms of Louis XV at Versailles once.

NICOLETTE: Misbehave?

KRISTÓF: Don't you see? There, on the pedestal, is its misbehaviour. *(Puts the statuette back)* From Versailles it was taken to Naples, to the Museo Nazionale. Then it was stolen—and now it is here.

NICOLETTE: Can you steal things from the Naples museum?

KRISTÓF: It's a disorderly museum. Formerly it was possible to steal from it. Now, of course, it isn't.

NICOLETTE: Did you steal it?

KRISTÓF: *(Outraged)* How can you say such a thing? I bought it and paid for it.—But let's leave the camel and turn to that for which we have been preparing all day. As

we said—tonight is to be the night of poetry and love. I've even found a name four our night—*Jardin d'Amour*. The Garden of Love.

NICOLETTE: Beautiful.

KRISTÓF: Red wine on our table.

NICOLETTE: I've had a look at it. *Vino Falerno.*

KRISTÓF: Yes, so it is. Falernian. The drink of poets—an immortal drink. And the genuine article—bottled in the Rome cellars of Giuseppe Scala. It was sent me by my Italian friends.

NICOLETTE: Horace drank this wine, didn't he?

KRISTÓF: You're right. At my school leaving exam I had to translate the Ode to Delius. "And thou shallt pour of best Falernian, on festive merry days." *(Holds the bottle in his hand and converses with it)* Falernian. For a long time I didn't even believe thou wert reality—I thought thou wast the vaunted crest of poems. A beautiful red wine. Thou art not so menacingly dark as Burgundy or the wine of Eger. Thou art lighter. A noble wine, antique wine, Latin wine. *With a sudden movement he pours)* Let's drink. *(They drink. To Nicolette, who is crouching in her night-dress)* Aren't you cold?

NICOLETTE: *(Puts down her glass)* It is a warm, June night. The curtains are drawn.

KRISTÓF: You're lovely. Quite like Isabelle de Chevron, the heroine of Rilke's letters from Muzot.

NICOLETTE: Who was Isabelle? I'm still so ignorant. Teach me!

KRISTÓF: A beautiful young widow. Two men contended for the lovely Isabelle, but she could not choose between them, whereupon the suitors in their fiery passion clashed so violently, that in their duel each killed the other. The unhappy Isabelle was distracted at the death of the three men (for her husband had also died but a short while earlier), her mind became deranged and she ran off, always seeking the three men, in very scant clothing—*trés légèrement habillée*, as Rilke put it. Your attire reminds me of Isabelle.

NICOLETTE: I wouldn't like to be Isabelle, I don't want anyone about me to die.

KRISTÓF: It's only two days since we've come back from the concerts of the Prague Spring, and for the time being everything still reminds me of Prague. Rilke too is the poet of Prague, that's why I recalled his heroine, Isabelle de Chevron. I have, in any case, but gratitude in my recollections for Prague, because that was where you changed.

NICOLETTE: Oh, that wonderful night in the Old City!

KRISTÓF: We arrived, and you would have liked to dance at the Alcron, the very first evening.

NICOLETTE: But you said, let's rather wander through the Old City at midnight. You were right. Narrow streets, trembling stars, an enchanted world—that's where I really came to know you.

KRISTÓF: First the music of Mozart and Beethoven, then at night the petrified music, the City.

NICOLETTE: I have you, you, you to thank for it! Before Prague I had pestered you for Paris and Rome, but you decided rather to go to the city of Rainer Maria Rilke. There again, you were right!

KRISTÓF: We'll see Rome and Paris too—perhaps as early as September, or else next May. But now, let us drink and play love.—Drink!... *(Pours)* Chin-chin.

NICOLETTE: Chin-chin. *(They drink)*

KRISTÓF: Have you learned the scene?

NICOLETTE: *(With emotion)* They might well be the words of my own love—I did not have to learn them.

KRISTÓF: The passages I marked?

NICOLETTE: *(Obediently)* The ones you marked.

KRISTÓF: Then I shall now lift you onto the table.

NICOLETTE: Lift me, love.

KRISTÓF: *(Tries to lift Nicolette, but somehow doesn't succeed in setting her on the table)*

NICOLETTE: Like this, perhaps... *(Nimbly steps on the Savonarola chair and thence on the table)*

KRISTÓF: *(Looks at her, enchanted)* How lovely you are!... The white silk shows off your body, your youth... *(With moving frankness)* I have always dreamt of playing Romeo and Juliet, the most beautiful part, the balcony scene, with a young woman whom I love.

NICOLETTE: *(On the table)* Oh, how many times you must have played it!

KRISTÓF: Never yet, never!

NICOLETTE: Didn't you ever ask anyone to?

KRISTÓF: I must admit, I did... Would that I had not... For other women were reluctant, they thought it odd, they were evasive... They were not Juliets!

NICOLETTE: And I?

KRISTÓF: You are! A true Juliet... They were Philistines, afraid of poetry and of music.—You are Juliet!

NICOLETTE: *(Pedantically)* A woman who doesn't like poetry and music is not only deaf, but will sooner or later betray you. Do not trust her!

KRISTÓF: Stage managers, attention! This is how Juliet should be set on the balcony—in a single translucent veil, for she is preparing for bed, her nurse is bidding her to come. *(He has, in the meanwhile, lit the candles of the three-pronged candlestick)* My Juliet! I extend to thee the sun, the moon and the bright stars!...

NICOLETTE: "Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,—Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek."

KRISTÓF: *(In the meanwhile also lights the two-pronged candlestick and switches off the chandelier. Now only Nicolette's candles upon the table and Kristóf's two candles below light the scene)*

NICOLETTE: Shall we begin? *(Declaims)* "O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?—Deny thy father and refuse thy name."

KRISTÓF: Wait, wait!... My heart is heavy. You have completely enchanted me. Give me just another moment... *(Presses his hand to his heart)* My heart throbs as though I were really in Verona, in an orchard under Juliet's window.

NICOLETTE: Maybe a trioxazin would help.

KRISTÓF: Thanks, I'm better now. *(Takes a big breath)* We can begin!

NICOLETTE: You begin.

KRISTÓF: That's right... *(An even bigger breath)*

"But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!—
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she."

(In prosaic tones) Now I shall leave out a few lines and skip to the stars.

"Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return."

NICOLETTE: *(Dreamily)* Oh, Romeo!...

KRISTÓF: It's not your turn, and that's not your text.

NICOLETTE: But it's just that sigh that's needed there.

KRISTÓF: Juliet only says "Ah me!"

NICOLETTE: It's very impertinent to argue with Shakespeare, but I must say, the old boy's wrong there. For why should Juliet say "Ah me!"? What an ugly and plain interjection, to say "Ah me!" She stands on the balcony, thinks of her Romeo, doesn't even notice what she's saying, and pronounces the boy's name: "Oh, Romeo!"

KRISTÓF: Wait a moment, I'll have a look at the English original... *(Sets the candlestick on the table, turns the leaves of a book, searches)*

NICOLETTE: Shall we say it in English?

KRISTÓF: *(Looks up)* A beautiful idea! A lovely idea!... *(Becomes dejected)* No, perhaps not... We would have to spend some time rehearsing the English pronunciation—and then we'd have to give up playing the

balcony scene tonight!... No, no! I want to be Romeo tonight!... Continue, perhaps, where it says: "How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?"—The intervening part's a bit lengthy, and there's not much gist to it. *(Seizes the Hungarian volume, sits down and checks her recital)*

NICOLETTE: *(Recites the lines)*

"How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb;
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee there."

KRISTÓF: Not "there," it's "here."

NICOLETTE: *(Repeats)* Here.

KRISTÓF: *(Reads his own part from the book)*

"With love's light wing did I o'erperch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out..."

NICOLETTE *(Interrupts)* Kristóf!...

KRISTÓF: Don't disturb me!

NICOLETTE; Kristóf, put down the book, be Romeo! Don't read it—speak from your heart!

KRISTÓF: You're right... *(Throws the book aside, stands up, seizes the candlestick)* This must be said from the heart! *(Recites loudly, almost wildly)*

"With love's light wing did I o'erperch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out:
And what love can do, that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me."

NICOLETTE:

"If they do see thee they will murder thee."

KRISTÓF:

"Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity."

NICOLETTE:

"I would not for the world they saw thee here."

KRISTÓF:

"I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And, but thou love me, let them find me here:
(With dramatic passion) My life were better ended by their hate
Than death prorogued wanting of thy love."

NICOLETTE: *(Exclaims)* That was marvellous. That really came from your heart! I'll give you a kiss for that! *(Sets the candlestick down on the table, hops down and embraces Kristóf)*

KRISTÓF: My love!

NICOLETTE: My love!

KRISTÓF: Let's drink a glass of the Falernian. Wine of poets...

NICOLETTE: Vino Falerno! Let's drink.

KRISTÓF: *(Pours)* Chin-chin.

NICOLETTE: Chin-chin. *(They clink their glasses)* And now we can continue... *(Runs to the Savonarola chair to step up on the table)*

KRISTÓF; Wait! I feel I could lift you now. My love has given me strength. *(Embraces Nicolette and actually lifts her to the table)*

NICOLETTE: *(From above)* My love!

KRISTÓF: *(Embraces Nicolette's knees)* My love!

NICOLETTE: And now my scene follows! *(Seizes the candles)*

"Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke: but farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say Ay;
And I will take thy word: yet, if thou swear'st,

Thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries
They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully:
Or, if thou think'st I am too quickly won,..."

(Interrupts herself) Do you remember the afternoon when I broke in to you with a two and a half stone tape recorder? I was not after frivolous adventure then, it was true love that impelled me.

KRISTÓF: *(Embraces Nicolette's knees, exclaims)* Juliet! My Juliet!

NICOLETTE: What is your wish?

KRISTÓF: Come down!

NICOLETTE: But I still have some lines left.

KRISTÓF: Never mind, come down.

NICOLETTE: *(Jumps down)* Here I am, my dear.

KRISTÓF: *(Embraces her)* We shall continue the balcony scene—but not here. In our inner chambers.

NICOLETTE: *(Smiles)* If you think so...

KRISTÓF: *(As though he were showing the way, starts off to exit with his burning candles)* Come!

NICOLETTE: *(Also takes her candlestick)* Your obedient servant follows you. *(And so she does)*

CURTAIN

In the sequel Kristóf gradually finds out that his young wife is given to drinking, that she has repeatedly behaved in a scandalous way at receptions given by foreign embassies, that she is carrying on with a former lover and—what most distresses him—that she sneers and pokes fun at everything he holds sacred, from his Gothic-Renaissance table to the sand-glass. Ilona, his first wife, is called to the rescue; she declares herself ready to smoke Nicolette out of the house, but she makes it a condition that Kristóf bring her to Budapest from the remote village where she is living and provide her with a flat and a job. Meanwhile she comes to live with them in the house whence she tries to oust Nicolette by every vexatious device. Contrary to all expectations Nicolette puts up no fight, or rather she ignores Ilona altogether. Ilona now seeks an ally in Nicolette's first husband, Péter, who had not left the country—another of Nicolette's lies—but is engaged in literary-historical research in a Budapest library.

Through her first husband Nicolette comes to realize how deep she has sunken. She proposes to divorce Kristóf and marry Péter again. The latter, though his feelings have as yet not completely changed, refuses the proposal.

With all her endeavours a failure, Ilona suggests to Kristóf that she offer Nicolette a sum of money on condition that she leave the house immediately and consent to the divorce. When the two women confront each other, Ilona offers the money to Nicolette who, to her greatest surprise, takes the cheque without a word. And now an unexpected thing happens: Nicolette in turn offers the money to the first wife and only wants to know in exchange the real reasons for her having divorced Kristóf. This scene—the climax of the play—follows in full.

ILONA *(gradually giving in)* What I still don't see is what you intend to do.

NICOLETTE: Nothing. I want to listen to a good piece of theatre.

ILONA: What is it you want to hear?

NICOLETTE: Whatever comes to your mind.

ILONA: And will Kristóf know about it?

NICOLETTE: I solemnly promise never to tell anyone. Not even Kristóf.

ILONA: *(Takes the cheque)* Will it be worth this much to you?

NICOLETTE: A one-man theatre is an expensive piece of entertainment.

ILONA: *(Still anxious)* And what if you don't find it entertaining?

NICOLETTE: You leave that to me. *(Again flings herself into the arm-chair as though it was a good stall in the theatre)* Now then. Why did you divorce him?

ILONA: *(The confession that she has never made to anyone so far, erupts from her)* Because he is an empty-headed, vain baboon.

NICOLETTE: *(voluptuously)* Go on.

ILONA: *(Also sits down in the other armchair. The way they are seated, they cannot see a large part of the room.)* My first disillusionment was when I signed the marriage register. Till then, I had thought that he spelt his name with a *y* in the middle. Because you know how keen he is on titles of nobility and on *y*-s. What he liked most about me was that I was a squire's daughter—Ilona Morvay de Szárazberek. Poor thing... he had no title of nobility and he couldn't stick a *y* at the end of his name—so he smuggled it into the middle. But the marriage register had the real name, and that's where I saw that he was simply called Hajnal, with a *j* and not a *y*.

NICOLETTE: You know, I was taken in by that *y* too.

ILONA: There, you see, it impressed you too... Later he had his name done up officially to match. His documents were also made out with a *y*.

NICOLETTE: More!

ILONA: *(A little offended)* What do you mean, "more?"

NICOLETTE: More stories please, more, more!

In the meanwhile Kristóf appears in the open left-hand doorway. He has come back from his brief stroll—and now he stands aghast at the threshold. He listens to the women. They cannot see him, and do not suspect his presence.

ILONA: Well then. Do you know the story of his decorations?

NICOLETTE: He has a French Legion of Honour and some sort of Spanish Order.

ILONA: And haven't you noticed that he never puts on the little red ribbon of the French Legion of Honour when there's a reception at the French Legation, and that he doesn't like Spaniards to see the Spanish medal?

NICOLETTE: You don't mean to say...

ILONA: I do!

NICOLETTE: They're false?

ILONA: He bought the ribbon and the medal in Paris when he was a student.

NICOLETTE: How did you find out?

ILONA: I asked the French Minister whether Kristóf had ever been given a Legion of Honour.

NICOLETTE: Do you speak French?

ILONA: Someone interpreted for me.

NICOLETTE: And didn't it kill Kristóf?

ILONA: He appeared to resurrect himself later on.

KRISTÓF: *(makes a desperate movement in the doorway, but does not enter the room)*

NICOLETTE: More, more!

ILONA: Don't be afraid, I'll earn my thirty thousand. *(Ponders for a moment)* Tell me, does he still grease the windows?

NICOLETTE: Do what?

ILONA: He can put up with anything, poor love, with hail and war, floods and thunderbolts, but the one thing he can't stand is other people's successes. When he hears of them, he will stand in front of the window, press that fine, sad, empty forehead of his against the glass, and just stare out at it as though the ghost had sped from him. A quarter of an hour later he will shift a bit, only to go to the next window and there again glue his forehead to the pane. And glass doesn't like that treatment. It doesn't like it because my love's suffering forehead makes it all greasy. I always knew about his friends' successes from the way all the window-panes in our flat became greasy.

NICOLETTE: *(claps her hands)* More, more!

KRISTÓF: *(Makes a tortured movement)*

ILONA: And another thing I didn't like about him was that he's untalented.

NICOLETTE: Now how on earth do you know that? Are you an expert on music?

ILONA: I have absolutely no ear for music. But there was an Italian conductor here once, in forty-three you know, and he conducted something or other of Kristóf's. Afterwards we had some guests, and the Italian also came along. He drank a great deal, then took me aside and said: "Madam, your husband is as untalented as a hippopotamus and as refined as a humming-bird."

NICOLETTE: Do you speak Italian?

ILONA: Someone interpreted for me again.

NICOLETTE: And what did you answer him?

ILONA: You can imagine—I gave that Italian a good piece of my mind.

NICOLETTE: In Italian?

ILONA: In Hungarian. But don't think I was all that cheerful about it. It hurt me, despite everything.

NICOLETTE: *(claps her hands)* More, more!

KRISTÓF: *(Steps forward at last)* That'll do!

The two women rise in surprise.

ILONA: Are you back already?

KRISTÓF: I went as far as Csejtei Street.

ILONA: You walk very quickly nowadays. I didn't know.

KRISTÓF: Serpent infidel que tu es!

ILONA: Oh Lord, he's talking French. That means trouble.

NICOLETTE: Shall I interpret?

ILONA: There's no need to.

KRISTÓF: *(With great vehemence)* Bavarde! Papoteuse! Jaseuse! Tattler! Tattler! Tattler!

ILONA: *(calmly)* Did you hear everything?

KRISTÓF: Everything since the Legion of Honour.

ILONA: That'll have been quite enough. The Dombovár slow train leaves at half past two. I'm going to pack. *(Starts for the right-hand door)*

NICOLETTE: *(tries to stop her)* Ilona, here's the paper. You've earned your thirty thousand. *(Holds out the cheque)*

KRISTÓF: *(darts forward, wrests the paper from Nicolette's hand, tears it up and throws it on the floor)*

ILONA: *(Turning back from the door)* I forgot to tell you. He's vengeful and miserly too. *(Exit)*

*

In the final scene Kristóf and Nicolette are alone. Kristóf implores his wife not to leave him, but Nicolette tells him that she has already sued for a divorce that morning.

SURVEYS

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

I

The problem of local government organs has been of concern to politicians and political literature from the time when the State quitted the closed confines of the city, when its own local character ceased and it extended its power to larger areas, to several settlements, possibly even to several cities. The only thing to worry the Greek political writers (including Plato and Aristotle) in this respect, was to establish the ideal size of a city for purposes of government and to determine a city's optimal population for which the problems of government could best be resolved. By the time of the Roman Empire, the administration of the Provinces had come to present grave problems, including notably that of the extent to which they should have self-government and self-administration. The larger a country's territory, the more developed its economy and culture, the more multiplex will the problem be of what State bodies should operate locally, beside the central ones, and of how the central bodies should develop the transmission system through which they ensure influence and exercise guidance over the whole empire.

The set of problems regarding the local organs of the State underwent a fundamental change, or rather a process of expansion, at the time of the bourgeois revolution. The establishment of local bodies of the self-governing type came to the fore as one of the demands of the bourgeois revolution, considered to be one of the aims and guarantees of bourgeois democracy. The rising bourgeoisie, which had become economically strong and was struggling for political power, inscribed the cause of independent local (territorial) self-government on its banner. In these bodies it intended locally as well to establish and strengthen its own organs of power. This desire at the same time expressed protest against a central State organization based on absolute autocracy. Setting out from the system of three branches of State power introduced by Montesquieu, an enthusiastic supporter of the ideals of the English bourgeois revolution, the principle, rooted in natural right, of local power *(pouvoir municipal)* as the fourth branch of State power was established. It was then stressed that towns and villages were just as much entitled to independence in respect to their local affairs, as was the individual to a free choice in his own affairs. Henceforth the cause of local self-government became tied up with that of democracy. This is the reason why politicians, jurists and also public opinion in countries that call themselves democratic, are to this day very much concerned with the subject of local self-government. Not only as one of the indispensable instruments for the achievement of State tasks, but also as one of the fundamental institutions of the democratic regime and as one of the guarantees of democratic State administration.

This is why so much is being written about the democratic public activity developed in local self-governing bodies as one of the most important fields in which the constitutional life of the whole State finds expression.

Looking at the question from the reverse side, these same facts also explain a highly characteristic feature of the Fascist States—the suppression and later the liquidation of local self-government. Its place was taken by the unlimited power of the central State bodies. Thus the will of the Führer was carried through locally by bureaucratic means, through the medium of administrative machinery. It may be said that the degeneration of democratic traits always started in the first instance with the suppression of local self-government.

In countries where the fate of democracy is not treated with indifference, the development of local bodies and of the institutions of self-government and the attendant difficulties are still a subject of lively interest. In Britain, since the conclusion of the Second World War, there have been two occasions for widespread enquiry at the highest level into the situation and problems of local government and into the measures called for. In 1945 the Local Government Boundary Commission, established by Act of Parliament, worked out voluminous proposals in this respect, on the basis of a careful investigation. The Commission was, it is true, dissolved in 1949, but in 1956 the Government established two new consultative bodies to study self-government in England and Wales. Their work has still not been completed.

In the circumstances described, we may well presume that public opinion in Britain is also interested in the subject of local self-government in other countries. Especially, if it is the basic philosophy of the system of self-government concerned to comply with the requirements of democracy and with the proposition that local self-government constitutes an integral part of the democratic State system.

II

When Hungary was, at the end of the Second World War, liberated from under the Hitlerite occupation, State life in the gradually freed territories resumed in a new way, with new bodies, new people and new methods. This was necessarily so, because the old State machinery disintegrated, the former leading officials (including the local leaders) generally fled, or at least withdrew, and something had nevertheless to be done about the innumerable tasks which required solution with hourly increasing urgency in the ravaged country. It was in this period that the so-called National Committees of delegates from the anti-fascist parties and the trade unions were formed in the villages and towns of the liberated areas, and assumed this responsible and grave burden. The National Committees also played an important part in the convening on December 21, 1944, of the new, democratic legislative body, the Provisional National Assembly in one of the large cities of the country, Debrecen, symbol of the historical traditions of the struggle for freedom in 1848—49. Its members were elected by the population at rallies organized by these National Committees. The Provisional National Assembly formed a Provisional National Government, which was to be the central directing body of the new, democratic State machinery.

The National Committees were the first local government bodies of the liberated people. Their activities—corresponding to the exigencies of the times—extended to all the spheres of State life. They were the first defenders of public order, they set production going, and at the time of their formation they discharged all the tasks of the State.

Shortly after it began to function, the Provisional National Government began to build up the whole State organization anew. In the course of this process the organizational framework of the old State apparatus was temporarily re-established, including

that of the local organs. Among them, the pre-Liberation organs of local self-government were again set up, though naturally their feudal traits were abolished and widespread democratic reforms were immediately carried out in this sphere too. The National Committees henceforward gradually relinquished their State tasks and continued to function only as social, political organs of control, until they were finally abandoned in 1949. A characteristic feature of the local organs of this period was that, apart from the machinery functioning within the framework of the State, committees of the people, established by social initiative, evinced a lively activity in the most varied fields. It was they who among other tasks shouldered the execution of the land reform and played a great part in the organization of food supplies, in guarding public health and stimulating cultural work.

The country was at this stage confronted with extremely grave problems. First, reconstruction had to be undertaken, the currency stabilized, the reorganization of the economy and the establishment of foundations for the new economic and social order begun. Even so, a start was made in preparations for setting up new forms of local self-government, but the actual work could only be undertaken in later years. Until then, we had to make do with successive partial measures.

The birth of the Constitution of the People's Republic (Act XX of 1949), effective from August 20th, 1949, was a landmark in the entire process of Hungary's development. This Constitution—whose draft text was discussed at public meetings by the entire population throughout the country, before being debated in Parliament—laid down the fundamental framework of the whole State organization and established the most important structural principles of the new local organization within that framework. It called, moreover, for the passage of a separate Act relating to the new local organization.

The National Assembly, in line with the Constitution, passed the Act on the new local bodies in 1950. The new local bodies were gradually established, and on October 22nd, 1950, the members of the local councils were chosen throughout the country by democratic elections. It is from this date that the councils have functioned in Hungary as local bodies of a new type.

The councils are organs of State power as well as organs through which large masses of the population may directly participate in the work of the State. These corporate bodies are thus the local bearers of State sovereignty, and at the same time representative bodies of delegates elected directly by the population. As we shall later show, their mode of self-government is also novel—although enjoying independence within the State structure, they form a close unity with the entire State organization at whose apex the National Assembly acts as a supreme council.

The work of the councils over a number of years confirmed that the Councils Act had provided a basically correct solution to the problem, both in principle and in practice. In some respects, however, it turned out that there was need for changes, and in 1953 a new Councils Bill was drafted with due consideration of both the experiences gained in practice and the new theoretical results achieved. This Bill was again submitted to nation-wide discussion. The final text submitted to the National Assembly incorporated the lessons of the nation-wide discussion. It then became the so-called Second Councils Act (Act X of 1954), which is valid to this day. It is on the basis of this Act that we shall proceed briefly to outline the situation and operation of our local bodies.

III

In order to survey the system of local bodies it is necessary to be acquainted with the main features of the territorial and ad-

ministrative divisions of the Hungarian People's Republic, whose general framework was also laid down in the Constitution.

In Hungary the basic units of the territorial and administrative divisions are the centres of settlement—the villages, the towns and their boroughs. Today there are 3,210 villages and 63 urban boroughs. Councils were set up and a Council organization established in all the towns and their boroughs. Independent councils also operate in the great majority of the villages. The number of these village councils is 2,857. In some hamlets (generally with populations of less than from 300 to 500 people), State work has been organized through having several hamlets establish a common council. As a result, 353 hamlets have 167 common councils, which shows that the number of hamlets belonging to one common council is on the average two or three.

A special legal status among the towns has been accorded to the capital, Budapest, within which 22 borough councils were set up.

The four largest cities (Debrecen, Miskolc, Pécs and Szeged) enjoy the legal status of counties—they are called towns with county rights. A total of 13 urban boroughs has been established in the four towns with county rights, with an independent council organization in each borough.

The remaining 58 towns enjoy district status.

The intermediate territorial unit of self-government is the district. The village council organs work in subordination to the district council organs. There are at present 128 districts.

The highest territorial unit of self-government which engages in coordination is the county. The area of the country is divided into 19 counties. The council bodies of the districts and the towns with district rights operate in subordination to the county councils.

All in all, the whole system consists of 3,269 councils.

The councils of the counties and the towns with county rights carry on their activities in direct subordination to the highest State bodies—the National Assembly, the Presidential Council of the People's Republic (which also fulfils the functions of Head of State), and the Government. The various council units constitute a coherent, uniform network, built up from the bottom upwards and extending over the whole of the country. In itself, however, each council is a self-sufficient whole, the highest State leadership of its own territory, which, as the Councils Act states, "is in charge of local social, economic and cultural activity." It also enjoys a corresponding economic independence, with its own annual budget and development plans.

There are still some problems with respect to the territorial and administrative divisions of the country which have not yet been completely resolved and which cause difficulties particularly on account of the accelerating rate of economic development.

As far as the area and population of the counties is concerned, the reforms carried out since 1945 have eliminated the greatest disproportion of the previous arrangement. To do this, several counties have already been abolished in the course of development and certain county boundaries have been changed as the result of the reallocation of areas of different sizes. Nevertheless, there are still some counties with relatively large areas and relatively large populations, and at the other end of the scale, counties with less than average populations and areas. To a smaller extent the same problem exists in the case of the districts.

The main problem with regard to the situation of the towns is that some of the larger ones (including, for example, Győr, Szombathely and the newly erected Socialist towns, such as Komló) aver that their inclusion in the framework of a county impedes their development. They therefore urge that they be given the legal status of counties.

The villages include many that have outgrown village confines and are justified in qualifying as towns. The greatest problem, however, is that there are many quite small villages whose organizational independence does not everywhere correspond to the requirements of their economic development. It is particularly the development of the cooperative farm movement and the formation of cooperative farms over large areas through the fusion of smaller cooperatives, that has raised the need for the council organization of village settlements to be rearranged according to the new situation. This requirement is being very intently studied by both practical State leaders and theoretical experts. Widespread surveys and investigations are being conducted, aimed at the determination of economic regions (and within them of sub-regions, *etc.*) to correspond to existing economic circumstances and future economic development. New territorial and administrative divisions will then be established accordingly. This work may of course only be carried out in such a way as to insure that the changes to be effected do not interfere with productive economic activity and do not, even temporarily, cause difficulties in State work and control.

Another great problem with respect to the various council units is to secure their true independence, particularly by establishing the conditions and guarantees for their economic independence. Very considerable progress has been made in this field since the Second Councils Act came into effect, and particularly in the last few years. The most characteristic indication has been the increase in the economic activities of the conucils and in the turnover of the firms controlled by them. The difficulty in principle is here caused by the need to maintain harmony between the central planning of the people's economy and local initiative, the exercise of local independence. This too is a subject of everyday concern to the organizers of State activity.

IV

The most characteristic feature of our councils—as has already been pointed out—is the fact that they are organs of the people's rule. This means that they are constituted and operate as popular bodies, the direct organs of the population.

The first step towards securing that the councils should be organs of the people's rule is the method of their constitution. The members of the councils are elected by the population on the basis of universal, equal, secret and direct suffrage. All Hungarian citizens of 18 years or over have the vote and are eligible for election. Those declared insane by due medical authority and those temporarily deprived of their civil rights by a court decision constitute the only exceptions. The nomination of candidates also takes place with the direct participation of the population, at the various nomination meetings. The relevant figures unmistakably show the democratism of the franchise. On the occasion of the most recent elections (held on November 16, 1958) there were 6,600,686 citizens on the register of voters. This means that almost every member of the adult population had a vote, as Hungary's inhabitants at the time totalled about 9,800,000 (9,976,530 at the 1960 census). Perhaps even more important is the fact that 98.4 per cent of those on the register actually cast their votes at the elections.

The law prescribes limits for the number of members the various councils may have. Within these limits, the number of councillors is determined by the immediately superior council, in accordance with the size of the population. At the 1958 elections a total of 106,737 councillors was elected. It may also be of interest to learn that the total number of people participating in the organization for conducting the elections (set up in each ward by the largest democratic mass movement—the Patriotic People's Front), was 415,813. All these figures go to

show that the elections were conducted as a truly nation-wide movement.

It is an essential part of the operation of the councils, that the elected councillors discharge their duties as "delegates" of the population, *i. e.*, under the constant surveillance and in continuous cooperation with the latter. A guarantee of the closeness of this bond is that the electors have the lawful right at a meeting of electors at any time to recall a delegate who has not lived up to the confidence placed in him. The exercise of this right is facilitated by the constitutional obligation of the delegates twice a year, at meetings of the population, to render account of their own activities and those of the council. They are obliged, moreover, at reception hours and through other means, to maintain constant contact with their electors. The meetings not only discuss the reports of the councillors but also decide on those matters of public interest in the solution of which the councillors must, in obedience to their constitutional duties, participate.

The practical organization of the councillors' report-back meetings was no easy task. For one thing the councillors had to learn how to carry out this job sucessfully, on the other hand the population also had to be fully convinced that they not only had the right but also the duty of cooperating with the councillor, of supporting and controlling him, and of helping him to be fully acquainted with the live problems of his electorate.

We may confidently state (and the figures bear this out) that the majority of such meetings now fulfil their purpose. The further tasks are to raise the quality of the contents in the reports, to broaden the interest of the population in the councillors' work, and to strengthen in each elector his sense of responsibility towards the community and the conviction that it is in no small measure up to him to see that the activities of every council member correspond to the aims set and to the requirements of the Constitution.

V

The most important part of the council organization is the corporate body of the council itself, the organ of State power and of the people's representation. It is at the sessions of the council that it appears as the local repository of State sovereignty and exercises its most important prerogatives. At these meetings the council passes its by-laws, and takes decisions in execution of its control functions.

Meetings of the council must be held at intervals determined by the need for them, but the law also prescribes the obligatory minimum number of sessions—county (county town) councils must meet at least four times a year, district (district town and urban borough) councils at least six times and village councils at least twelve times a year. The law guarantees the effective preparation of council meetings, and the conduct of the sessions is regulated by procedural rules issued in pursuance of the Act. These prescribe, among other things, that the council in meeting elects its own chairman, adopts its own agenda; they entitle each councillor to put questions at every meeting.

A very important constitutional rule with respect to the work of the councils is that the resolutions passed by them may only be changed by the higher council. The councils, as organs of State power and representatives of the people, may in general only be given instructions by the higher council. At the summit of the coherent network of councils is the Presidential Council of the People's Republic, which, as the organ of the National Assembly, supervises and directs the activity of the councils. This provision of the Constitution is important as a guarantee that the organization of State power should not be subject to control by any other State body and that the council organs should enjoy priority and superiority as against all other State organs within the whole of the State structure.

Operational activity, everyday work, the execution of the regulations and council resolutions within the council organization, are secured by an Executive Committee elected by the council from among its members at its first meeting; it too acts as a corporate body. The Executive Committee elects its officers, a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary from among its own members, and they are personally responsible for the continuous conduct of affairs. Individual members of the Executive Committee may et any time be recalled by the Executive Committee as a body. The same applies to any of the office holders. The executive Committee meets every fortnight, and exercises its full prerogatives at these sessions. The Executive Committees are subject to direction by both the Council that has elected them and by the Executive Committee of the superior council. This is an instance of a peculiar feature of the council organization—its so-called dual subordination. It is manifested in precisely the fact that the Executive Committee is, with respect to local considerations and to allow local independence to be exercised, directly subordinate to the council which elects it, while to secure unified, central administration, it is subordinate to the higher Executive Committee. At the highest level of the network of Executive Committees is the Government (Council of Ministers), one of whose important tasks is to coordinate and direct the work of the Executive Committees of the local councils. The Executive Committees may not, however, pass resolutions directed towards the lower councils. Even where there is a breach of the law they are only entitled to suspend the resolution which offends against the law. The final word is then again pronounced by the council which elected the Executive Committee and which is consequently on the rung above the lower council concerned.

In a modern State numerous duties devolve on the local organs. A large variety of specialized tasks have to be solved in the course of their activities. In order successfully to solve them, organs of specialized administration (various specialized administrative departments and groups) operate within the organization of the Councils. These cope with the financial, health, architectural, cultural, welfare, *etc.*, tasks which arise. The organs of specialized administration are independent authorities, established by the Executive Committee. The latter appoints the heads of these offices, exercises supervision over them, revises their decisions, *etc.* Here again we find dual subordination; from the point of view of their everyday work these organs are directly subordinated to the Executive Committee, but they are at the same time also subordinated to the higher organs of specialized administration. At the summits of the various networks of specialized administration are the Ministries. To take one example—the Agricultural Department of the Executive Committee of a district-council is subordinate to the Executive Committee of the district council, but also to the Agricultural Department of the Executive Committee of the county council. The Department, in turn, is subordinate to the Executive Committee of the county council, and at the same time also to the Ministry of Agriculture.

The eleven years that have passed since the First Councils Act, the time that has passed since the Second Councils Act, and particularly the experience of the last few years have shown that the system of Councils, as a novel organization of self-government within the democratic organization of the State, has justified the hopes attached to it. One very important factor in its development has been the constant endeavour to train both the councillors and the staff of the council offices, to which end both schools and extra-mural methods of instruction of the most varied kinds were used. Each year, including the current one, various lecture courses have been held for council members. The staff of the offices are trained at courses

and special schools. To train those in the higher posts, a two-year Council Academy has been established, and very many of the leading council officials have graduated or are graduating at the universities. During the course of the past year, in fact, the Government issued an Order that those working in certain of the more important posts are obliged to obtain university qualifications. The special and scientific press also plays a considerable part in improving the work of the councils. Apart from the daily papers, there is a weekly organ for council members, called *Tanácsok Lapja* ("The Council Paper"). The problems of the councils are treated at a higher level and on a theoretical plane in a scientific monthly, called *Állam és Igazgatás* ("State and Administration"). The regulations affecting the councils are published in a special official paper, produced and edited for the purpose by the Government, entitled *Tanácsok Közlönye* ("Council Gazette").

These achievements by no means imply that the development of the work of the councils is free of hitches in organization, or that there are no difficulties in their operation.

At first, experience showed that the council as a body did not find its place and did not adequately exercise its right of directing the work of the Executive Committee, tending rather to devote only formal attention to the problems submitted to it. It was hard to achieve a critical approach, independent activity by the councillors, and there were few constructive and productive debates at the council meetings. These difficulties were augmented by the fact that, according to the First Councils Act, the Executive Committee acted on behalf of the council in the periods between two sessions, which meant that many important matters were not, in fact, submitted to the council meeting in time. In the course of development, a change was successfully brought about in this respect. This was facilitated by the fact that the Second Councils Act put an end to the right of the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the council. In recent years particularly, the councils' role of giving guidance has been strengthened, the spirit of criticism has become sharper at council meetings, and gradually the obstacles are being overcome to insuring that it is truly the most important items which are put on the agendas of the relatively rarely held council meetings. Now it is no rarity for a council itself to decide for several months or a year ahead what problems it wishes to discuss, thereby helping to make the work of the councils more efficient and planned.

Despite these advances, it cannot be maintained that all the problems in these spheres have now been solved. Particularly with regard to the work of economic management, the content and planning of the activities of the councils as corporate bodies needs improving. Measures should also be taken to see that the councillors and the committees of councillors should take more part in the preparation of the proposals submitted to the councils.

VI

The committees, as organs of the councils, submit opinions and proposals, and exercise supervision. We might well call them the "sensory organs" of the council. They form a direct link between its activities and the population, securing the utilization of the experiences, opinions and criticism of the population in the conduct of the council's work.

According to the Councils Act, the council at its first, inaugural meeting elects from among the councillors various permanent committees, which continuously fulfil their tasks in the various spheres entrusted to them. They keep an eye on the developments of everyday life and on the work of the bodies subordinate to the council. There are, for instance, permanent committees to deal with the council's finances, industrial mat-

ters, agriculture, health, cultural development, *etc.* Each of the more important spheres has its own permanent committee. Some councils, in accordance with their special situation, may also set up special permanent committees, e. g. to deal with the problems of the spas. In the first half of 1960 there were 12,314 permanent committees at work throughout the country, with an overall membership of 53,540. During the six months concerned these committees held almost 34,000 meetings, at which over 10,000 recommendations for the work of the councils were adopted. It is interesting to note that during this period the permanent committees conducted close on 32,400 investigations in the various fields of the councils' work. These figures are sufficient to show that the scope of committee work and the supervision exercised through it is very broad indeed. We may well add that the methods of committee work have also developed considerably.

The basic work of the committees is two-directional. On the one hand they forward the opinions of the population to the councils, on the other they take the council resolutions to the population and help mobilize the social forces of the population to carry them out. The committee members themselves cannot alone accomplish this two-way task. They can only satisfy their calling if they rely on a broad social basis. The method employed is mainly to organize volunteers drawn from the most varying groups of the population, from among various experts, *etc.*, to help them and to work together with them. During the period mentioned about 25,000 voluntary activists throughout the country helped the permanent committees of the councils in their work.

The committees are, incidentally, direct organs of the council, subordinate only to the council and obliged to report to it on their work. The councils may at any time recall the members of the committees.

The even development of the permanent committees was impeded by several factors—mainly, perhaps, that the official staff were for some time fairly averse to the committees and loath to accept their interference. At the same time the committee members, insufficiently versed in the special issues of the job concerned, themselves acted timidly and generally came to be led by the office staff. This prevented the committees from exercising proper supervision over the work of the staff. It also took a fairly long time until the firm framework of a system of voluntary activists could be established, the proper people selected and persuaded to undertake the tasks awaiting them. Most of these difficulties have now been overcome, but they are still present in some fields. Beside the permanent committees that are functioning well, there are still some—especially in the villages—which work badly, in a formal manner, or hardly function at all.

The regulations also make it possible for the councils to establish temporary committees beside the permanent ones, to solve particular tasks.

A very appropriate way for conducting the work of the permanent and temporary committees is to have them set about the solution of a particular task in cooperation with the various mass organizations (trade unions, women's councils, Red Cross, *etc.*). The opportunities available in this respect are also far from having been exhausted.

VII

A characteristic feature of the work of the council organization has been the increasing activity of the councils in developing the villages and towns, the greater role of "local politics." The development of municipal political work is closely linked with the development of democracy in the councils and the broadening of the links between the council and the population.

The councils (particularly the town, urban borough and village councils) have relatively

long-term development plans. With these as a basis, they annually prepare a municipal development plan. This plan comprises those tasks, those investments that are, beyond the general plan for the people's economy, to be carried out directly as a surplus, from local resources, with the creative cooperation of the people. In the course of this process the direct participation of the people is increased in the shaping of their own living conditions and in the establishment and maintenance of the institutions which render their everyday conditions of life more favourable and beautiful.

Naturally, municipal development work also has its special problems and difficulties. For example, it is not always sufficiently planned, and in the case of some investments the appropriate care and foresight in determining requirements is not always exercised. There are cases where a part of the plans cannot be carried out for lack of suitable building facilities or materials, which also has a detrimental political effect.

VIII

One of the most important theoretical principles which determine the work of socialist councils, is that, in the truly democratic sense, the management of the affairs of State should take place not only in the interest of the population, but actually by the population. This implies that the councils should merge the methods of delegated democracy with the institutions of direct democracy. The councils should be real organs of the people, but under the councils, or more precisely together with them, the greatest possible number of individual members of the population should, to an increasing extent, participate directly in the management of affairs. The system of councils does in fact provide the requisite objective and organizational conditions for realizing this. Development is influenced in this direction by the fact that council meetings are public, by the permanent and multiple contacts between the councillors and the population, by the activities of the permanent and temporary committees, *etc.* Beyond these opportunities there are also innumerable other forms for the exercise of direct democracy in the sphere of work of the councils. Even during the course of development to date a great variety of directly democratic institutions has already been evolved.

A study of the work of our councils shows that in the case of almost every single council several special bodies operating on a voluntary basis have been set up (the social committees), which have developed and are working according to the requirements of actual life to help various council organs. Some were established by the councils, others by the Executive Committees of the councils, others again by the various organs of specialized administration. There are also some which were set up on the initiative of social organizations. Much initiative has been displayed in this process, for instance, by the local organs of the Patriotic People's Front. Some of the committees work on a permanent basis. They are concerned, for example, with the problems of the old-age pensioners, or else they help in child protection work, or they coordinate the programs of cultural institutions. Even the most general headings would not permit the most characteristic of these many kinds of committees to be listed. Other committees are of an *ad hoc* nature, designed to carry out a particular project, e. g., to survey sanitary conditions, organize a particular festivity, investigate some special problem, *etc.*, *etc.* In these committees, members of the various mass organizations, council activists, experts of different professions, representatives of the most different strata of the working people are brought together in mutual collaboration. Frequently it is precisely the proper coordination of the work of many types and kinds of committees that causes difficulties. The councils have a particularly important part to play in this respect. This

live flow of committee work is a proof of advancing democracy and of its driving power. Complete with the attendant difficulties it is one of the indicators of the healthy progress of the new, democratic State organization.

In the course of any account of State activity that is developing towards direct democracy, we cannot fail—however briefly—to mention the so-called tenants' committees, which are new institutions of the council organization and which are expected to shoulder increasing tasks in the towns with respect to council activity, thus promoting the further development of democracy.

The tenants' committees are social organs, directly elected by the population, which conduct their activities in the apartment houses and are guided by the Executive Committees of the councils. They take part in the solution of the problems arising within their block and are closely linked to the activities of the councillors. One of their tasks is to overcome difficulties between the tenants and to participate in the solution of personal differences within the house. They have, moreover, been entrusted with certain auxiliary governmental functions. In addition they also take part in organizing the report-back meetings and reception hours of the councillors.

Undoubtedly the work of the tenants' committees was in many places slow to get started, for the importance of the question was not everywhere recognized and people were often reluctant to undertake these tasks. Nevertheless, reports on the activities of the tenants' committees now tell of very many significant achievements. They have been particularly successful in the work concerned with good neighbourly relations, e. g., in helping lonely old people and the sick, in protecting the houses from delapidation, curbing unruly elements among some of the tenants, checking house repairs, *etc.* They have also achieved important results in supporting the work of improving the behaviour of the children within the blocks. A very useful initiative has been the increasingly popular movement for getting the children themselves in some of the bigger blocks of flats, where there are many children, to elect block committees of their own with a view to ensuring peace and order in their own circle.

The democratic significance of the tenants' committee movement may also be substantiated by figures. From 1960, almost 15,500 tenants' committees were formed in Budapest, with a total of 83,000 members and alternate members. In the other big towns there are also many tenants' committees.

The main item among the difficulties encountered in work connected with the tenants' committees is that their activities are not yet accompanied everywhere by the proper social backing and appreciation. For this reason the fluctuation in the membership of the tenants' committees is still fairly great. Despite these difficulties it may be affirmed that the institution itself has proved to be suitable, although both theoretically and practically many related problems still remain to be solved.

IX

The work done by the councils so far and their future development are firmly founded on the principles laid down in § 1, Act X of 1954. Their observance will lead to their becoming ever more fully the organs of the people and the means of true self-government. Within their framework, the inhabitants are themselves managing their common affairs. The sound development of the councils establishes conditions for socialist democracy to be further perfected, the social elements in State work to be increasingly expanded, and thus for progress to be made towards the self-administration of socially conscious people, embued with a community spirit.

JÁNOS BEÉR

BREAD AND THE SPIRIT

For decades Hungarian reporters faithfully recorded those currents which revealed the general enrichment of life, the insatiable mass acquisition in Hungary of the means of comfort offered by modern civilization. Life here was full of things worth discovering, of ever new sensations: country girls abandoning their folk costumes for city clothing and nylon stockings, young wives riding about on motor scooters instead of going on foot, peasants having a gay time in the coffee bar in place of the old-time village "csárda," miners delighting in the proud possession of a motor car—all this was excitingly novel but a few years ago. Now there is nothing sensational about them any longer. They have become a matter of course.

From time to time, it is true, the reporter still stumbles across instances that amaze through the degree to which they exceed what is customary. Thus, at Petőfibánya, a small settlement of 4,000 inhabitants, in the northern mining district, there was a trade-turnover of five million forints (about 80 thousand pounds) in the course of a single day. It should be added, that this happened to be "miners'day"—a national holiday, which is made particularly festive for the miners by the premiums and sundry other rewards for good work which fall into their laps at this time. The miners purchased 1,600,000 forints worth of furniture, 60 railway carloads of it. Already 70 miners own cars. "Let alone, if more were available," they tell us; and in the local savings bank there are deposits totalling 11 million forints, awaiting car purchasing permits. "Ours is a pioneer settlement," says the director of the cultural centre at Petőfibánya, "everything was built here early in the 1950's. Until they struck roots here the people threw their money around in the pub like chaff. Every pay-day ended in a brawl, and the police had to be called out. And now? The pub is practically empty. People have learned the value of their money in terms of furniture, carpets, TV sets, washing machines and cars—all the happy comforts of prosperity."

Well, this is just where the "revelations" begin. The question involuntarily presents itself: is this really all it is worth? Have we really learned how to manage our money? This "simple fact," discovered by Marx and formulated by Engels when he said people must first have food, drink, clothing and shelter in order to engage in politics, science and the arts, is naturally a concentration of a much richer and more comprehensive complex of problems than is contained in our question. Yet we must unavoidably ask whether the Hungarian people—now that they eat, drink, clothe and find shelter abundantly—at last concern themselves adequately with the sciences and the arts. Speaking metaphorically, does the spirit—once the body is provided with bread—seek nourishment just as greedily? It is true that the abundance and appetite of Petőfibánya is not yet general, it is a kind of advance payment on the future; yet the question is of urgent timeliness, for this future is already at our threshold. The facts and figures regarding Hungary's cultural development reveal that, on the one hand, our cultural policy has "rushed ahead" to meet prospective demand, while, on the other hand, this demand has in fact made its appearance. In 1949, there were 434 public libraries, now there are 4,668. In place of the 433 cultural centres there are now 2,310, and cinema-goers now have 4,560 cinemas at their disposal instead of 1,500. In 1950 there were 620 thousand radio sets in the country, now there are close on two and a half million; whereas 507 concerts were given in 1950, there were 2,500 in 1960. The 143 million forint turnover of the book trade in 1951 is dwarfed by the 554 million forints of 1960, and the circulation of the village public libraries is nearly five times that of 1955. That behind these figures a genuine

and vigorous cultural revolution has taken place and is continuing, it would be hard for anyone in his sober mind to deny. A qualitative analysis of these same figures, however, serves as a warning against exaggerated claims, and certain signs in actual life that suggest new tendencies draw attention to new tasks.

What do we mean by this?

An analysis of the figures gives results such as these:

Among the 4,668 public libraries more than 3,000 have a book stock of less than 600 volumes, the average number of volumes of the village public libraries is 495, and of the 600 works most important to the readers only 11 may be found in each of the libraries. This situation is obviously untenable: the socio-economic transformation brought about by the collectivization of agriculture means more "bread" available. It is therefore now that the appetite of the spirit needs to be aroused—and appeased. Those who are engaged in this task know very well that the existence of the 2,310 cultural centres in themselves is likewise no cause for complacency. For in the main, their life is limited to the activities of one or two occasional amateur groups. But let us continue. In 1960, there were 1,542 theatre attendances for every 1,000 Budapest residents, while in the villages there were only 130. If we study the statistics of audiences at the most popular plays, the situation gives us even more cause for thought, this time on a country-wide scale; in the 1959—60 season, 1,600,000 people saw six Lehár operettas, 2,500,000 people saw eight Kálmán operettas, the Csárdás Princess alone drew 1,500,000 spectators, while in comparison to this, even Molière—with 12 of his plays performed—could only boast of 900,000 visitors, and Chekhov—with four plays—of a mere 120,000. The proportion of attendances at concerts of serious music to concerts of light music is somewhat more favourable: there were 424,000 visitors to serious music concerts, compared to 896,000 visitors to light music concerts. In the villages, however, the situation is worse, 4.7 light music concerts to every serious music concert. Finally let us mention that 90.6 per cent of all gramophone records sold are in the field of light music. The conclusion from all this is so obvious that it hardly needs to be formulated. The country's spiritual nourishment is in some respects insufficient, in other respects—to continue our metaphor—it is not "rich enough in calories."

Obviously, cultural demands will not automatically follow the growth of material well-being and even less may the latter be assumed to imply cultural requirements of a higher order. The triumphs of the operetta over Molière and of light music over Beethoven are indicative of this truth. As far as mass taste in particular is concerned, the discussions on trashy art carried on in the press recently have reminded us by way of countless examples that the bulk of the work is still ahead of us. As the prosperity of individual people increases, an ever greater effort will be needed to prevent this prosperity from nourishing petty-bourgeois nostalgia and to make sure that it results in the development and triumph of a modern, socialist pattern of taste. At present, the worker and the cooperative farmer, whose incomes, in both cases, are constantly improving, are yielding to what amounts to mass suggestion when they exchange their ancient beds and chiffoniers for a sofa bed with built-in reading lights and a combined wardrobe cabinet with drawers and a glass showcase, which they consider to be "upper class." And like a magnet the showcase draws the cheap knick-knacks purchased at the fair, and the shells from Lake Balaton with "Souvenir from Siófok" smeared on them, while the TV set of contemporary design often faces some serially produced daub, entitled "Troating Harts" or "Ballerina Lacing her Shoe."

There are other signs too of the danger of petty-bourgeois mentality, and Petőfibánya, previously mentioned as a vision of

the future, also provides a warning example in this respect. Ever since people have learned that money is worth furniture, a car and, of course, a TV set, the number of visitors to the cultural centre, which offers relatively full cultural facilities, has decreased considerably. A few years ago the biggest headache was how to sell the 8 and 10 forints tickets to the theatre performances, because everyone was demanding 16 and 20 forint tickets. And now for six months they have been unable to put on a single play. There is no public. The number of cinema-goers is also rapidly declining. In 1959, the turnover was 545,000 forints, in 1960, it was 477,000, and in the first six months of this year it declined to 33,000! (On the other hand, almost 200 TV sets were purchased in one year.) Figures on a country-wide scale show a similar—although naturally less rapid—decline. For example, the size of audiences to variety programs is 12 per cent smaller than in the middle 1950's and the season-ticket system, which imposes a greater financial burden, also appears to be declining. In 1951, season tickets represented 19.3 per cent of all theatre tickets sold, whereas, in 1960, the corresponding percentage was only 9.2. As regards the opera season there were 70,838 season tickets sold in 1955—56, but only 51,434 in 1959—60 and 45,913 in 1960—61. A steady, unbroken upward line—both at Petőfibánya and on a country-wide scale—may be found rather in the purchase of TV sets, pictures and books. The TV sets, paintings and books "can be taken home," they add to the beauty and comfort of the home. For, in the final analysis, this is what is happening: culture is "coming to the home," which would be very gratifying if it would not go hand in hand with a certain tendency towards turning inwards and a narrowing of cultural experiences. The collective experience of acquiring knowledge is turning into a very haphazard "personal affair." This is certainly a world-wide problem, for we think it would hardly be welcomed in any country if those collective forms of education, which in the course of their historical development since ancient times always constituted an important forum of public life, were now to lose their collective character. This would clearly menace their very survival. The problem becomes even more disquieting if one takes into account the extremely doubtful intellectual and artistic values the individual is offered in his home, particularly by the TV program. The complaints about the low standards of the latter throughout the world could, if brought together, fill quite a library. Thus, culture "brought into the home" tends to make this home resemble Noah's Ark, drifting as it were companionless on the waters of cultural shallowness.

Whether this ark will finally find its Ararat will depend, in the first place, on systematically guided cultural policies. This requirement is met in Hungary by a policy aimed primarily at ensuring that TV, radio, the art galleries and the bookshops bring genuine culture to the home. We must hope, moreover, that the tendency towards turning inwards will in the end, prove only transitory. "What will people buy ten years from now, when they almost have everything they need already?" we asked the director of the cultural centre at Petőfibánya. "Helicopters," he replied jokingly, and with this he indirectly touched upon the fact that within a short time the saturation point must be reached. As soon as people have their fill of their beautified, enriched home, the enchantment of television, they may again turn more vigorously and demandingly towards the community.

We can only hope fervently that this turn will really come about. At any rate, it is only then that the harmony of bread and the spirit can truly be born.

VILMOS FARAGÓ

DOCUMENTS

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY IN BUDAPEST FACTORIES

1 Aims and Methods of the Enquiry

At the beginning of 1960, the Cultural Education Department of the Engineering Workers' Union asked me to work out more attractive forms and methods of organizing cultural work and the dissemination of knowledge in the factories. Two large Budapest factories, the Áron Gábor Iron Foundry and Engineering Works and the United Incandescent Lamp and Electrical Factory were earmarked as the scenes of my experiments in the course of this assignment. The public opinion survey, which was to provide the basis for further work, took place between February and April 1960. Its results were then used to compile an experimental series of lectures for those employed in the two factories.

A detailed report has been drawn up on the whole experiment. The present paper contains an analysis of a part of the public opinion survey—the 12,474 items for 1,615 people employed in the factories, of which 6,575 were furnished by men and 5,899 by women. These figures can not only be used to establish a firmer basis for educational work, but are also certain to contribute new features to our existing ideas of the Hungarian workers' interest in cultural activities.

We considered that a psychological basis for the dissemination of knowledge could best be established if the cultural interests evinced by men and women engaged at various levels of work were studied. Separate investigations were therefore carried out to discover the approach and requirements of apprentices, of unskilled and skilled workers, of technicians and engineers, and of the office staffs, in respect to the various spheres of cultural activity.

The collection of data was accomplished by the use of *questionnaires*. The forms, containing 51 questions, were built up of several groups of questions. These were I. Personal particulars (questions 1—6), II. Cultural activities, further education, studies (questions 7—23), III. Reading (questions 24—39), IV. The cinema (questions 40—47), V. Broadcasting and television (questions 48—51). The *questionnaires* were forwarded to the benches in open envelopes, by the T. U. stewards in each shop. The shop stewards were briefed on the aim of the public opinion survey and the correct way to fill in the forms, by the head of the project. Several hundred shop stewards and workshop secretaries took part in the survey, which took weeks to complete. They forwarded some 3,500 *questionnaires* to the people in the workshops, and it is due to their conscientious and keen work, that close on half of the forms (1,615) were returned either completely or partially filled in.

We were aware that a survey through *questionnaires* has many vulnerable points. It is hard to check the reliability of the figures

that are collected, they do not enable a more penetrating psychological analysis, *etc.* We endeavoured to counter these undeniable drawbacks in several ways. Our informants answered anonymously. In the letter which accompanied the form we asked the workers to furnish "frank and considered" answers, pointing out that their wishes would be incorporated in the new plan to be prepared for cultural activities in the factory. Finally, the "law of large numbers" may also be invoked to insure an adequate degree of reliability. Many tens of thousands of items were assembled through the *questionnaires*. These may, of course, include a few hundred, maybe even several thousand, that reflect the actual situation in a deliberately distorted manner. But this is at best only a small percentage of the whole and cannot distort the picture presented by the overall figures.

On the basis of these considerations and of the direct personal experiences gained in the factories, I believe that the public opinion survey enables us to obtain a reliable picture of the cultural situation of the working people at the two factories and to use the results of these investigations in future work.

2 The Distribution of Personnel by Levels of Work and by Sex

Before embarking on an analysis of the figures, it appears necessary to say something about the composition of the personnel that answered the questions. This will also contribute to a more realistic appraisal of the results.

The employees were divided into seven groups, according to levels of work, namely, apprentices, unskilled workers, skilled workers, technical staff (technicians), engineers, clerks and others who could not be classified in the above categories (porters, messengers, *etc.*). The most populous group among those investigated are the *unskilled workers* (217 men and 556 women). Nearly half of those interrogated (47.8 per cent) belong to this category. They are, however, the lowest level only in respect to skill, for their education shows a very broad variety. There are individuals among them who have only attended two or three forms of elementary schooling, others have university degrees, and all grades of learning between the two are to be found among them. The majority may nevertheless be said to be at the cultural level of the fourth to eighth grades of the general school, and there are conspicuously many among them whose studies were hardly adequate to the acquisition of a basic cultural level.

The *skilled workers* are represented by 366 people (22.4 per cent) of whom only 18 are women (1.1 per cent). The majority have completed general school or attended the corresponding forms of the former higher elementary schools or of secondary schools. Several have been to trade schools and have attended special courses. The 156 *technicians* (9.7 per cent of the total) who have completed technical secondary schools, include 29 women (1.8 per cent). These members of the technical staff are the most highly qualified stratum still to apply their knowledge directly on the process of production. The 59 *engineers* (3.6 per cent)—including 4 women—are concerned with the planning and direction of production. They represent the higher stratum of the technical staff in the factory.

Two thirds of the 210 (13 per cent) *clerical workers* are women. Their proportion is a good indication of the basic principle applied in our society, that male labour should as far as possible be utilized directly in productive work. The majority of the clerical workers have secondary school leaving certificates.

The 25 (1.5 per cent) *apprentices* are prospective skilled workers. All of them are young and male. The majority entered the factory after completing general school.

The workers classified as *other*, are porters, messengers, *etc.* Because of their small number and miscellaneous composition, their figures could be ignored in the course of the analysis.

The material of the present investigation

thus includes representatives of every stratum of factory personnel, with respect to both sex and education. And even though the data covering 1,615 people may be too few for conclusions characteristic of the cultural interests of the entire working class to be drawn from them, they are at all events sufficient to draw up a true cross-section of the cultural situation—the requirements and spheres of interest—of the workers in these two prominent Hungarian factories. The project was, indeed, not intended to serve as other than an initiative towards similar surveys, on an even larger scale.

*An Analysis of the Wishes and Interests of the Personnel**

1 Observations on the Questions

46 of the 51 questions on the *questionnaire* inquire in one form or another into the wishes and interests evinced by the subject. The present paper contains the analysis of the replies to only five of these questions—those which seemed most relevant to planning the substance of the knowledge to be disseminated in the factories. The answers to Question 7 were intended to provide information on how spare time is spent by the worker. An analysis of spare-time activities provides insight into those aspects of his private life to which the person concerned likes to devote his attention. Adults are rarely influenced by the force of circumstances in this respect, and it may be presumed that they make use of their spare time in a manner corresponding to their own interests, according to their pleasure. If this is nevertheless not always the case, it may be instructive to find out what factors prevent the working man from spending his spare time in a way that gives him a change and provides him with an opportunity to rest and to improve himself.

Question 14 was aimed at finding out in which field of knowledge the person concerned felt that his education or his special training needs supplementing and brushing up. The many forms on which the answer to this question was omitted show that it is not so simple as it at first sight appears, for it assumes that the person questioned is aware of the deficiencies in his knowledge and what it would be good for him to know more about. The lower the individual's level of education is, the more uncertain is his answer, or else he does not answer at all. The question was left unanswered by 64 per cent of the unskilled workers and 57 per cent of the apprentices. On the other hand, only 34 per cent of the technical staff and 18 per cent of the engineers failed to answer.

Questions 15 and 16 proved to be much more fruitful. These inquired: "What are you specially interested in a) in connection with your trade or profession? b) apart from your trade or profession?" (Question 15), and "List a few subjects about which you would like to hear lectures" (Question 16). All the apprentices with one exception answered the question, while 37 per cent of the unskilled workers, 16.7 per cent of the skilled, 13.5 per cent of the technical staff and only 8.2 per cent of the engineers left the question unanswered. Where, therefore, the question touched on an actually existing interest, the reaction was generally lively and positive. That there were nevertheless still many forms with the answer left blank, points to the fact that there is very much yet to be done to awaken the interest of the

* Very considerable help was given in the technical preparation of the figures by deputy head-master dr. Lajos Szathmáry (Ferenc Kölcsey grammar school, Budapest VI.) and grammar school mistress Mrs. Várnagy, Emőke Kádár (József Katona Street general school, Budapest XXI., Csepel). Here again, I wish to thank them for their selfless labour.

working people and arouse their desire for greater knowledge.

The greatest number of answers (6,632) was received in response to Question 23, which was worded as follows: "What events interest you most? The cinema—theatre—opera—ballet—circus—the puppet theatre—the library—lectures—museums—concerts—sporting events—exhibitions—sightseeing—excursions—other activities. The words desired in the reply had to be underlined. Only 0.5 per cent of those asked failed to answer, and they were mainly among the unskilled workers (17) and the skilled workers (12). When the possible replies are enumerated, those asked are apparently more ready to respond than if they have to compose them themselves. This circumstance must, therefore, not be disregarded in the planning of *questionnaires*.

2 On the Use of Spare Time

2,471 items of information were gathered from the replies to Question 7, which may be divided among eight ways of spending spare time.

Prominent among the figures for the *men* are the more entertaining means of self-improvement—reading, radio, television, cinema, theatre, opera, concerts, *etc.*—which account for 42 per cent, while sports (14.1 per cent) and study (11.7 per cent) play a very much smaller part. In the case of the *women* on the other hand, most of their spare time goes into entertaining forms of self-improvement (38.4 per cent) and work or other activities related to the family and the home (35.5 per cent), while the remaining time is split up among study, social life, sports, *etc.* This again clearly shows the effect of the "second shift" on the lives of working women, in shaping their spare time differently to that of the men, and more disadvantageously.

The picture becomes far more instructive, if we subject the spare-time activities of the two sexes to separate analysis.

a) The spare time of the men

There are 1,368 items of information to permit a study of the features of spare-time activities among the male personnel of the two factories. The first noteworthy relation is that found between study and other forms of self-improvement. It appears that the desire to study increases proportionately with the educational qualifications of the individual (3.3; 9.4; 19.8; 22.9 per cent). The desire for other means of self-improvement on the other hand, decreases parallel with higher qualifications (46.0; 42.4; 40.0 per cent). In the case of the technically more advanced stratum of employees, the desire for study at courses or in other scholastic forms is thus evidently stronger and the part played by the looser forms of self-improvement is correspondingly reduced. The technically poorly trained unskilled workers, on the other hand, are mainly attracted to the looser and more entertaining forms of acquiring cultural knowledge (reading, radio, theatre, *etc.*). This does not, however, imply that the technically more highly qualified members of the factory staffs neglect these forms. The high percentages (42.4; 42.0; 40.0 per cent) show that they also evince considerable interest in these looser forms of cultural education. The level of professional interest displayed by the clerical workers is somewhere between that of the unskilled and the skilled workers. It is, however, they who most fully exploit the rich opportunities for other means of self-improvement (49.7 per cent).

Artistic activities (music, singing, drawing, photography) and higher educational qualifications also show a parallel development in the light of the information obtained. The curve for this type of interest mounts evenly from the unskilled workers (5.3 per cent) to the engineers (12.2 per cent). Though to a smaller extent, the same rule is also found to hold for the women.

Social contacts (society, courting, dancing, games, visits, *etc.*) appear according to the

figures to be subject to the influence of age. In the matter of frequency, pride of place is taken by the apprentices (22.2 per cent), while the lowest figure is that for the clerical workers (2.7 per cent), the overwhelming majority of whom are over 30. Nor is it accidental that the ratio devoted to *resting* (15.6 per cent) is higher in their case; it is nearly ten times the figure for the apprentices, who are young people.

The use of the *apprentices'* free time should also be examined from a different aspect. The figures nicely reflect their youth and their cultural situation. In the spheres of study, sports and social contacts they are in the lead. Not a single one of them referred to spending his time in artistic activity. Their requirements as regards reading, radio, concerts, theatre, opera, drawing, painting and music are the least developed of all the personnel. This emphatically calls attention to the need for the cultural education of the young people in the factories.

The answers of the 845 men interrogated also show that the favourite means of spending spare time are the entertaining forms of self-improvement (42.0 per cent). The other pastimes come way behind—they are: sports (14.1 per cent), study (11.7 per cent), domestic work and odd jobs (9.0 per cent), social contacts (8.3 per cent), resting (4.1 per cent), social and cultural work (3.0 per cent), other forms of spending time (7.9 per cent).

b) The spare time of the women

Even though the use of spare time by the women shows agreement on some points with that of the men, there are fundamental differences which reflect the psychology and the different social position of women.

The agreement is most striking in the matter of *study*. As with the men, the figures for study here too increase in proportion to the qualifications of the individual. The desire for study evinced by the women, however, surpasses that of the men by a few per cent in every category. This is especially noteworthy in the case of the 556 unskilled women, where the figures for study are nearly twice as high. Time spent on other forms of self-improvement on the other hand is no longer as well-balanced as with the men. Here again, the downward trend is evident. Among the women too the clerical workers are the most industrious readers, they are the keenest of all the personnel on going to the theatre, the cinema, operas and concerts.

The special social situation of the women is expressed in the answers concerned with *domestic work* and *work around the house*. The most frequently mentioned occupations are the many varieties of domestic work, such as needlework, attending to the children, mending their husbands' clothes and gardening. The burden of the tasks generally known as the "second shift" is borne mainly by the women. Of the 718 items of information for unskilled workers, 294 are concerned with domestic work. The time the working women spend on their homes, varies between 26.8 and 62.5 per cent of their spare time. Of all answers 35.5 per cent mentioned domestic work, which thus comes second after self-improvement. A grave problem of social and cultural policy is involved in the figures for the "second shift." It is an indication to those concerned that they must do all in their power to reduce the burdens of the home that the working woman has to shoulder. Only thus can her spare time become an opportunity of recreation for the woman working at the factory, and only then can we expect her to devote more time to raising her cultural standards and satisfying her desire for artistic activity and sports.

The use of spare time by the women shows the following sequence: self-improvement (38.4 per cent), domestic work and work around the house (35.5 per cent), study (9.1 per cent), social contacts (6.3 per cent), sports (5.1 per cent), social and cultural work (2.2 per cent), artistic activities (1.7 per cent), resting (1.4 per cent), other forms of spending time (0.3 per cent).

3 The Consciousness of Inadequacies in Education

The object of Question 14 was to find out to what extent the subjects of our inquiry were able to appreciate the deficiencies in their cultural attainments and professional or trade education.

The 1,079 replies of 798 persons were analysed for the investigation of this question. In more than half the cases, the deficiency in general education which they mentioned was in the *social sciences* (52.2 per cent). The spheres within this category in which the working people consider themselves least well informed appear in the following order: the arts (209*), foreign languages (121), literature (114), history (57), cultured speech, grammar, spelling (13), politics (11), philosophy (9), acquaintance with the classics (3). The deficiency felt in respect to knowledge of the *natural sciences* is very much smaller (24.1 per cent). Among the more frequently mentioned are the technical sciences (147), mathematics (32), physics and nuclear research (28), geography (19), biology and hygiene (12), astronomy (5), *etc.*

Third place is taken by *professional or trade* education (11.5 per cent). Machinery, technical achievements and new processes related to production (109) and technical drawing (16) are included in this group.

Frequent mention of the lack of *general cultural attainments* is a valuable indication that the desire for self-improvement has been aroused in many people (10.7 per cent) who do not yet see clearly how they are to progress further. This desire might apply as much to the natural sciences as to the social ones. More can not be deduced from the tersely worded replies.

a) Inadequacies in the education of the men.

The figures obtained from the answers of 468 men permit interesting and instructive conclusions to be deduced on the interest evinced by those at the various levels of work.

To begin with, it is a noteworthy fact that the ratio of general to specialized knowledge has, compared to the previous figures, increased from 1 : 1.1 to 1 : 2, while the great gap between the natural and social sciences has decreased considerably. The shift in proportions is presumably due to the special spheres of interest of the women.

The lack of general cultural attainments is mentioned with notable frequency by the unskilled and skilled workers. Parallel with the rise in level of schooling, however, the number of answers alluding to a feeling of deficiency in this respect, understandably diminishes rapidly. An ascendant and a declining trend in professional knowledge may be distinguished. Up to the skilled workers the feeling of deficiency increases, while in the remaining categories a swiftly decreasing trend may be observed. Even these relatively small figures, however, suggest that there is a broad mass basis for further professional and trade training in the two factories concerned.

The men, however, most consciously sense a deficiency in their education in respect to the *social sciences*. Close on half of those asked (45.6 per cent) mention these fields of knowledge in their answers. Especially prominent through their higher numbers are the arts (96), foreign languages (76), literature (56), and history (30). The *natural sciences* (30 per cent) take second place, with technical science (122) in the van, followed by mathematics (21), then physics and nuclear research (19).

We may therefore conclude from the answers given by the men that their feelings of deficiency in cultural attainment present a fairly balanced pattern. Especially the answers of the skilled workers show a harmonious distribution among the various sciences (23.6; 32.7; 31.3 per cent). The clerical workers on the other hand evince the least balanced interest (2.4; 26.2; 64.3 per cent). The explanation of this phenomenon is undoubtedly to be found in the work

* The figures in brackets—when not specifically qualified as percentages—refer to the absolute number of replies.

which each of them does. Those who day by day, standing by their machines, struggle with matter, are closer to the phenomena of nature and more quickly realize the deficiencies in their knowledge of the natural sciences than those who sit at writing desks and are further removed from the throbbing life of the workshops.

b) Inadequacies in the education of the women

Let us now see how the picture is modified in the case of the women working at the factories.

The women feel more intently that their knowledge in the field of the *social sciences* is deficient (62.2 per cent). Especially the figures for the arts (113), literature (58) and foreign languages (45) substantiate this view. The repeated mention of history (27) is also noteworthy. Although the recognition of deficiencies in the social sciences attained considerable numbers in all categories, the 92 women clerical workers nevertheless call for special mention as being in the van, with 89 replies (81.7 per cent).

The *natural sciences* were relegated to the third place on the list of deficiencies (14.2 per cent). The women thus evince far less interest in these fields of learning. Even so, the relatively low figures for technical achievements (25), mathematics (11) and geography (11) are conspicuous among the rest.

The lack of *professional and trade knowledge* is mentioned in increasing measure especially among the unskilled and skilled women workers and the women technicians. In the case of the women engineers and clerical workers on the other hand, the curve of interest declines steeply. The few replies (26) at any rate serve to draw the attention of factory cultural workers to the fact that there is still much to be done in developing the technical interests of working women.

4 What Would You Like to Hear Lectures About?

The greatest help in planning the substance of educational work in the factories was given by the answers to Questions 15 and 16. From the answers, which contained many items of information, it was possible to establish those characteristic fields of the working people's interest which must be borne in mind when preparing programs of lectures for the dissemination of knowledge. Three quarters of those asked actually replied to these questions, and from them, 2,292 items of information were obtained. The readiness to answer in itself betrays that our questions touched on very sensitive points relating to the interests of those questioned. What the previous question had revealed as a feeling of deficiency could now come to the surface as a definite wish. It turned out, moreover, that each category of the working people has definite desires in respect to the acquisition of knowledge. And from the mosaics of the many individual wishes, the main fields of interest could clearly be established.

The figures confirm even more positively, that the core of the interest shown is in the natural and social sciences (77.3 per cent). This interest, however, is very characteristically divided among the two sexes. In the case of the men the requirement for the natural sciences (46.0 per cent) far outstrips the social sciences (27.2 per cent). Among the women on the other hand, the latter are predominant (48.8 per cent) and the ratio of the natural sciences is smaller (34.2 per cent). In other respects too there are notable differences in the interests evinced by the two sexes. Men are very much more attracted by professional and trade problems (12.9 per cent) and sports (9.6 per cents) than the women. On the other hand the replies given to questions regarding the home and family life show a predominance of the women (8.0; 2.8 per cent).

a) What interests the men?

The further course of analysis points to yet further special features of the interest displayed by the two sexes. In this respect the interests of the men were studied in

664 *questionnaires*. It has already been noted that the men are more strongly attracted to the natural sciences than the women. This is especially true of the skilled workers, technicians and engineers. Of the natural sciences, technical achievements (space flight, rocket science, radio, electricity, electronics, *etc.*) came first with 293 references. This was followed by the other sciences; geography (61), mechanics (52), physics (48), astronomy (41), hygiene (26), biology (25), and mathematics (19).

Of the social sciences, the arts (music, cinematography, the visual arts) are the most prominent (162). The remaining disciplines follow in this order: history (72), literature (43), politics (41), philosophy and psychology (23). It is especially the interests of the clerical workers, particularly the older generation, that differ from this order.

The voicing of requirements related to their trade is characteristic of the unskilled and skilled worker categories. But the engineers also follow close behind them. At first sight it is difficult to understand the slight interest in professional matters shown by the technicians, since this stratum of factory personnel has always been inspired by a desire for study and technical progress. However, a part of their professional requirements was, because of their technical nature, included among the natural sciences, which led to an apparent decrease in interest under the other heading.

The *sports* figures cover a very varied set of activities (attending sports events, playing football, motor cycling, boating, tourism, chess, *etc.*). The intensity of the interest taken decreases parallel with the increase in qualifications. The most lively interest is displayed by the apprentices and unskilled workers (13.6; 13.5 per cent), the least by the engineers (3.2 per cent). Of the 128 preferences for sports, 81 (66.5 per cent) were from those under thirty. The relatively high percentage of older age-groups is a welcome proof of the popularity of sports in our factories.

The problems of *the home* and of *family life* were most conspicuously of interest to the apprentices (21.6 per cent). In the case of other categories in the factories, interest was slight (between 0.5 and 4.1 per cent). The young people are mainly interested in founding a family, in love and marriage. Since there are also many young men under 30 among the unskilled workers, it is easy to understand why this category shows relatively so much interest in this subject.

b) What interests the women?

The numerical distribution of the 959 items of information relating to 526 women shows that close on half the women's answers were concerned with the social sciences (48.8 per cent). Prominent is interest in the arts (196), literature (93), history (67), education (60) and politics (32). The figures reveal a strong attraction to literature and an interest in matters of education far surpassing that of the men. Even though literature can hardly be designated as a special field of feminine interest, this can more readily be maintained in respect to education, with the reservation that the problems of education also arouse a response in a narrower circle of the men.

It is worth noting that interest in the natural sciences is strongest among the 354 unskilled women workers (39.3 per cent). Their interest in art on the other hand is—together with that of the technicians —very low. In respect to technical training they are at the lowest level in the factory. There are, however, many among them who are engaged in further study in order, after acquiring higher qualifications, to be able to enter superior categories of employment. Such endeavour brings them closer to technical and scientific problems, as a result of which a corresponding interest develops in them.

If we examine the components of their interest in the natural sciences, we find that the working women are particularly attracted to medical and hygienic problems (144), technical subjects (67), geography (54) and

physics. The problems of the home and of family life arouse a more lively response particularly among the unskilled women workers and the clerical staff. In the case of the other categories of women workers, the small number of the answers does not permit conclusions of general validity to be drawn.

We cannot, however, leave the slight interest in *sports* without comment. Among the 959 replies of 526 factory women, there are only 7 references to the subject (0.7 per cent). Both the large factories in which the survey was conducted possess good facilities for satisfying the requirements of those who wish to engage in sports. Why, we may ask, is physical culture, which is nowadays so popular and so beneficial to health, unable to gain ground among women workers? Is it because of the tiring work—or the "second shift" that awaits most women at home? Or can it be that the background to this phenomenon is poor propaganda for sports? These are questions to which only more specialized and extensive investigations can furnish the correct answer.

5 The Development of Interest in Activities Requiring a Fee for Attendance

The answers given to Question 23 provide information on the cultural institutions and programs of which the working people like to avail themselves to satisfy their cultural requirements.

These have been divided into three groups. Group I includes those which provide a high level of artistic experience (cinemas, theatres, the opera, ballet, puppet theatre, concerts and exhibitions). Group II are the institutions and events for the dissemination of knowledge (libraries, museums, lectures). Group III is that of organized entertainments and sports (sports events, circuses, sight-seeing, excursions and dances).

At the top of the interest list is Group I providing high-level artistic experience (56.7 per cent). The next group is that of entertainments (29.1 per cent), and last the dissemination of knowledge (14.2 per cent). In the first group the women are in the lead (59.8; 53.65 per cent). Entertainments, on the other hand, are better liked by the men (32.05: 26.1 per cent). The popularity of institutions and events for the dissemination of knowledge is the same with both sexes (14.3; 14.1 per cent).

Let us now see the proportionate interest shown for specific institutions and events by the men and the women. In the case of the *men* the order of preference is: cinemas 662 (21.4 per cent), theatres 522 (16.1 per cent), sports events 403 (12.4 per cent), excursions 293 (9.0 per cent), the opera 235 (7.2 per cent), circuses 210 (6.5 per cent), museums 210 (6.5 per cent), libraries 170 (5.2 per cent), sight-seeing 134 (4.1 per cent), concerts 120 (3.7 per cent), exhibitions 107 (3.3 per cent), lectures 85 (2.6 per cent), the ballet 34 (1.05 per cent), the puppet theatre 31 (0.9 per cent), dancing 2 (0.05 per cent). The order of preference for the *women* is: cinemas 641 (18.8 per cent), theatres 636 (18.6 per cent), the opera 416 (12.1 per cent), excursions 364 (10.7 per cent), museums 250 (7.3 per cent), sight-seeing 201 (5.9 per cent), sports events 165 (4.8 per cent), libraries 162 (4.7 per cent), concerts 158 (4.6 per cent), circuses 151 (4.4 per cent), exhibitions 130 (3.8 per cent), lectures 73 (2.1 per cent), puppet theatres 34 (1.0 per cent), the ballet 32 (0,9 per cent), dancing 1 (0.3 per cent).

The two sexes thus only differ considerably from one another in their liking for the opera and sports events. In the first case the women, in the second the men are foremost. In other respects the predilection of the two sexes for cultural institutions and events displays fairly similar features.

Summary of the Results

The main conclusions of our investigations may be summarized as follows:

1 Considerable differences are to be found in the interest displayed by the men and women factory workers. This is especially striking in respect to their preference for cultural matters dealing with art or with science. In the case of the women there is demonstrably greater interest in the arts. The men, on the other hand, are more attracted to the natural sciences, to knowledge connected with their profession or trade, and to sports. Of the cultural institutions and events the women prefer mainly those which influence their public through the artistic experience they offer.

2 The cultural interests evinced by the working people at the various levels of work (apprentices, unskilled workers, skilled workers, technicians, engineers and clerical workers) also show noteworthy differences. Thus, for instance, the desire to study and to engage in artistic activities increases proportionately with the higher qualifications of the personnel. The admission of deficiencies in general and specialized education decreases parallel with higher qualifications. Among the women workers it is the unskilled who evince the greatest interest in natural sciences.

3 Age also occasionally has a palpable influence on the interests shown. In the case of sports, for instance, the predominance of the age-groups under thirty was apparent. But the problems of love and marriage also mainly aroused a response among the apprentices and the young unskilled workers.

4 The development of cultural interests among the women—and particularly the use of their spare time—is strongly influenced by the obligatory burden of the "second shift."

It is these lessons that will facilitate the job of bringing educational work in the factories closer to the interests and real requirements of the working people and making it more attractive and fruitful in its forms, contents and methods.

BÉLA TÓTH

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

A TALK WITH WILLIAM COOPER

Following the invitation of the Hungarian PEN Club, William Cooper stayed in Hungary for a fortnight. He is fifty-one years old, slender, of medium height. His carefully brushed hair is greyish; he has a funny little moustache. His eyes and his pointed nose express merriment and criticism at the same time. His movements are light; he steps out of the airplane gracefully, and in a few days' time he skips about the ruins of Aquincum, the hillside of Esztergom, and the shore of Lake Balaton like a grasshopper up to some mischief. Serious-minded headmasters, Civil Service chiefs and suchlike—if I did not know it by experience I would have learnt it from his novels in which he has described himself several times—are not likely to appreciate this type of man: he is too liable to give them a surprise.

However, he is sober-minded and firm, as it were *'ex officio.'* He was trained as a scientist and is closely connected with the world of science today. He examines and selects young people who apply for jobs as scientists. In the meantime he writes humorous novels.

"Since 1941 I have interviewed some thirty-five thousand young scientists and engineers. This did not provide me with actual material for novels, but on the other hand it has probably sharpened my insight into people, by constantly making me try to find out what different individuals are really like."

"When did you start writing novels?"

"At first I set out to be a scientist. I went up to Cambridge—I got a scholarship and my parents raised a loan. At Cambridge I was at the same college as C. P. Snow, who was then doing research in spectroscopy—I went to him to be taught about it. He had already made up his mind quite definitely to become a novelist, and his enthusiasm affected me. We became good friends and have remained so ever since. After taking a degree in physics I got a job as a schoolmaster so as to have the long summer vacations in which to write. I published three novels before the war and eight afterwards. In *Scenes from Provincial Life* I made use of some of my experiences as a schoolmaster in a provincial town."

Mr. Cooper reveals one of his personal experiences which he made use of in the novel:

The hero of his novel—a schoolmaster—escapes through the window from a boring lesson in physics while the pupils are doing experiments. That schoolmaster was the author himself.

"You can imagine how fond my headmaster was of me..." he added.

Scenes from Provincial Life was published in the early 'fifties. It made a great stir and has been talked about a lot ever since.

Still, this is not the book that is going to be published in Hungarian, but another novel, *The Struggles of Albert Woods.**

The author approves this choice.

"*Albert Woods* is about scientists," he says. "Nowadays, when people think scientists are different from everybody else, I wanted to show from my experience that they are pretty much the same. I was interested, and amused, by some of them becoming careerists, and also, more seriously, I wanted to describe what it is like to make a major scientific discovery, and to show that the process bears a great similarity to creating a work of art."

I now raised another issue of general interest, that of realism in literature.

"In my novels I aim at realism," he said. "So do the majority of English novelists at the present time. There is a great difference between us and the innovating novelists of thirty years ago, whose aim was very different. For example, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. They tried to present a man's experience of existence as a series of momentary sense impressions—in other words, the experience of man alone. It seems to me that realism must deal with man in society as well—either, without the other, is not enough for realism."

"What is your opinion about the realist writers of the 19th century? Do they have an influence on the English novel of our days?"

"I have great respect for them. I think they do have an influence on today's novel in this respect—the innovations that novelists are trying to make today can be linked more clearly with the innovations of the 19th-century realists than with writers of the Joyce-Woolf period. The 19th-century novelists I have in mind are not so much Dickens, who was undoubtedly the genius among them, as Trollope, Thackeray and George Eliot. Incidentally, I am surprised to see Trollope's name missing from the excellent list of classic works to be translated into Hungarian. The resemblance between C. P. Snow and Trollope has been exaggerated, but all the same it is very interesting to compare *The Masters* with Trollope's most generally admired novel, *Barchester Towers*. Actually *Barchester Towers* is not my own favourite Trollope. I think I like *The Way We Live Now* best—it may be a bit looser in construction, but displays the writer's grasp of a much wider field. Trollope is greatly interested in the *causality* of human behaviour, as Snow is, or as I am. Why do people do what they do? Why do they act in certain ways in their relationships with each other or with society? Where do their motives derive from?"

"Are those the questions you try to answer in your own work?"

"So far as I can, yes. You could say my fundamental aims as a writer are to investigate the answers to those questions. At the same time, while I am doing so, I try to strike a light and natural tone, and I often try to bring my meaning home by hints and allusions rather than flat statements. As far as dialogue is concerned, I try to make my characters speak as real people do. In fact, in general I don't consider I am restrained by the rules of 'refined' literary style."

"Your novel *Scenes from Provincial Life* has pointed out a new direction to the young writers of the 'fifties. How do you see the further development of this new trend?"

"I think I showed certain young writers how to loosen up the novel, both in technique and in approach, without giving up the serious aims I was talking about a moment ago. Investigating the motives of human action, the causality of human behaviour, can make a novel heavy going. I try to make mine light going—I think novels ought to be as attractive and readable as possible."

"Isn't such a concession dangerous?"

"It isn't a concession in the first place. I don't change what I mean to say in order

* The novel has been published in April by Europa Publishing House, Budapest, in Miklós Vásárhelyi's translation under the title: *Tanár az uborkafán.*

to write something attractive and readable. First I make up my mind what I mean to say on the basis of what I believe to be the truth. I think this is what any writer should do, not allowing himself to be influenced by other people—least of all by current fashion—into saying something different. But, having decided what I mean to say, I devote a lot of thought to making it as easily understandable, as easily assimilable, as I can."

"In our age which is characterized by the enormous quantity of knowledge—and consequently by specialization—is it possible to be a writer and to do scientific work at the same time?"

"In some ways it would be a very attractive prospect to devote my full time to writing. On the other hand, I think I should find it very hard to give up my other profession. I enjoy the company of scientists; I find them interesting; and as a writer I learn quite a lot from them. Also I think it would be wrong for me to retire altogether from the technological part of society. It so happens that I am able to move about in the two cultures, the scientific and the literary. It is unusual for anybody to be able to do that, and I think anybody who can do it ought to go on doing it."

"These past years both you and C. P. Snow have dealt extensively with the opposition of the two cultures. What has led you to do so?"

"I should need more than a few sentences to answer that question. I'll try to answer part of it. We are worried about the opposition of the two cultures because we feel it is very much to the disadvantage of the literary culture. As the western world becomes steadily more industrialized, its society becomes steadily more technological. If antagonism drives the literary culture away from technological culture, literary society may come to develop a tendency to separate from society in general. Art and literature don't spring from space. They must have their roots in society. Without their roots in society they cannot survive."

"We have learned from your articles and lectures that you believe not only in bridging the gap that divides the scientific and non-scientific cultures, but also the gap that divides the cultures of the East and West."

"Yes, I do. At the present moment in history the problem before all of us is to look for ways of trying to increase the chances of survival for mankind. I believe cultural exchanges between East and West are more likely to increase than decrease those chances. The increase may not amount to much, but it is better than none at all. It is because I believe this that I accepted the Hungarian PEN's invitation to come here. I was discussing some aspects of this subject the other night with Professor István Sőtér, the President of the Hungarian PEN. He believes that it must be possible for us to mark out some cultural territory where writers from East and West can meet and talk to each other in an amicable, professional manner. I agree, and I have been looking for that sort of territory while I have been here. I passionately believe in the necessity for East and West to try to come to an understanding with each other. It won't be easy and it will require great patience from both sides. But there is nothing in the world at present that matters more."

László Kéry

RENDERING ATTILA JÓZSEF'S POEMS IN ITALIAN

The striking force of a novel imagery, rigorous and at the same time boldly barbaric verse, extreme originality of the language—it is this three-fold characteristic of Attila József's poetry which makes the task of the translator an intricate and desperate one. Is it clearness of imagery, or is it rhythm, that ought to be given greater attention? And will it ever be possible to give an idea of the stylistic contribution of a writer who raised the most usual expressions to the highest intensity? It stands to reason that translator and philologist can not be identical; but can the translator ignore that which the philologist almost unconsciously regards as the very substance of the author whose work he is reading, and not as mere outward form?

I wonder how often other translators of Attila József were taken with despondency. As for myself, I must frankly admit to having more than once thrown aside the versions already committed to paper, then picked them up and revised them, only to discard them finally, with the feeling that I shall never be capable of conveying the atmosphere of the original in an acceptable approximation. A poem like *A Dunánál* ("At the Danube") seemed to constitute the limit of my abilities: I have failed to condense the impetuosity of the Hungarian into Italian verse, failed to render the vital pulsation throbbing in the original from the first line to the last. Something always had to suffer: a conception, a flitting image, an appropriate word or expression. It is but a meagre consolation that others too have produced rather bad Italian translations of the poem "A Dunánál." At best this is an indication and proof of the intrinsic difficulties of the poem itself which, perfect as it is in its original form, rebelliously resists all attempts at recasting. I did not keep the first versions of the poems which now appear in their final form in the volume published by Lerici (Milan, 1957), but I still recall the ease with which in my first joy at the discovery of an exquisitely beautiful poem the eleven- and seven-syllabled lines (the smoothest ones in Italian) began to flow from my pen, and it seemed as if I had immediately succeeded in penetrating into the nucleus of the thoughts, in conjuring up the brilliance of the imagery. At second reading, however, the marvellous eleven and seven syllables lost their splendour, they seemed too song-like to be genuinely good, too superficial to convey the extremely profound thoughts of the poetry. The worst came when the lines turned out not only too simple but also too many, when they came to exceed in number those of the original. I remember how great my enthusiasm was when reading *Részegen a sineken*, ("Drunkenness on the rails"), a lyrical poem full of foreboding, in which the subtle play of mystery is almost palpable. I went to work with great zeal. The first version had eighteen lines, the second seventeen. There remained an expressive line that I tried in vain to eliminate. I had to tell everything, to preserve each phrase, transplant the sounds and colours—and the result was always eleven syllables too much. Under great difficulties the latter finally disappeared in a more intense and more concise wording, so that the sixteen lines of the translation at last came to correspond to the sixteen lines of the original.

Many an example could, of course, be cited to illustrate the embarrassments in which one gets entangled when endeavouring to translate the work of a foreign author into one's own language. I shall confine myself to a few references as a matter of curiosity. In the 12th stanza of *Eszmélet* ("Consciousness") Attila József closes the poem with this line:

én könyöklök és hallgatok.
("I lean on my elbows in silence")

An exact and rhythmically acceptable rendering of this line in Italian is not impossible: "sto appogiato sui gomiti, in silenzi". This, however, gives the line an uncomfortably prosaic tone. No matter how we proceed with the image of leaning on one's elbow, we are apt to deprive the whole of its suggestivity. To change this into "mi sporgo" would be too audacious, for would it not substitute action for a static state? May be it is, but from the point of view of the musical effect I found the following solution quite legitimate:

nella luce
sono di tutti gli scompartimenti,
mi sporgo e sto in silenzi.

The ending thus obtained is, on the whole, not very far from that of the Hungarian original.

In the poem *Csodálkozunk az életen* ("Marvelling at Life") the poet says of a lock of the beloved girl

Haja szurokkal elkevert arany.

("Her hair's gold blended with pitch.")

Locks black as pitch would in Italian only elicite a smile, as in that language the concept of pitch (pece) is associated rather with stickiness than with a colour. Therefore I translated the line, though in a somewhat Baroque vein, as follows:

i suoi capelli sono notte ed oro.

There is a world of difference between Attila József and Giambattista Marino, but a touch of archaism appeared here preferable to a decline in tone.

The poem *Az árnyékok* ("The Shades") begins with the extremely delicate *mezza voce* line

Az árnyékok kinyulanak...
("The Shades stretch forth...")

How to render the expressiveness of *kinyulanak* which is, by the way, a formulation of József's own. Diminutive verbs (si allunghiocchiano, si avanzucchiano) would perhaps serve the purpose phonetically but they obviously lack poignancy and effectiveness. I preferred to insert an adjective which does not occur in the original: "lenta l'ombra si allunga", in order to preserve the softness and the suggestiveness of the rhythm. (And the singular has been substituted for the plural for euphonic reasons; although *le ombre* would sound more concrete, this concreteness would have clashed with the tone prevailing from the beginning.

The opening lines of the poem bearing the title *Emberiség* ("Humanity") made me hesitate for a long time. How lucid and pure, how fascinating the Hungarian

Oh emberiség, kit törött anyám
szenvedni szaporított és nem értett!

("Oh Mankind that did
my broken mother increase,
for suffering, although she did not
understand")

And abruptly there appears the *te két milliárd párosult magány* ("Thou joined solitude of two thousand million"). But what can you make of the Italian "tu due miliardi di solitudine accoppiata?" Maybe "Solitudine a coppie di miliardi?" It was in the latter direction that I experimented:

Oh umanità, che mia madre schiantata
non capì, ma aumentò con me in dolore!
Non temo di rinascere per te,
solitudine a coppie di miliardi!

only to arrive at a quatrain of dubious taste. To spare the reader the feeling of being confronted with a piece of mathematics, it is, in my opinion, necessary to reverse the position and to present immediately the numerical aspect:

Oh tu, miliardi due di solitudine
accoppiata, non temo di rinascere,
umanità, per te. Mia madre affranta
non ti intese, con me ti aumentò in pena.

I am not sure whether this second attempt may be considered better than the first; in any case, the multitudinous yet lonely existence of mankind manifests itself more forcefully than in the former version.

In *Eperfa* ("Mulberry Tree"), consisting of four lines, the two last lines contrast with each another, the one being extremely severe in tone while the other is of great softness. The word *úrvezető* ("owner-driver") of the third line is most effective in creating a gloomy atmosphere full of menace. What can be substituted for it in Italian? "Padrone della macchina" will certainly not do! "Autista"? But then the original sense would be lost! Thus one had to content oneself with the general term "conducente," which renders the meaning of the Hungarian word only partially:

Attento, conducente! Il tronco è duro!

Not to mention the various cuts and omissions one is inevitably forced into, generally to the detriment of the substance, in the interest of outward form. In that song of grief entitled *Nem emel föl* ("It does not lift me") Attila József cries out in despair: *Hogy ne legyek kegyetlen árva!* ("Let me not be cruelly orphaned!") The strict character of the sevensyllable verse forced me to eliminate the adverb "terribilmente", notwithstanding its grave significance beside the adjective *árva*, "orfano". An expression, if not of decisive but in any case of great importance, had thus to be sacrificed to the exigencies of outward form. Did I succeed in safeguarding in this way the essence of a thought worded with concision and exactitude? It was at any rate, my intention to do so, although I am not certain of the outcome.

And let us pass over that which is irretrievably lost because of being linked with a peculiar literary tradition. In No. 3 of the 1960 volume of Galleria, I came out with a selection of Attila József's poems hitherto unpublished in Italy, among them the exquisite song *Bánat* ("Sorrow"), *Futtam mint a szarvasok* ("I ran like a stag"). But how to render those archaic nuances which the poem owes to its being an imitation and adaptation of a *kuruc* ballad? The best one can do in such cases is to endeavour not to spoil the originality of the imagery by a version aimed at "clarification."

I would not like these notes to be interpreted as a defense of the manner in which I tried to extricate myself from a difficult and awkward situation. I have simply enumerated some instances that caused me embarrassment and have pointed out a few of the expedients I resorted to in the translations which are of little avail. Thus the following strophe in *Születésnapomra* ("On My Birthday")

> De nem lettem, mert Szegeden
> eltanácsolt az egyetem
> fura
> ura
>
> ("But I was not, for at Szeged
> I was expelled by the University's
> Strange
> Gentleman")

would not leave me in peace, either when trying to translate it into Italian, or afterwards. The version

> Ma mi espulse da Szeged
> un tipo strano, della
> Università
> signore

is decidedly colloquial and fails to render the subtleties of the original text. But from the stylistic point of view, what else could I invent? "Un bizzarro messere, signore dell'Università," or "un bizzarro donno dell'Università"—to give an idea of the poem's superior and refined atmosphere? On the other hand, the metric measure of the whole poem imposed well-defined and precise boundaries which could be observed only by means of *enjambements*.

I could go on, were I not certain that anyone engaged in translation has struggled

with similar or even graver difficulties, often—alas without the slightest hope.

On my last visit to Budapest I was asked why I failed to employ any rhymes in my translations. In Italy rhymes have long ago fallen into disuse and come to be regarded with considerable diffidence. The superabundance of sonnets, the over-polished eleven-syllable lines, the perfect correspondence of the terminations in the practice of poetasters have given rise to serious reservations. It is significant that modern Italian poets of distinction, though drawing on the heritage of D'Annunzio and of Pascoli, have left the path of rhymed verse which those two great predecessors had followed so successfully. To translate constantly in rhymed verse (I did so occasionally, as in the "Ballata del poveruomo," *Szegényember balladája*, where it was warranted precisely by the ballad-like character of the poem) would be doing a disservice to Attila József, since it would invest him with the robe of classicism in the 19th-century manner, thus remaining true to outward form to the detriment of the contents. Let me refer in this context to the domain of my professional studies. Thirty years and even more ago the translations of the classics by Romagnoli were the great mode. In these translations rhymes were in part employed. Conceding as we must that the translations are pleasing enough—Romagnoli was, after all, a master of his craft—the rhymed parts are none the less somewhat cumbersome. At present, such prominent men of letters as Quasimodo and Pasolini, in their re-translations of Aischylos ("Le Coefore," Milan, 1949, and "Orestiade," Turin, 1960, respectively), though not expressly ignoring all well-defined rhythm, ignore the rhymes altogether. The most appreciated contemporary interpreter of the Greek classics, Leone Traverso, whose eleven-syllable lines of delicate structure are remarkable for their variety and their rhythmical qualities, did not use a single rhyme in his recent Aischylos (Florence, 1961). Moreover, Franco Fortini, when announcing in No. 11, 1957, of *Indicatore* the publication of my volume, suggested "a dialectic humility" and expressly advised me—considering the scale of my selection of Attila József's poems—to render each individual line of verse in a line of prose!

Before closing these short reflections or, rather, these confessions of a translator, I should like to add one more remark. The problems, the question-marks, the uncertainties always emerge in the second phase of one's contact with the author to be translated. The first phase is marked by passionate and unconditional devotion to the poet, a devotion which ignores all difficulties. It is owing to this very devotion that one succeeds in conveying an idea, no matter how vague, of the original. One is overwhelmed and moved by the spell of something beautiful, novel and great, and an intense desire is born to spread the knowledge of that which has been discovered, to give an acceptable form to that which one wishes to make known. One tries in one's own language to cover a path which is not greatly different from that already marked out clearly before us. Encouraged by one's devotion, one proceeds with the conviction deep in one's heart that

etiam disiecti invenias membra poetae.

What is all-important is to make known to mankind the poet who by accident or by the grace of fate has suddenly emerged before our eyes as a giant.

UMBERTO ALBINI
(Florence)

THREE NEW HUNGARIAN NOVELS

Three new Hungarian novels are lying before us, all of which evoked serious interest and lively debate. They differ from one another in theme, environment and timing like their authors' mentality and purpose. Yet there are sound reasons for reviewing the three of them together, because it is this variety that indicates some typical trends in the Hungarian novel of today, throwing light on the experiments, achievements, difficulties encountered.

I

Indubitably Virág Móricz's novel *Balga szűzek* ("Foolish Virgins") is the most demanding of the three. The author is the daughter of Zsigmond Móricz, the greatest Hungarian novelist to this day. This may explain the rather late unfolding of her talents: a promising beginning in the 'thirties was followed by a long silence, and only in the 'fifties did she appear as a new writer, with an enchanting book on the life of Zsigmond Móricz *Apám regénye* ("The Story of My Father"). Inspired by respect and filial affection rather than by poetic inspiration, this book became from the moment of its appearance the most important reference work on Móricz.

Since then she has written several novels. Miss Móricz is specifically a woman-writer: she sees the world from a woman's point of view and is interested chiefly in the fate, the emotions, and the condition of women. In her earlier novels too, the principal character is invariably a woman whose thoughts and emotions reflect a small world of her own. So far she has moved within the bounds of the short novel, satisfied with the description of a single psychological process or event. In the "Foolish Virgins" she aspires to more: seeks, through the story of a famous singer who came from a poor working-class family, to draw a picture of Hungarian life from the first decade of the century to our days.

First she focuses on the experiences of her main character as a child during the First World War and the 1918 and 1919 revolutions, then as the young girl in her teens, cherishing artistic ambitions during the great economic crisis, continuing with her rise to fame in the first years of the war and growing fascism, and finally as a great singer, already ageing, who arrives at the peak of her career in present-day Hungary. Thus this voluminous story is really made up of four short novels, linked together only by the principal character and the author's individual style. Miss Móricz endeavours to give those four different movements varying intonations and a different viewpoint, achieving extensive totality through form as well as time. Employing an extraordinary abundance of figures and events she tells not only the life story of all the noteworthy characters but also all their human attachments and relationships, and has also much too much to say about their acquaintances, friends or enemies. Sometimes she almost seems to get lost in the jungle-like ramifications of her stories, which, although they enrich the picture of the age, yet certainly confuse the straight course of the narrative, diverting attention from the heroine by the irresistible attraction of the side-line episodes.

Particularly in the first two parts of the novel the author's natural inclination and talent seem to conflict with her aesthetic convictions. Her foremost gift consists of the minute finish she is able to give to details; she excels in the description of the emotional world of her characters, especially that of women, as well as in sudden changes of mood, as revealed in multilateral, colourful flashes. She has a sense for dialogue, dispute, for the emotional clash of feelings rather than for the logical clash of views. Yet she

was not content to stay within the boundaries of her talents, but tried to create a picture of Balzacian dimensions. Here, however, intention and ability diverged and are also unable to merge into an organic whole in the novel. The one is neither the generator nor the consequence of the other; they alternate unorganically (and are therefore tiring).

In Hungarian aesthetic literature and criticism of the past decade realism was a widely discussed subject; the extensive totality attempted here, after the example derived from the realist masters of the nineteenth century, was for quite a considerable period held up by many as the only valid and approved standard to be required of writers. (It might be of anecdotic interest here to point out that in Hungarian literary theory this claim suffered the first defeat when the evaluation of Zsigmond Móricz became the order of the day. For some time the qualities of Zsigmond Móricz as a realist were disputed, because this extensive totality was missing from his works. When his outstanding merit became unquestionable, it had to be recognized theoretically that intensity of presentation makes up for, and often surpasses, not only the aesthetic effect but also the capacity of reflecting reality of thematic extensiveness.) Miss Móricz, in her new book, provides a conclusive refutation of this concept: constitutionally this way of writing is alien to her. Had she followed her own leanings along the lines of her former successes, she might have delighted the reader with a less extensive but more harmonious work.

One of the most successful achievements of the novel under review is the description of the mother-daughter relationship in two versions. First that of the heroine and her mother, later that of the heroine and her own daughter. She gives an excellent portrait of parental love, tormenting and unable to express itself save through roughness and affront. Both relationships, although identical, differ. The second—the singer and her daughter—is more refined than the first—a working-class woman and her child—but not less tormenting. In the singer's case the situation is more acute because she remembers her own childhood, how much she had suffered from her mother for the same reason, and she realizes her inability to act differently. This is the most prominent psychological achievement throughout the book. But not less noteworthy is the way in which the authoress describes the unconscious development of a talent in the years of adolescence and the search for self-expression. The "Foolish Virgins" is one of the rare novels on artists which convince the reader of the hero's artistic gift, not on the writer's *parole d'honneur*, but through its human manifestations.

2

Imre Keszi aspires to an equally wide social panorama but within much narrower limits of time. *Szőlőből bor* ("Wine from Grapes") gives the story of a single year, a turbulent and chaotic year, upsetting everybody's life and decisively influencing their fate. The author is extremely versatile: once a pupil of Béla Bartók's, he became a composer, folklorist and philologist. For a time he was the most dreaded literary critic, then an aesthete who provoked hectic debates. Since a number of years he has devoted himself exclusively to creative literature, chiefly as a novelist. His novels provide evidence of his uncommon talent and wide erudition. His novel, "Elysium," published also in France, was the successful result of a bold undertaking: it is the story of a lonely, deserted Hungarian Jewish child, seized by the nazis and used for experiments—the lurid, crazy world of 1944 seen through the eyes of a child.

"Wine from Grapes"—although differing in method and outlook—is historically the continuation of "Elysium." It describes the first year of liberated Hungary, from August 1945 to August 1946, from the first beginnings of reorganized life, over the dark

months of inflation, to the opening of a new chapter: the introduction of the new currency, the forint. The author has thus written a novel of manners presenting an impressive, all-embracing social tableau of this recent but by now almost historical period. However, he made no attempt to benefit from the proven methods of bestseller historical novels; he does not name well-known personalities of the period, and even actual historical events are transubstantiated, fashioned to fit the figures, places and happenings within the framework of the novel.

The hero is a young Jewish schoolmaster who has come back from deportation. The choice of this hero may be regarded as fortunate: the portrait of the highly intellectual young man—returning home, trying to adapt himself, slowly succeeding in fitting himself into the new world, fighting to get over the horrors of the recent past that caused the death of those he loved—is drawn with convincing authenticity. This rootless and wounded individual, his hesitant uncertainty and slow rehabilitation, give Mr. Keszi ample opportunity for keeping the intellectual world of teachers and artists (so thoroughly known to himself) in the limelight, for unfolding a broad social panorama, drawing dozens of figures into the plot. At the same time, with the selection of the hero Mr. Keszi, in spite of all his artistic skill and high intellect, was unable to avoid a certain lack of balance: the Jewish problem tends to overshadow all the other problems of Hungarian society at the time. This preponderance is misleading, because, though in Hungary the Jewish problem had been steadily growing graver from 1938 (if not from 1920) onwards and became a central question in 1943 and 44, it naturally could not remain such after the liberation—except for die-hard fascists and for Jews who were faced with the task of overcoming their sufferings. Society in general was soon burning with the fever of reconstruction and the search for new political orientation, in which the above-mentioned impulses and painful memories may have played a serious role, but could no longer determine the period.

The characters of the novel, notwithstanding their multiple interrelations, belong to three different worlds: one is the school with its staff of masters, the second is a circle of artists, and the third is the sphere of the workers, taking part in the labour movement. This three-strata arrangement by no means corresponds to any mechanical separation of progressive and reactionary forces. These forces run diagonally through the school-staff, the artists and even the labour movement, first marking, then attracting, finally bringing into contrast adherents of opposite poles.

There is no room here for going into the details of the story. But equal in significance to the chief-character is the figure of a gifted musician, who is driven towards abstract music in retreat from the inhumanity of the war. This figure and his creative problems reveal one of Mr. Keszi's most remarkable qualities: he writes about music, about the process of the composer's creative work, the functioning of his mind and imagination in so vivid a manner as to render them comprehensible even to the uninitiated. In this respect he stands unique in Hungarian, and perhaps not only in Hungarian, literature.

It is one of the author's outstanding accomplishments that he endows each of his characters with a personal style and individual mode of expression, characteristic not only of their dialogues, but also of their *monologues intérieurs*. In this respect he is able to use all intonations with great ease. Although at his best in ironic-caricaturistic style and in style imitations, he can touch the emotional, playful or pathetic strings with as much ease as those of children's thoughts and feelings. Admirable as this stylistic versatility may seem, it is nevertheless tiring, and one would like to identify the author's own voice among the many "relative styles," in order to find firm ground amidst all the sudden changes.

This novel depicts a most exciting period

in recent Hungarian history. Contemporaries are naturally hard to satisfy; when comparing our memories of what we have been through with the world described by the writer, we feel that for all its riches the novel is poorer than our own experiences. This may be due to the choice of the hero and his milieu. The teaching staff of a secondary school is a narrow medium for reflecting all the tensions and tendencies of that period. The wild plunge into black-marketing and hot political discussion, characteristic features of these months of raging inflation and disorganization appears transposed to a secondary level only. On the whole the atmosphere of the novel is more distressing and sceptical than we remember that time to have been—despite all our innumerable individual and collective losses. Still, this book is one of the most successful efforts in Hungarian literature to give a truthful picture of the life and the people of that period.

3

In his last short novel, *A négylábú kutya* ("The Fourlegged Dog"), Lajos Mesterházi conducts the reader into a world that is different both in tone and theme. The author, like almost all writers of his generation, has already written his great *roman fleuve* reflecting the course of his contemporaries, from growing up and awakening to consciousness in Horthy's Hungary to rebirth and fulfilment in a people's democracy. His name and reputation, however, he acquired first of all as a publicist, then as a playwright who after 1956 had the courage to tackle numerous questions openly: *Pesti Emberek* ("People of Budapest"). In his articles as well as in his plays the question that really attracts Mesterházi is the moral problem.

"The Fourlegged Dog" (the play he based on it under the title *A tizenegyedik parancsolat* –"The Eleventh Commandment"–was one of last year's successes on the Hungarian stage*, also deals with a moral problem, in fact with a whole series of moral problems, in a broader and maturer way than in his earlier writings. The title itself has a double meaning: it is the signboard of a provincial inn which plays an important part in the story; but it really possesses a symbolical meaning, indicating the significance of every-day life.

The problem it handles is also twofold. In the foreground a successful communist writer, who has become careless and somewhat indolent by his success, is startled by a conflict in his private life into realizing the inadequacy of his own attitude and methods, bringing home to him the dangers of complacency that are liable to threaten his integrity as artist and man. In the background two moral crises run their course involving two generations of a worker's family, interwoven with the writer's conflict and, in part, precipitating, motivating and colouring it. Mesterházi never before succeeded in writing with such ease and serenity about far from minor problems without undue lightheartedness. Engaging is the way in which he draws a slightly caricaturistic portrait of the communist writer, devoid of bitterness, although he obviously modelled the figure after himself.

The central problem of the novel is the hero's mental crisis, his conventional thinking, his predilection for *idées reçues*, his loosing of his grip on life, his work having become useless except as an easy way of making a comfortable living. His eyes opened through the crisis of his own marriage, he looks into the lives of others, into his own work, and soon perceives that the moral teachings he has been broadcasting over the radio with such lavish generosity are no more than extracts of Christian morality imbued with a moderate pink hue. This man's value begins to rise when he has the courage to recognize the truth and draws the logical conclusions regarding his life and activities.

The story, however, shows certain disproportions. Though the writer's personal crisis and its solution ring true, the conflicts originally destined for illustration—the

* See Dezső Keresztury's article in Vol. II, No 3, pp. 182—183.

desertion of the old worker by his wife, the differences between the young working couple—are given too much weight and significance, mainly because a similar conflict threatens the hero's own marriage (even if it is less acute and caused only by a double misunderstanding). But one has the feeling that the really significant subject-matter lies in the decisive change experienced by all women awaking to self-consciousness, women who have their own profession and in consequence are no longer willing to live humbly at the side of the man ordained by "divine dispensation" to be the master: they try to find their own happiness in their own way.

These two conflicts unfortunately do not complete each other harmoniously; on the contrary, they tend to clash. The one hampers the development of the other, and draws away too much attention from the author's real intentions.

These three novels have been picked from among the several dozen that have lately appeared on the Hungarian book market. Notwithstanding the differences among their authors regarding sphere of interest, talent and concept, they are unanimous in trying to tackle simultaneously the problems of society and the individual's psyche, as well as of their interrelation. These three novels furthermore furnish proof that the narrow and stiff barriers raised at one time before socialist literature are slowly disappearing. Artists are no longer following prefabricated principles, but create at the incentive of their talents and convictions. There is no infallible recipe for producing a masterpiece, nor is there one for avoiding failure; success and failure are not determined by a literary recruiting commission, but by the public and lively debates of literary criticism.

PÉTER NAGY

BOOKS ON HUNGARIAN MONUMENTS AND WORKS OF ART

A notable achievement both of Hungarian research in the history of art and of Hungarian publishing is the series of monographs which under the title "The Topography of Hungary's Monuments and Works of Art" surveys on a regional basis the entire material of this country's art treasures, in the widest sense of the word.

The want of such a topography had long been felt. One of the pioneers in the field, Arnold Ipolyi, was urging a hundred years ago the need for a history of art which would provide the groundwork for "the knowledge of our country." After several starts had been made, only to be abandoned, the project was taken up again in the period between the two world wars. The lesson of the earlier attempts and the example of work done abroad led to a higher standard of erudition. The support, both moral and material, accorded to the undertaking was for those days unusually generous, but instead of the projected series only a single volume appeared.

Edited by Professor Tibor Gerevich and published in 1949, it dealt with the collections at Esztergom. It is indicative of the difficult circumstances under which the work was conceived that the first volume of what was intended to be a topographic series should restrict itself to the objects of art, primarily of foreign origin, in a collection whose reputation had already been internationally established. Though it catalogued with erudition a number of contemporary paintings, the material to which the volume primarily owed its value consisted of the

works of art in the museum dating from the periods between the Middle Ages and the Baroque.

Nevertheless, fresh ground had undeniably been broken. And in the course of the preparation of the volume it had already become clear that such work could only be accomplished by the joint efforts of several collaborators. Besides the strenuous and time-consuming task of collecting and arranging the material, adequate financial and intellectual assistance was required, and the necessary research had to be carefully planned and allocated.

In registering these achievements, it must be pointed out that work on this scale could only be carried out thanks to the great upswing which followed the liberation of the country in 1945. The extraordinary energy and scope of the cultural revolution not only meant a diversification and broadening of interests; it also permitted the continuous development of planned research and of organized scientific work without which such a great enterprise could hardly be embarked upon. Moreover, the concept of historical value had also acquired a new and richer meaning; the field of study could thus be considerably extended, and the important and valuable material already recorded in earlier periods could now be treated under many more aspects.

The work was given further impetus by a growing recognition throughout the world that, in the task of stock-taking and reconstruction after the devastations of a great war, the data to be found in topographical literature can be of immense help to the scholar and the state, to the layman and the expert. Throughout Europe the practical aspects of such topographical work gave a greater impetus to the work already in progress, helped to overcome many a deadlock in research, and quickened a demand that large-scale work of the type which, as it had seemed earlier, could only be done efficiently for German-speaking territories, should be undertaken by every nation.

Thus, in recent years, and in relatively rapid succession, topographies of monuments and works of art have been published in Switzerland, Great Britain, Holland and Sweden, not to mention the Austrian, Czech and German topographies which have behind them a tradition of several decades. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that such work has so far been neglected in some of the countries richest in art treasures, notably Italy and France; and the neglect is clearly due not only to the difficulties of treatment arising from the very wealth of the material but also to the opposition to this method in the academic traditions of these countries. In Italy, there are numbers of vast summary monographs, but there is an aversion to describing simultaneously architectural monuments and the works of art on the basis of regional divisions. Similarly in France the encyclopedic-typological method fathered by Viollet-le-Duc, with its more or less general disregard of the historical point of view, is still vigorously alive.

As regards European topographical work in general, since the late 1940's there have arisen a number of still unsolved problems which are common both to the newer projects and to those initiated earlier. Besides a whole range of other questions, we may instance: the elaboration of methods of organization; the reconciliation of collective methods of working with individual interests; whether particular artistic forms and domains of art should be covered or not; whether architecture should retain the leading position generally accorded to it in topographical works, or whether its treatment should be more in proportion with that of the other arts; whether individual works or groups of works should be analysed in greater or less detail; what should be the minimum age of the monuments selected for description; what standard of value should be applied. In countries such as Hungary, where the discipline was of comparatively recent standing and the necessary experience was consequently lacking, these and similar

questions were the subject of extensive preliminary discussions and investigations; and the answers which were sought had to be in accordance with the latest developments in branches of knowledge which formerly only bordered on topographical work, if they had any connection with it at all. It is sufficient to mention, among others, such branches of learning as settlement history and town planning—both the planning of the aspect of the town, and problems arising in connection with the rapid changes in forms of village settlement. These questions could be tackled most freely in those countries where the greatest and most valuable part of the material was in public ownership and consequently no limits were set, other than those of time and space, to the scope of research and publishing.

Topographical work in Hungary has a curious history. Ever since the eighteenth century, when the task of describing the country was undertaken from several angles, a considerable number of mainly architectural monuments was listed in diverse publications and mention was also made of the most outstanding private collections. These works, written sometimes in Latin (*e. g.* those of Mátyás Bél), and sometimes in German (as in the case of Joh. Korabinszky), grouped their material geographically or statistically or presented it in encyclopedic form. The information on eighteenth century conditions in Hungary contained in these works is still valuable today. They failed nevertheless to give an objective valuation of the country's art treasures, treating all indigenous works of art with rather sentimental affection or commenting more than once in mildly apologetic tones on everything which was not Viennese in origin or departed from that venerated standard. Only the strengthening of national self-consciousness and the emergence of a national art in the first half of the nineteenth century could make us realize the value of our own treasures. It is therefore easy to understand that the struggle for the rejuvenation of the Hungarian language and arts coincided with the struggle for the country's political independence. Nor is it surprising that in the period of oppression after the 1848—49 war of independence not only artists took part in the resistance movements but also aristocrats and church dignitaries, who in their writings, inspired by their love of art, recalled the past to paint the picture of a better future. It was to serve the forces which were shaping this better future and to strengthen confidence in its coming that Floris Rómer, for instance, wrote his travel notes—which were to become an important source for the topographical works of the past decade.

There were now better foundations to build upon than in the heroic age a hundred years before. The results of general and regional historical research, the Hungarian works on art history and ethnography, the survey—primarily that of medieval monuments—undertaken to serve the purpose of a more thorough teaching of architectural history, were in part already available. Those who have had experience, however, of what topographical work demands, will know that all this means little or nothing. The compilation of the material for each single volume requires on-the-spot inspection with up-to-date methods of investigation, an extensive study of archives and municipal building records, and the taking of thousands of photographs and measurements; and all this work must be so coordinated that adequate material resources and expert knowledge are at hand when and where required. For a small country which was directing all its efforts to the construction of a new world after the devastations of the war, the task was not an easy one. The difficulties were finally overcome by the formation of a working group under the auspices and with the material help of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and since 1952 a new volume of the series, each embracing a different regional unit (an entire county or part of it, a sector of Budapest, the city most abundant in historical

monuments) has been published about every two years.*

The organization of topographical work has by now reached a stage in Hungary when the preparation of several volumes can be carried out simultaneously. As a consequence, the interval between the publication of successive volumes is likely to be reduced, probably to one year. It must not, of course, be concluded from this that the topography of the whole country could be covered in the lifetime of a single generation. But the initial steps towards this goal have been taken, and the continuity of the work is secured.

More difficult than the problems of creating a working organization—solved in our case with comparative ease—are those connected with the principles of methodology to guide the researcher in his work of selection and arrangement. Although the method which became established in Hungary is largely similar to that which has stood its test so well in Austrian topographical research, there are, in more than one respect, marked differences between the two. One of the most important relates to the extent of the period under investigation. Whereas the year 1850 is generally accepted as an upper limit, this has in Hungary been advanced to 1900, in order to include the achievements of the great building activity in the second half of the nineteenth century as well as the creations of a great number of important masters who were working here at the period. But while every single one of the few surviving relics of earlier ages is taken into account, from among thousands of works of art, mostly architectural, dating from the second half of the nineteenth century, only the most outstanding are to be covered by the monographs. The field is further narrowed down by including from the same period only those works of art which form an integral part of a building.

Another distinctive feature of the Hungarian topographical method is that it has to take so much account of the state of preservation of the buildings. Owing to the repeated ravaging of the country by wars, most monuments are mutilated or fragmentary, converted or reconstructed: hence in Hungarian surveys there are frequent descriptions of fragments, ruins, converted monuments and damaged works of art, while relatively little space is devoted to the description of private collections. These have never been numerous in Hungary and such as existed had already before the first world war been largely dispersed or had found their way into museums. In Hungarian topographical works, therefore, an unusually thorough and extensive treatment is given to the material of local museums and to ecclesiastical objects as well as to the interior decoration of churches, since these frequently represent the only surviving relics of a particular age. Finally, the inclusion in the surveys of the rich archaeological material now coming to light and its description from both the topographical and the historical angle, also constitutes a characteristic feature of the Hungarian method. Thus as far as the available material permits, every phase in the history of the region which is being described is portrayed with exact concreteness, while the first chapters of each volume aim at a more comprehensive and profound summarization and synthesis than is usually found in foreign works. Not only archaeological, historical or art-historical summaries are given, but when the need arises—as in the case of the volume describing the art

* Csatkai, Endre—Dercsényi, Dezső: Sopron és környéke műemlékei (Monuments and Works of Art in Sopron and Surroundings). Bpest, 1953, 2nd edition 1956

Genthon, István: Nógrád megye műemlékei (Monuments and Works of Art in Nógrád County). Budapest, 1954

Horler, Miklós: Budapest műemlékei I—II. (Monuments and Works of Art in Budapest Vol. I). Budapest, 1955. Vol. II, Bpest, 1962

Pest megye műemlékei I—II.(Monuments and Works of Art in Pest County Vols. I—II) Bpest, 1958, (Edited by a Topographical Working Group under the Auspices of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

treasures of Budapest—there are also analyses of town aspects. Finally, though the treatment is still tentative and faces many problems, steadily increasing space is being given to the monuments of folk art, especially of peasant architecture. This is all the more important for two reasons: there are frequently uncertainties as to where the responsibility lies for the preservation of these types of monument; and with the rapid transformation of our countryside it is likely that before long objects of folk art will be found only in museums.

It will be clear from what has been said that in selecting the material of the volumes considerations of historical and evolutionary importance have taken precedence over those of aesthetic value. The application of these principles of selection in accordance with the most recent ideas has preserved the volumes from being burdened with antiquarian curiosities or with the products of artistic dillettantism.

Having thus presented some characteristic features of topographical work in this country, a few words must be said also of the difficulties which accompanied the development of suitable and adequate scientific working methods. Principles of editing had to be worked out that would be equally applicable whether the monuments of any given region were important or insignificant ones, numerous or few. The procedures of description and analysis had to be evolved together with methods for the utilization of archival material and for the presentation of the most important bibliographical data. But all this belongs to the normal preliminaries of large-scale scientific work, whatever the place or time. Nor was it particularly difficult to give the guidance necessary to ensure the achievement of standards suited to the markedly different levels of training of a large number of collaborators. The greatest difficulties were due to the fact that no collective work had ever been carried out on a comparable scale either in this country or abroad. It had, moreover, to be started with hardly any previous experience in the field, and had to produce tangible results within the shortest possible time—this, the editors felt, was demanded of them because of the great material and moral support accorded to the venture. It was therefore decided to allow the first volume ("Sopron and its Surroundings") to appear without delay as the lifework of a single author. Its publication was followed by long discussions and protracted controversies; and the increased interest and appreciation which the work was arousing became manifest when the country's highest cultural distinction, the Kossuth Prize was awarded to Endre Csatkai, and D. Dercsényi, author and editor of the volume. Three years after publication a revised and enlarged second edition was quickly sold out. This proves that although the project was not started without misgivings, and though the volumes are not cheap, nor are they easy reading, yet the series is undoubtedly satisfying a strong demand, and the interest awakened by it is general.

In the absence of adequate experience a set of problems of seemingly secondary importance had to be cleared up, among them the establishment of a uniform nomenclature. Questions of terminology had to be extensively discussed and a guide prepared (A Guide to Topographical Research—Bpest, 1951). Not even now, with six volumes already published, can all the problems of a similar nature be considered as settled.

In topographical works the descriptive methods are, as a rule, applied to architectural monuments, and this fact had hitherto largely determined the structure of the works. The problem now arose of making these methods applicable to works of art of smaller dimensions. That this is more than a simple question of adaptation is proved by the fact that while the applied arts—especially the works of goldsmiths and silversmiths—generally lend themselves to a treatment analogous in method and purpose with that which the survey of architectural monu-

ments employs, paintings and sculptural works are, to some extent, thrust into the background, owing to the fact that they cannot adequately be either studied or photographically reproduced without large-scale technical equipment. Only recently could steps be taken to remedy these disproportions.

And there are other, more important questions still unsettled in preparing the survey of Hungary's art monuments. It is certainly beyond the scope of the present paper to cover all relevant problems, or to strike a balance between the achievements and shortcomings. Our purpose is to give an account of the work which—embarked upon with high standards of accuracy, organized with careful thought and already showing rich results—has brought to light several thousand works of art hitherto unknown, known only superficially, or not known for what they are; a work which, with its many thousands of photographs, measurements and plans, made many of our monuments part of the material of the universal history of the arts. From these works and discussions there has emerged a team of more than one hundred well-trained collaborators, who without thought of recognition of personal merits and sparing neither time nor trouble are prepared to serve anonymously a great cause. This in itself, particularly in view of future developments, is an achievement whose value cannot be overestimated.

ANNA ZÁDOR

A READER'S DIARY

This time the *Insel Verlag* people sent me the book of another of their authors, the young Spaniard, Rafael Sanchez-Ferlosio, as their present. It is the German translation of his *El Jarama.*

I looked at it with the sense of guilt that always overtakes me when something makes me realize how little I know about the world. I tried to assemble the facts that I remembered about Spain, and all sorts of stupid things came to my mind—first, of course, something that has nothing at all to do with literature, that this was where they founded the Order of the Golden Fleece. (As a child, I was a passionate reader of the encyclopaedia. At least twice a week I would have a look at the double-sized coloured plate against the article on Orders, and I was thrilled by the idea that some men wore dead lambs about their necks.) I also recalled pictures, and how diagonally the Spanish painters composed their works, what sharp faces the saints have there, even the illustration of their heavenly ecstasy is sharply green-and-mauve. And I seemed to have written something in my university days about the authors from Hispania, that at a certain stage in the period of the empire it came to be the Provinces that furnished Rome with her true talents. Of course I had. Seneca, Lucan. Why, even at my finals I had to write about Martial. *De epigrammatibus Martialis.* Good Lord, how much I have forgotten since!

I turned the thick volume over in my hand. What else did I know about Hispania? Nothing accurately. There had been Vandals and Goths there, and I had an idea that the Spanish were the result of a match between the Goths and the Romans. There had also been, if I was not mistaken, an Arab period in Spain's history, it was the birth place of the Inquisition, Columbus set sail under the Spanish flag, and at somewhere about the time of our *Kuruc* risings (was it then?) there was a Spanish branch of the Hapsburgs in power. Typically, however, it was Don Carlos whom I remembered best,

who was really a horrid monster, but that does not matter now—I have found out too late, and so it is Schiller's picture that will remain with me for good, and Posa, the most Spanish of Spaniards, will also speak to me in German:

> ...alle Könige
> Europens, huldigen dem spanischen
> Namen.
> Gehen Sie Europens Königen voran,
> ein Federzug von dieser Hand und neu
> erschaffen wird die Erde, Geben Sie
> Gedankenfreiheit...

Don Carlos... No end of kings followed after Philip, and they all disappeared from the throne. Cuba, Morocco, Primo de Rivera. Party struggles. The military dictatorship. Alphonso in the picture supplement to a newspaper in my childhood. Plum-like eyes and a small moustache. The Alcazar. The Civil War. I clearly saw the face of Franco, but instead of Garcia Lorca I could only recall the scenery to Act I of one of his plays. How heavy that stage setting was, heavy and lustrous, like honey or oil. *El Jarama.* It still would not convey anything, though in my mind every piece of literature has a person linked to it—the memory of a person or an event. *Poema del Cid* is Ágnes, Lope de Vega is Uncle G., Cervantes is Daddy, Calderon is also Daddy, and our old black bookshelf. Alarcon is N. B.—he was standing in front of the bookshelf, looked at me, and said: "Wouldn't you do better not always to take Red Indian books, dear?" Gongora. I was at Vásárhely by now, at the top of a terrible ladder in the masters' library. Unamuno. I am ashamed to put it down, but this was Aunt Palika. We thought Aunt Palika so boring, that whenever possible we showed her out, pleading some ostensible engagement or other, or else I would climb up the clock on the wall behind her back and put the hands forward. Aunt Palika would arrive home from our place sooner than she had left us. "Unamuno," said Father, tipping me the wink whenever we were fed up with a guest and wanted to be rid of him. I would immediately clamber up to the clock.

El Jarama. I continued to test my knowledge, obviously out to gain time—I was not very keen on this book. In fact I was not keen on any new experience at this moment. Through the courtesy of Piper's we were once given an anthology, and I knew some other Spanish poets as well as Lorca. Did I really have to get down to this *El Jarama* now? I began muttering the Cordoba District. With great difficulty I recalled Hernandez, the swaying almond branches, buzzing bees, fig-trees, and a Manuel something or other who also wrote about a river, like this Ferlosio of mine, but what on earth was his name, good Lord. I do remember what he wrote—that the river forgets. That still stirs me, even just that. Well, the river does forget. Altolaguirre. Maybe. Rameau's Minuet. But that is no longer by Manuel but by a Rafael something. Alberti? The Lord knows. Terrible, how superficial my recollections are, how confused everything is.

Am Jarama. Am Jarama. I had to read it, though I felt absolutely no inclination to, but I did not want to offend the *Insel* people. I would have liked to browse about in the Toldi, in Winnetoo, or the *Kincskereső Kisködmön* (Treasure-seeking Little Waistcoat). Why, for heaven's sake, do I have to keep up with contemporary literature? Finally I even laughed at my own predicament as I stared at the book and kept putting off the moment when I would open it. I savoured the name of my unknown Spanish colleague. "What did you do during the Civil War, Ferlosio?" I wondered. "What is your opinion of the processions in the streets of Madrid? I saw them at the hairdresser's in "*Ország-Világ*" (Country and World), you could probably look at them from your flat. What is your opinion of Franco? What does the jacket say, when were you born? In 1927? Well, you're young enough then. You first appeared on the scene at the age of

twenty-three with a picaresque novel, and *El Jarama*, for which you were awarded the *Premio Nadal*, is your second book. Let's see this *Premio Nadal*-winner then, let's get over it!"

I had a go at the book five times, and set it aside five times. The sixth time it was only anger that made me persevere with it, I cursed, and swore that if I could not bring myself to get beyond the tenth page this time, I would take to my "Treasure-seeker," because I could not stand it any longer. I spent half my day at the hospital, the other half managing my household, I wanted to be left in peace with Spanish literature, or if I was not to be, let that Spanish author write so that I could understand what it was all about and should not have to rack my brains to unravel the threads. I hoped that the *Insel* people had sent Ferlosio my *Freskó* (Fresco) to read and that my colleague was since endeavouring, amid wild Spanish curses, to decide how many inhabitants there were in the Parish of Tarba, and who was who. I can imagine how familiar he is with the life of a Protestant parish! *El Jarama*. Why, the very title was no good!

What was this man up to, with this geography-book beginning, fifty times more boring than the worst schoolgirl books. A Spanish novel should begin with a foreword, let the writer call me the leisured reader, let him write about pleasant fields, clear skies, springs, and preferably...

Why "preferably?" I was fed up!

I was peevish, made myself a cup of coffee, fumed, then realized what it was that irked me most. Of course, the annoying thing was that in this novel there was no village called X, with a nobleman who had a lance, an emaciated steed and a darting greyhound. I was laughing by now, for the truth had proved so comic—the *Insel* people would have a fit if they found out that I do not really like modern novels at all, only the old-fashioned kind, and that the reason why I write my own things the way I do, is that unfortunately I don't know how to do it any other way. Come on *Jarama*, for a sixth and last time. Three hundred and fifty pages, when shall I get to the end. "Kurz und der Reihe nach will ich die spanischen Flüsse beschreiben..." Unbearable. And all dialogues, hardly a description here and there, as though it was done specially to annoy me, as though I was having someone cock a snook at me from afar. I do so hate all dialogues in novels—to my ear they all sound false. The place for speech is on the stage, in plays. The interior monologue on the other hand...

Well, it could not make any difference now. I had to read it, whether I liked it or not. I could not do that to the *Insel* people. What would I write to Sch if he asked me in one of his letters what I thought of it?

Dawn found me still awake, the book on the eiderdown and the light switched on. Repentently I clambered out of bed, went to the room where the books are, and sought out a picture of the Iberian Peninsula from among the Atlases on the shelf. I pulled my finger along the black lines of the rivers—here was that Jarama of mine, oh Lord... The sixth attempt had succeeded, perhaps a little too well, I had not slept a wink because of it, and now I obviously would not. I felt upset, tired and happy, as always when I am stirred by an artistic experience. It was not worth while going back to bed, it was a lovely, cold dawn. It would be a better idea to make some coffee and try and figure out what this book had, and what this author had...

Am Jarama is the story of a scorching summer day, a Sunday, by the banks of a stretch of the river near Madrid. Six boys and five girls spend their day resting there from morning till evening, by the waves of the water. The guests at a riverbank tavern enjoy the cool air and drink wine with lemons. From time to time one of the girls or boys pops in to the publican to ask for this or that, some slices of lemon, then they just sing, sunbathe, talk, roam about, and go home when the evening sets in. Not all of them—one of the girls is dead by the eve-

ning, she has drowned in the river. The waves continue on their way, the light assumes a new colour on the surface of the water. Everything continues, everything changes—everything remains unchanged.

What should I write about this novel?

Its plot is almost nothing, and what there nevertheless is, is almost impossible to summarize—as though I was being forced to do what I most loathe, which is to reproduce the contents of a lyric poem. The waves fold over each other, the sand is honey-coloured, the evening is inky blue. That is the sort of thing you can say about it, but what the reader will think... Never mind. That is the truth. A train runs across a silly little bridge, the pink, sad soft noses of calves show between the planks of the freight cars. A rabbit darts across a courtyard, trembling. Children, on an excursion, steal an invalid's wheel chair and play with it, oblivious of everything—they shriek with delight, they have such a good time, it is a heavenly game... The invalid watches them. There is a smell of water, a smell of ooze, the coloured glasses on the bar of the tavern glitter. A curtain is drawn aside, the dead girl is laid on the floor of a cellar carved out of the limestone, it is a moist, cold cavern, the shadow of the coroner is elongated in the candlelight. The music from the riverbank tavern is carried among the graves of the cemetery, a man with an ass plods along the road taking maize stalks, the leaves a shrill green. One boy and a girl spy in through the graveyard railings, the vases on the graves glint from within, and faded silk ribbons rustle on the wreaths. The urchins on the highway giggle as they stare at the girl's slacks—an unusual and absurd fashion. "They'll get used to it," says the boy. "The Americans are here, they're building a new airfield over there. They'll get used to it..." "I'm not interested in politics," says the girl. "I only read the cinema ads..." Gendarmes come along the road, the young man becomes confused and humble, the girl cheeky and irate; the gendarmes also feel that her slacks and bathing dress are immoral, they are near a cemetery—what unseemliness! The graveyard is almost the church itself. "What outrageous idiocy!" says the girl indignantly. "You're a woman," replies the boy. "If you were a man, you wouldn't stick to your principles that much, because you'd know that if you were too obstinate, you'd get a good kicking..."

The water flows on, and as the hours pass, the river between its banks always assumes a new colour. Speech and song mingle on the shore, and the travellers at the tavern are also engaged in conversation. It is still the girl's slacks... What a sensation! A man from Alcarra ruminates—how odd the world really is. The other day they had some foreigners their way, and the publican's wife did not dare serve them, they looked Protestant, and the foreign woman also wore slacks. What if she incurred perdition for giving them food... Masts reach into the night in the direction of Vicalvaro, with white and red lights radiating from their tips, like fireworks. Behind them is the black sky, on which only the most brilliant constellations can match the moonlight. Over the hot earth floats the weighty scent of summer, crickets chirrup, some kind of stone gleams at them. In the valley of the Jarama the landscape floats in the vague light of the moon, as though a mist lay over it. A wan whiteness decks the distant mountain ranges with snow, the peaks looking like the giant sheep of a fairy-tale flock. The water rocks the lights of the inn, and the vastly extended shadow of a man leaning against the wall may be seen. In fact there is nothing else but shadow and light, the water seething in the lock, the sound of a wireless—and somewhere in the distance the eye of a railway train appears, then disappears. Night comes and Lucita is no longer alive. The coroner has to be called to the body from the small town nearby, where he is having a night out at the Casino del Alcala. The car speeds across the Plaza Mayor. There is no one in the streets, only Cervantes' gaunt figure squats on a low chair,

a quill in front of him, a sword at his side, with the moon showering down on him. Light and smoke gush forth from the bars. Lucita lies there, at the bottom of the limestone cellar, and the coroner has a carnation in his buttonhole.

I am sure it must have been Mr. A's idea to send me this particular book—to let me see how another author can tell the story of one day, how another can describe the scenery. how another writes a novel without a hero. For of course the real hero of this novel too, is not a human one, but the River Jarama (just as it is not Annuska, but Tarba itself that is the hero of my *Freskó*), and even it does not signify itself, but time. Inexorably flowing time, in which, between morning and evening—between our births and our deaths—we all of us take a dip, and our brief sojourn in the water or only on its banks varies according to our abilities, tastes and characteristics. How this book had bored me at the beginning, and with what trembling eagerness I devoured it at the end, with what unforgettable lines it illumined the slow night! Now here is an author who has style —his sentences quiver, rise, then tumble again, while the rhythm of their slow, irresistible undulation drops and lifts the reader. People come and go beyond the shadows of the words, the sun shimmers above, then tumbles down, someone comes, leaves, is drowned, evening falls, dry wreaths rustle beyond the cemetery railings, the Americans in the vicinity of Madrid are teaching the people in the streets a new style of life. Nothing happens—I have said so already. Only that nothing includes everything.

*

The war, of course.

How long will it take for my generation to rid itself of its experience? In the cinema at Szombathely, during a performance of that excellent Yugoslav film, some of the children gave great shrieks of excitement when the searchlight of the sentry tower in the Concentration Camp scanned the row of prisoners. The very old dozed off, and there were also some who left before the interval, grumbling and cursing the distributors: "Let them look at it as wants to. . ." The children chattered and giggled in the interval, for them what they had seen was a game, they could not really understand it, their interest was objective and only concerned with the film itself. But those of our age sat through the performance, never spoke, just leaned forward on one of the empty chairs of the almost empty auditorium, and with the storm-laden, low firmament of the open-air cinema above them, thirstily smoked one cigarette after another. Our generation has a dual experience of all war films—at once objective and subjective.

You cannot, as an intelligent being, live through a world war during the most receptive years of early youth, without it leaving a generation-long wound.

That must be the reason why I was so breathless, so possessed of that "I can't put it down for a moment" type of excitement, in my reading of Mme. P.'s present—an *Anthology* of Polish prose authors about the War. (I wonder if all Poles are as charming as the ones I know? Mme. P. keeps sending me everything with the same naturalness with which she let me have this book: "It won't hurt you to become acquainted with your Polish fellow-writers before you go to Warsaw." She gave me tickets to the Chopin concert and to the performance of the Polish dance ensemble. And Jan, Jan bidding us farewell and collecting his things in the lobby, and trying to squeeze a book into a briefcase, which we immediately snatched from his hand and examined—we always examine every book we see. "Does it interest you? I'll give it you," said Jan, with his charming, gay look. When we tried to protest he looked at us uncomprehendingly, in almost unfriendly manner, as though we had offended him. "A gift!" he explained, perhaps we would now understand better, maybe he had not expressed himself with sufficient

clarity in Hungarian. We had to keep the book, and in his joy over this, he sends us lovely picture cards from Warsaw on every conceivable occasion. But Krystyna is also like this. Krystyna with her magic chain, on whom all the women looked darkly in their chagrin if she appeared anywhere with her glimmering jewellery of seventy-seven plastic cubes, which after our last handshake on the bus she hung about my neck.)

Never such a contradiction between the contents and the binding! The book has been done up in a grey cloth with green stripes, and three silly flowers on top. The blossoms would suggest a love-story, but of course it is not. By the time I was through, I felt as though I had been thoroughly beaten up, or as if I had been ill, with a grave disease. Reality never tells on me as much as its description.

The volume of three hundred and fifteen pages contains fifteen short stories; three of the fifteen authors are now dead. Those alive —with the exception of Andrzejewski, Dabrowska, Iwaszkiewicz and Zawieyski— are about forty, a little this side of the mark or just beyond it. I would have to read the volume several times to establish an order of precedence among these excellent short stories. As it is, I am afraid it was a purely personal, and not a literary reason that led me to devote the most attention to Jerzy Zawieyski's work, "The Real End of the War." Good Lord, why that was what I had always believed too, that a war does not end at the solemn and historic instant when peace is concluded—it is not all that simple. I have long ago discovered that a war continues to live longer than itself, that it continues to live for a while even in peacetime, that the dead are near, and that the memories of the living are hard to heal. Everyone has, at a completely subjective instant of his life, separately and for his own self, to terminate the war. This does not happen to everyone at the same time, nor with the same ease. Up to the outbreak of the War I was myself a child, it was during its years that I had to revaluate the ideas that had been inculcated in me, to realize that the gates could be broken in on me at any time, that there was no lock that could really be secure, that there was no ceiling—at least among our single-storey houses—that could not be penetrated by a bomb. My whole life was given a different course as a result of the War, the peaceful, provincial and middle-class career that I had hardly begun was interrupted. My siege experiences, shamefully insignificant compared to the suffering of others, were sufficient to make me wake screaming from my dreams for years after, and I know from my own self how many years it took after 1945, before the War ended for me and I got over the crisis caused by the fact that though I had myself not killed anyone, yet I had been a contemporary of mass murderers and mass murders. Horror is more difficult to overcome than its objective causes.

The story of Zawieyski's life itself moved me.

He published his first novel at the age of thirty, and was interested only in religious questions. He was a mystic, preoccupied by supernatural problems, then in 1956, not as a young man but at the age of 54, he published a volume of short stories which no longer contained so much as a trace of symbolism, abstraction or mysticism, where the relations between people and the struggle with real life had become the central issue. As far as this change is concerned, he might of course still be a bad writer, who for the sake of something or somebody shed his skin and forced himself to adopt a literary attitude that did not suit him, like an overloose or over-tight garment. Only this was not the case here—he is extremely gifted. I would very much like to make the acquaintance of his earlier works—to see the sort of thing he wrote in the mystical, religious sphere, with this power for the creation of atmosphere. They must have been awesome pieces of writing. And how much he knows about people, heavens alive, and how simply

he expresses himself, exactly as I imagine a good prose writer should, with a kind of style-less style, so terribly simply, as though some strict professor had tormented him until he got used whenever possible to doing without similes, and, if he could avoid it, to desist from weakening his originally expressive verbs with adverbs, and his nouns with adjectives. Externally he bears an interesting resemblance to "The Cuckoo" *(Kakukk)*, though his is of entirely different literary stature to that of Tersánszky.

I do awfully hate describing the contents of something, because all contents-summaries are no more than a stammering and an insult to the author. When I was a schoolmistress, I used to clench my fists for nervousness, to be able to listen to the smooth and conceited prattle of the eminent students or the desperate monster sentences of the poorer ones, during literature lessons. (We were not allowed to ask them the contents of poems or even of novels, for a work of literature will die if subjected to primitive analysis. But what were we to do? How were we to mark them? Terrible and insoluble!) In the case of Zawieyski's short story too, the essence is not what can be recounted of it —not as though it did not have an exciting story—but that which is awakened in the reader as a result of his reading.

The hero of the plot is an engineer who —in the opinion of his family—is dumb and mentally deranged upon his return from a POW camp. His wife is equally terrified of the nights she spends with him, as of the days when her husband's madness is made manifest even to outsiders. On these occasions he will embark on a strange dance, spinning, leaping and whirling, and then collapse. The wife does not know that her husband is actually neither dumb nor mad, only as no one has the patience to wait till his halting tongue stammers out a sentence, he prefers not to speak. If anyone in the family would really devote serious attention to him and try to help him, he would be able to mutter his miserable story to them, but who has either the time or the patience he needs? The housekeeper Józia is glad that her master is helpless and that she can requite her frustrated maternal instincts by nursing him, his wife has long come to love another, has thought that he was dead, and his unexpected return has merely served to disturb her life—how is she now to marry her lover? Yet she would do well to listen to what had happened to her husband.

The engineer had wanted to survive the War, he had wanted to survive at any price, because he longed to return to his work and to his wife. He tried even as a prisoner of war to preserve his strength, his humour, and he arranged concerts and plays for his fellow prisoners. The War was nearing its end, when a new commandant arrived in their camp, Kurt Winter, who had been sent there from the Eastern Front and who knew that they had lost the War, so that he tried to soothe his despair and fear through constant drinking and orgies. The engineer knew German and French, and this was to be his doom. Winter made use of him in his carousals, he was the interpreter when the Gestapo officers had French women brought over for them from the neighbouring Concentration Camp. He was not a good drinker, so they forced him to dance, to provide entertainment for the Germans. His dance was his own desperate invention—a horrible, peculiar dumb-show. Winter himself made improvements on the "choreography," finally having him dance naked, and to make him move quicker he lashed his legs with a riding-crop. One night, when he could dance no more, Winter struck his head with the button of his crop, beat his naked prisoner till he collapsed, then flung him out at the second-floor window. When the allied forces liberated the POW camp they found the engineer almost dying and immediately set about treating him.

He wandered from one hospital to the next, where nurses and doctors of goodwill always understood his stammering speech. His permanent dumbness only began at

home, when he noticed on his return that his wife grew so terribly nervous whenever he spoke in those distorted tones of his. His chronic dances were still directed by Kurt Winter—a Kurt Winter who had died long since. The War had apparently ended —but only apparently, for nothing had been settled. The engineer's life remained unresolved, so did that of his wife, and the woman's lover was also doomed to inactivity. And of course Kurt Winter also lived somewhere, though he ought not to be, it was not right that the memory and the nervous system should have preserved him, not right that he should be able to influence, suggest and command, as he had once done.

What is to be done? There is no other solution than for the German officer really to die, and he cannot be killed in any other way than together with the engineer himself, for he is a piece of fiction, dead, living only in memories, only in the manifestations of a warped derangement. Why wait till his wife divorces him, marries her lover, and sends him to the country with Józia? Why force someone whom he loves so intently to go through a divorce suit, a removal? He has received so much from her, she is such a good woman; what has happened is not her fault, nor even that of her lover—Kurt Winter is to blame, he must suffer for it. The engineer takes one last walk through Warsaw under construction, gazes at the workers erecting the walls along the devastated thoroughfares, thirstily, enviously stares at the *hale* who can work (he is an architectural engineer), and not for a moment nurturing anger or remonstrance in his heart towards the faithless wife, fully comprehending her bodily and mental reactions, commits suicide. The War must be terminated somehow, and no price is too high if Kurt Winter, who has long been living only in his diseased nerves and crippled body, will cease to be.

His death surprises no one, but his wife's behaviour all the more so. Because of course for the wife too, it is now that the War comes to an end—it is now that she definitively becomes a widow, which should have occurred when the other women did. Now, at last, after the event, she understands something that she ought to have understood earlier—she is noticeably beginning to age, she breaks with her lover, takes a wreath on her arm, dons mourning—the War has come to an end at last, the dead are due their mourning. The lover is also able at last to quit his inactivity, he marries—his own, special war has also come to an end. When at the very end of the story he strolls across the autumn park with his wife, he is shocked to see his former mistress in the company of Józia, making her way home from the cemetery across the damp, fallen leaves, wearing deep mourning, and with the youth vanished from her face. She is a widow, like others. The War has ended.

What is there for me to explain about this, or to add to it? It would be such a hopeless attempt, for anything that I write would, from the very nature of the subject, be my own form of expression and not that of the author, whom I so greatly respect. How should I describe the bitter delight that his every line caused me, the fearsome suggestive power of his thinking? For me, the most unforgettable part of the story is where Józia, finding an outlet, prattles baby-talk to the engineer, and constantly addresses one who is burdened with *such* memories, who is at once himself and Kurt Winter, as "Teeny didums! Teeny-weeny!" It was as a child that I experienced something of this sort—I loved really hot bathwater, the scalding sort, because it hurt, and when I was immersed in it my body became goose-fleshy, and I was so hot that I shivered and felt cold.

MAGDA SZABÓ

PATHFINDERS OF A REVOLUTION

HORVÁTH ZOLTÁN: *Magyar századforduló. A második reformnemzedék története* (1896—1914).
[The Turn of the Century in Hungary. A history of the second reform generation, 1896—1914]. Gondolat Publishers, Budapest, 1961. 648 pp.

Zoltán Horváth's book has contributed new colours to Hungarian historiography, an art that has been none too rich in individual hues. One new colour is the subject of his work—a synthetic treatment of the democratic reform generation at the beginning of the century, which has been handled by historians with a cool reserve, frequently with aversion, in line with the general trend of relegating to the background the history of the decades preceding the First World War (except for the recognition of such creative geniuses as Endre Ady, Béla Bartók or Zsigmond Móricz). Even where an occasional essay or one of the rare monographs did discuss them, it was rather the negativ features that separate them from socialist ideas and from our present generation that tended to be stressed. A new colour has also been introduced in the method of treatment, representing a continuation of the best scholarly traditions, characterized by the seizure of the typical among the available facts rather than the pursuit of a minute and methodical process of proof, by the endeavour to reveal the essential aspects even in matters of detail, to convey the mood of the period, to centre attention on its problems through a single, suggestive conception, and to stimulate the reader to constant thought and polemics. A further novel feature is the scientific and moral courage of the undertaking, requiring penetration into fields fenced off by the boundary-marks of cautious reserve and aversion, into a wilderness crowded with an inestimable mass of material, where the precursors, the amassing of details and the earlier treatments, have at best trodden a narrow path. For all these reasons a first perusal leads us to begin with a glad and appreciative welcome of Zoltán Horváth's book, although—or indeed just because—it has already provoked violent controversy and will continue to do so. At all events it will be an incentive to research workers to undertake further exploratory expeditions and will arouse interest in obtaining a more thorough knowledge of the tragically fated reform generation at the turn of the century and a more realistic and equitable appraisal of its significance.

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The actual theme of the book corresponds not to its title, but to the sub-title. It does not provide a comprehensive review of the economic, social and political history of the turn of the century, with a treatment of the gradually deepening crisis of the Austro-Hungarian dualistic system, but is a broadly based synthesis of the political and intellectual endeavours, the works and struggles of the "second reform generation." It is indeed somewhat to be regretted that what is in fact the main theme, the main hero, "second reform generation," appears only modestly in the sub-title, though in this succinct designation the author has coined a term of noble brand that truly characterizes and colligates the truthseekers who appeared in the most varied fields of Hungarian life at the turn of the century, and who, despite differences in their background, stature and frequently outlook, joined forces in pursuit of a common aim. The parallel established between them and the first reform generation—that which prepared and fought the revolution of 1848—appears realistic and convincing. The tasks of the two reform generations, the bourgeois transformation of Hungary in the one case,

and the completion of its bourgeois democratic transformation in the other, both in opposition to the feudal, clerical reaction that supported Hapsburg domination and enjoyed its support in return, were indeed similar. Beyond the task apportioned them by history, their intellectual qualifications, their European culture, and the similarity of their reformer's approach—trusting as they did in the moral power of their just cause rather than in revolutionary action—also linked them together, as did the analogy of their tragic fate. The author does, indeed, correctly point to the differences between the two reform generations, separated as they were by over half a century and by the intervening changes in social relations, though his arguments are perhaps incomplete in this respect. It is hardly possible to agree with the author's view that the first reform generation was confined to a few dozen isolated men with no mass following, in contrast to the second, which is alleged to have commanded the support of large popular masses. The truth is almost the very opposite. The first reform generation relied in its struggle for an independent bourgeois national state on the majority of the nobility—at least half a million people—the urban bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia, managing after the liberation of the serfs in 1848 also to rally a large part of the Hungarian peasantry behind it in the War of Independence (1848-1849). The second reform generation, though its potential basis was indeed considerably broader, could hardly break through its urban isolation, was far removed from the masses, and only occasionally appealed to—or rather, joined—one or the other of the mass movements of the organized workers. And this peculiar difference is closely linked to the other important distinction which is absent from the author's analysis. The first reform generation was the champion of national traditions, the standard-bearer of the national idea, of a nationalism that was then fundamentally progressive. This was the source of the enormous influence it exercised on its own period and on subsequent history. The second reform generation on the other hand, which struggled, with democracy as its main aim, against the very nationalism that had degenerated into reactionary chauvinism and against the landowning and squirarchic ruling classes that were the representatives of this chauvinism (though it was itself not free of a certain nationalism related to the "Hungarian State idea"), did not fight for the kind of democratic transformation that would be closely linked with national independence. This is what we consider the decisive difference, unlike the authors' view that "the activities of the first reform generation were terminated by the war of independence, while the actual role of the second reform generation was cut short by the First World War," the latter statement being in any case one to whose critique we shall subsequently return.

Even though our opinions may not concur on the differences, we must hasten to declare our essential agreement with the realistic, many-sided conception that is advanced of the tasks of the second reform generation, the circumstances and the content of its struggles.

The book sets out with an introduction that sums up with economical restraint the social and political conditions of the period of the *Ausgleich* (Compromise) of 1867, continuing with a broadly delineated cultural panorama. This "millenary panorama" is vividly characteristic and painted in colours that are far from uniform. It presents the achievements of the country's undoubtedly considerable material advancement, of the development of industrialization and a capitalist civilization, the colours and lights of the voracious spread of Budapest in its growth to metropolitan greatness, of its spectacular building activity and of the celebration of the 1896 Millenary. And, in the contrast afforded by the glaring lights, the grave, dull splashes of the shadows

emerge the more palpably—the backwardness and foresakenness of the peasant masses, throttled by the vast estates, the destitution of the millions of agrarian proletarians suffering for lack of land and employment, the political and cultural oppression of the national minorities—their lives harassed by political trials, Hungarianization and malevolent suspicion—and above all else, permeating all the rest, the chauvinism that had come to dominate the whole of public life. One of the great virtues of the book is the characterization, through an approach using almost neurological methods, of the "visage of chauvinism" and of its pathological phenomena. The author adduces striking facts and excellently selected quotations to depict the phrasemongering "Hungarianism" that indulged in an orgy of trappings, the cult and terrorism of a "patriotism" that failed even to recognize or else denied the true values of the nation, the illusions of national grandeur that proved a menace both at home and to others, the self-deception that had become utterly divorced from reality, the lies that completely poisoned public opinion. At the same time it also exposes the social basis and function of the chauvinistic mania—the class of great landowners and the squirarchic apparatus of government, which had developed and spread their antisocialist, antisemitic, nationalist cult, wrapped in independence slogans and designed to preserve their positions of power derived from the feudal system.

The account given of education, university training, scientific life and cultural policies in the broader sense, clearly shows the harm done by a Hungarian nationalism that propagated the fiction of a "homogeneous national state" and tried to force it on the multi-national country, as well as the connection between chauvinism and its cultural and scientific backwardness. This intonation is the key, characteristic of the whole tonal structure of the book—that of a merciless, principled critique that does not even in matters of detail extenuate Hungarian chauvinism and thus differs radically from the right-wing criticism of Gyula Szekfü's historical school, from the "neo-nationalism" that rejected the most outrageous abuses of the chauvinism practised at the turn of the century from the standpoint of the counter-revolutionary Horthy regime.

The introductory chapters at the same time point to a grave deficiency of Hungarian social development in that it failed to establish a bourgeois-democratic trend of any significance, an even moderately progressive bourgeois approach in opposition to the leading stratum of great landowners and squires and the nationalist tradition of the nobility that had come to dominate intellectual life. The majority of the Hungarian bourgeoisie was formed of assimilants, who both in politics and culture conformed to the semi-feudal leading stratum. The weak, spineless bourgeoisie, at this time undergoing a process of Hungarianization, participated as a sleeping partner of the system in the exploitation of the masses of the people, and in making money out of the multi-national country's economic resources. It therefore withdrew under the protective wings of the liberalism that had been inoculated into the feudal system, supported the regime, and until the turn of the century—content with its legal and religious emancipation—did not even entertain the idea of a political and cultural emancipation from under the leadership of the landlords and squires. Thus, in a country divided by a mass of glaring social and national conflicts, at the time of the great upsurge of the working class and peasant movements, "a veritable vacuum of ideas, views and politics came about" between the increasingly conservative and agrarian-minded landowners' rule and the mass movement that arose under the banner of socialist ideas. This necessarily had to give rise to a bourgeois-democratic trend, ideology and culture.

Having established the foundations, the book goes on to treat the appearance of the

bourgeois radical sociologist group, concentrated about the periodical *Huszadik Század* ("Twentieth Century") and the *Társadalomtudományi Társaság* ("Society for Social Science"). It emphasizes that the ideological break in Hungary logically began in the philosophy of law, first with Ágost Pulszky, then more resolutely with Gyula Pikler's sociologically based theory of law. There is an analysis of Pikler's "admissive theory of law" and an account of the part played by his teaching—and by the chauvinistic, anti-scientific campaign against him—in the formation of the radical sociologist group. It is not, of course, possible in the framework of this review to follow the author step by step, as he carefully follows the ideological, political—frequently even the individual—development of the bourgeois radicals in the first dozen or so years of the century. Instead of such an account, it would seem more appropriate to try and stress the features where the author's conception differs from preceding ones. Obviously, his view of the bourgeois radicals is the absolute reverse of the usual vulgar abuse on the part of the counter-revolutionary system, of its "critique," which even in its more cultured form was distorted by hatred. Zoltán Horváth sees in the radicals the pioneers of Hungarian democracy, the awakeners of the progressive spirit, politician-scholars worthy of the esteem of posterity, who were morally incorruptible in the search for truth, though due to their mistakes not guiltless in the failure of the cause of democracy. This conception also shows a welcome departure from the fairly wide-spread evaluation prevalent during the past decade. Its point of departure is not the extent to which the bourgeois radicals attained the standard set by socialist ideas, their failure to appear progressive from the vantage point of the socialist system, but rather what they accomplished and what they failed to do in the interests of the topical and primary cause of their own time—that of democracy. It is from this point of view that the author, unlike the mainly philosophically inclined essays of recent years, has evaluated not only the theoretical views of the radicals, but also several hitherto neglected or unknown facets of their practical political activities. His approach has not by any means led him to superficial apologetics. He has exercised hard-hitting criticism, whose passion has occasionally even made him abandon his objective style of presentation, levelled at the mistakes of the second reform generation, at their intellectual aristocratism, the deficiencies of their agrarian program and their almost complete lack of contact with the peasantry. He has gravely reproached them for their nationalist narrow-mindedness over the minority question, but this is a criticism—a painful criticism—from within, derived from the concept of a Hungarian democracy that is in agreement with the neighbouring peoples.

A similar yardstick has been applied to those social-democratic leaders who are included among the members of the second reform generation. And if, having been weighed in the self-same balance, they are nevertheless found to have been lighter than the bourgeois radicals, this follows logically from the fact that the author has, in the case of the leaders of a socialist labour party, been more severe in his judgement of the same mistakes, or rather, in their case, of their reformist temporization. It is noteworthy that the author, himself a social-democrat through several decades, has exercised objective and sharp criticism of the early twentieth century Social-Democratic Party for its dogmatic agrarian policy, with its rejection of land-distribution and thus of the peasantry as an ally, for its cautious reserve over the nationality problem, its covert support of Hungarian nationalism, and for its retreat from revolutionary aims, while not casting doubt on the sincerity and human integrity of the party's leaders. He can therefore hardly be reproached with prejudice in favour of social-democratic traditions, but at most with his failure to

penetrate beneath the surface in respect to the social basis and theoretical roots of the opportunism of social-democracy in this period.

Next to bourgeois radicalism and social-democracy the book devotes the most copious treatment, with the newest material and most original considerations, to a discussion of the cultural life and trends and the great creative minds of the period. A broadly sweeping presentation serves to acquaint the reader with almost all the branches of intellectual life at the turn of the century, with the seething turmoil and resurgence of literature, the theatre, music, painting and journalism, with their universally recognized and their only locally great or their mediocre personages, with their lasting values no less than with those products that proved perishable or had indeed been rotten at their conception. Again it would be unrealistic to undertake a detailed account of these chapters of the book, with all their fusion of thought and fact. Once more a review must be confined to a few points of evaluation.

The greatest virtue of the sections concerned with cultural history is probably their synoptic approach and uniformly based appraisal of the manifold branches of art, each with its own separate aesthetic laws. Numerous excellent works have appeared in the various component fields—histories of literature, music and art—concerned both with individual artists and with the trends of the period. This, however, is the first book to make an attempt at the creation of a comprehensive cultural synthesis, presented in its interpenetration with the entire history of the period. To achieve this object, the author has deliberately avoided embarking on an aesthetical, specialized investigation of the various branches of art and their creative personalities, striving instead to seize upon the common features of their social determination, social function and intellectual attitude. This method has permitted him in a convincing manner to distinguish the different strata and fronts of Hungarian intellectual life and to establish their essential traits. In most spheres the reader is shown the development of three main trends—the official, expressing the intellectual requiremets and traditions of the ruling classes; the urban, serving the superficial erudition and commingled tastes of the city bourgeoisie (though generally of a higher standard than the previous school); finally, the democratic and, at its culminating points, revolutionary trend, opposed to both the previous ones in its striving to express and perceive the truth. These apposite categories may be made clearer by the following citation of names that hallmark the various trends: in literature the penman and admirer of the refined "gentlefolk" was Ferenc Herczeg, there was the urban spirit and wit of Ferenc Molnár or Jenő Heltai, and opposed to them the revolutionary Endre Ady, Zsigmond Móricz, the writers of the periodical *Nyugat* ("West"). In music, the ruling-class fashion was for tearful merry-making to gipsy music, with Jenő Hubay to present it; then the light operettas of Ferenc Lehár, Imre Kálmán and Jenő Huszka, the chansons of the music-hall; and set against them the outstanding revolutionary genius, Béla Bartók, and his companion, Zoltán Kodály, with their true folk-music that was at the same time the peak of modernity in their sphere of art. In painting the dignified representative of dusty academism was Gyula Benczur; at the same time the Schools of Nagybánya (*e. g.* Károly Ferenczy) and of Szolnok (*e. g.* Adolf Fényes) flourished; and finally those closest to social themes were Károly Kernstok and József Rippl-Rónai. By way of an interjection it may be pointed out that architecture unfortunately escaped the author's attention, though it excellently reflects the division into cultural trends at the turn of the century. The artificial striving of official architecture, with its various "neo" schools of style, for monumental effects led to empty, superficial attempts to resurrect

the past. This was terminated by the frequently extravagant and tasteless, yet in their aims novel, edifices of the *art nouveau* style. The highly gifted Ödön Lechner attempted to use the valuable features of this school for the evolution of a national style, while the most original of our architects, Béla Lajta, sought, on the basis of the principle of "unity of material-structure-function" and utilizing folk traditions, to formulate a modern architecture.)

Zoltán Horváth has presented a realistic picture, free of exaggerations, of each of the trends, separating in them the retrograde from the progressive, the artistic from the tasteless, showing the relative values of the urban trend of culture, its vacillations between self-devouring art and easy success, and its subsequent fall but the most affectionate care and inmost identification with his subject is to be found in his treatment of the representatives of the democratic spirit. Of most of them—thus of Ady, Mihály Babits, Frigyes Karinthy, Ignotus, Béla Bartók and Rippl-Rónai—he has drawn not merely a portrait, but a panorama of their careers, placing them not in the Hungarian Pantheon but in the hard struggles of Hungarian reality that required of them the dedication of their entire lives. It is this sociologico-political method that has enabled him to show what was really great and common among them—their opposition to the dualistic system of landed estates and big capital that weighed so asphyxiatingly on the country, to the feudal heritage that blocked the path of progress; their protest against the chauvinistic poisoning of the souls, against the lies used to narcotize society; their search for a way out of the ever more spectral and inhuman world of imperialism; their inner conflicts and revolts, their not infrequent faltering, yet, above all, their profoundly humanistic search for truth. In telling us this, he has told us the most essential features of the early twentieth-century forbears of the present generation.

The chapters on the history of the press deserve special mention. In this field, so familiar to the author, he has pointed to details, subtleties and interrelations which have made these chapters the best comprehensive treatment the Hungarian literature on the subject has yet seen, and in our opinion they are novel and noteworthy even by international standards. Once again he has set out from the social function of the press, showing the process in the course of which the press at the turn of the century gradually changed from a political organ for the dissemination of principles to colourful reading-matter, to a business enterprise whose expansion took place to the detriment of principles. Particularly instructive are the analyses of the mingling of party and capitalistic interests, of the appearance of the penny-press to cater with business-like alacrity for the tastes and requirements of the public, and of its influence on the deterioration of standards, tone and journalistic ethics. The exploration of such subaltern regions of scholarship as the small ads. column, the gutter press and the picture magazines—which incidentally had a far greater influence in shaping the tastes of the masses than the periodicals of literary rank—has shed light on new aspects of the real function, the "Power" of the press. Altogether these studies in the sociology and psychology of the press serve as extremely valuable contributions to Hungarian social history and mass psychology, and—by elucidating the political attitude, frequently even the shades, of the various main organs—to political history and also to the methodology of the universal history of the press.

Among the many other achievements which could be listed at length, one more may perhaps be singled out—the exposure of the fact that the evolution of the component elements of the counter-revolutionary Horthy system was completed during the age of dualism, in the years before the First World War. The author has spun these

elements mainly of two threads. The one is the career of István Tisza, whose person is rightly given special emphasis: starting as a politician—then unsuccessful—of the "mercantile," semi-liberal, landowner and big capitalist trend at the beginning of the century, he was after 1910 to become the most deliberate, most brutally reactionary representative of the alliance of the ruling classes. The other is a subtle analysis of the policies of the clergy, which always adapted themselves flexibly to changing circumstances. The author has undertaken a detailed treatment of the policy of the Catholic People's Party, of the experiments in Christian socialism and the part played by the "modernist" bishop Prohászka. In doing so he sheds interesting light on why it was impossible in Hungary to form a modern political mass party, a kind of Centre Party, under the leadership of a Catholic Church that held State offices and had large estates. He elucidates how the clergy was, under the influence of the progress of democracy and of the mass movements, swept into one camp with "mercantile" Jewish finance capital and the Protestant squires, and how and why it joined forces with István Tisza. We fully agree with his conclusion that by 1913 the counter-revolution stood essentially prepared, in almost its entire ideological and political armour. If something is lacking, it is indeed that he has not shown this armour and its bearers in sufficient breadth. One of the more pallid features of the work is its characterization of the antiliberal "agrarian" ideology and agrarian camp, with its demagogy of a "conservative reform," while the presentation of the organization of the petty squires, of the evolution of a squirarchically-minded "middle class" and the antidemocratic trend of its development, the accounts of the precursors of the "race-protectors" and "awakening Hungarians" or of their then already active protagonists, are similarly inadequate.

The—to our mind—deficient appreciation of the date of 1913 which heralded the victory of reaction, moreover of the constituent elements of the later counter-revolution, directs attention to the more deep-seated problems of the book and prompts the presentation of these differences of opinion. It is not intended, of course, to dispute that the reactionary camp of the large estate-owners, big capitalists and clergy scored a victory over the forces of democracy in 1913, but rather the other side of the thesis—an essential part of the author's conception—*viz.*, that the second reform generation suffered final defeat and concluded its historical role in 1913. Hungarian democracy did indeed suffer grave blows in 1913, including the victory of Tisza's violence over the opposition, the retreat of the Social-Democratic leaders from the general political mass strike proclaimed in March of that year, and so on. There can also be no doubt that these defeats aroused despondency among the ranks of the generation struggling for progress, as the author has tried in every respect to show. However, even at a first reading, the student is left with the impression that the author has forced his facts to fit in with his conception. For, while it is true that Bartók, discouraged, retired for a few years in 1912, this was connected not with the nation-wide defeat of democracy but with his own individual failures, and did not prove to be a lasting decision. During the war he was again composing magnificent works (The Wooden Prince, the Second String Quartet, The Miraculous Mandarin). And how, in any case, can it be alleged that Bartók or Kodály, who were two pillars of fire of this reform generation, completed their historic role in 1913? The pessimistic statements of a few progressive painters by no means justify talk of "the end of the age of reform in painting," considering that their works during and after the war bear witness to a great—frequently striking—development in their perception of reality and their power of expression. Or take the example of Ady.

It is true that with him, the most devoted of those who had awaited and conjured up the revolution, lethargy had by 1913 made profound and gloomy inroads. But is it not a one-sided approach only to cite poems and articles to prove this facet, and to remain mute over the fact that previously too, and also later, revolutionary faith and despair, the drums of battle and acquiescence in Hungarian fate, alternated within him to an extreme degree? To be silent over how the pessimism of the cycle *Sípja régi babonának* ("Whistle of Ancient Superstition") was followed by a resumption of the struggle in *Véres panorámák tavaszán* ("In the Spring of Blood-drenched Panoramas"), with lines such as these: "The earth moveth, my young friends—And we place our feet on the Hungarian clod—And we swear, it too shall move—And all things present shall have better substitutes—Or all shall perish here, amen, for ever"? Other poems too, written after 1913, and articles and a lecture in the Galileo Circle could be adduced to prove that with Ady the crisis of 1913 did not mean the admission of final defeat and a final surrender. Is it not an exaggeration, then, for the author, ignoring proofs to the contrary, summarily to state that for Ady the militant phase of life ended in 1913, lost its meaning, and even, with a kind of irrational, psychologistic approach, to go so far as to attribute the death of the poet—who is generally known to have suffered from a fatal disease—to his having given up the struggle and given up himself?

The formation of the Bourgeois Radical Party in 1914 also did not fit into the author's scheme, and he has therefore made very short shrift of it. While failing to analyse its program, the circumstances of its formation, its aims and the positive features of its formation, he has again quoted one or two pessimistic statements. Many other facts that go to prove the revival of the democratic camp have also been left out of the book. And beyond the detailed facts, it is a mutilation of the truth to declare that the leading personalities of the second reform generation, its members and their disciples, only prepared the way for the October Revolution of 1918. The author has not succeeded in his endeavour to disprove that they—Jászi, Szende, Kunfi and their companions—were there at the cradle of the revolution and played a most prominent historical part in the establishment, achievements and failure of the democratic republic.

Nothing can therefore induce acceptance of the author's contention that it was a temporary victory of the ruling-class forces led by Tisza and achieved through violent oppression that put an end to the promising struggles of the second reform generation. In our opinion their historical role ended with the 1918-1919 revolutions, and it is incorrect and unjustified—for all their errors and mistakes—to dispute their right to the glory of having participated in the revolutions. Their share in the formation of history was terminated, as in the case of the first reform generation, by defeat, the scaffold, prison, counter-revolutionary terror and emaciation in exile. This was a tragic fate, one of the great tragedies of Hungarian history, but it would not be correct to degrade it to a philistine level through alleging that it had been caused through an abandonment of the struggle and premature capitulation. Instead, we should raise this tragedy of individuals and of a generation to the heights of the defeat—unavoidable amid the given international and domestic circumstances—of Hungarian democracy and socialism, thus constituting a national tragedy.

The one-sidedness of the author's conception is, we think, related to the fact that some important features of Hungarian social development are rather superficially treated. Thus he has somewhat exaggerated the weakness of the forces of democracy and the limited nature of their potential basis. Nor can his analysis of the social

structure be considered fully satisfactory. It would, of course, be unfair to require that this book should make up for the backwardness and the *lacunae* of research on Hungarian social history. Nevertheless the subject itself would have required an analysis—beyond a few numerical facts—of the stratification of the peasantry, the situation of the proletarians of the land and the poor peasantry and of the composition of the working class, but above all a more profound investigation of the peculiar development and composition of the Hungarian bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia. Without this, the social picture of the radical sociologist group and of the entire reform generation is somewhat uncertain. In their characterization the common ideological features again tend to predominate over their social position and their motives. The constant replenishment of the reform generation, right up to 1919, its renewal from among the urban radical bourgeois, intellectual and working-class strata, is obscured.

Nor should we conceal our feeling of deficiency with respect to the international aspects of the intellectual upheaval at the opening of the century. The author has indicated in a curt chapter of three pages that the problem has not escaped his attention, that he sees the links between the European intellectual turbulence at the turn of the century and that which took place in Hungary, that he is aware of the similarities and differences, of the peculiar Hungarian features, but he then veers away from the subject without any attempt at a deeper analysis either of the distinguishing marks and trends of the international transformation, or of their domestic effect and of the special Hungarian traits. A work of such eminence might well have been expected to offer a fuller survey, based on a systematic socioligocal treatment, of the epoch-making transformation that took place from Baudelaire and Verlaine to Gide and Apollinaire, from Cézanne to abstraction and Picasso, from Debussy to Schönberg, from R. N. Shaw to Le Corbusier. An even greater lack is that in the course of the concrete argument, when discussing the various branches of art, with their schools and artists, the author has not availed himself of the instructive opportunities for comparison with the corresponding European phenomena. Without this, he has failed to achieve either sufficient clarity or the requisite conviction for his fundamental contention that the course of the second Hungarian reform generation and the character of its cultural revolution differed considerably from that of European bourgeois radicalism and the various artistic "isms"—that despite the existing tendencies towards irrational abstraction and *l'art pour l'art* aesthetics, it managed to retain its foothold on the soil of reality and remain in the thick of the social struggle, that it expressed the yearning for freedom and human values, and that in some of its protagonists it came near to socialism or actually attained it.

As with the enumeration of the achievements in detail, so this review might also continue arguing over problems of detail and listing lesser deficiencies or criticizing the composition, which in some places lacks coherence and is rendered loose by repetition. Such a dissection of detailed problems would, however, hardly serve to inform readers abroad. It should nevertheless be pointed out that for many of the lesser mistakes not only the author but also the publishers must take the blame. Even though acknowledgement is due to the publishers for the fact that they have produced the book and for its pleasing appearance, it cannot be left unsaid that we feel the editorship to be rather deficient and in places superficial. More careful editing might certainly have corrected the lesser errors of fact and misprints which tend to be confusing (though without detracting from the value of the work); it might, moreover, have established a closer correspondence between the titles and contents of some of the sub-

divisions of the chapters, or indeed have eliminated the frequent sub-titles that interrupt continuity. Blame for the awkward arrangement of the notes must lie squarely with the editor. The publishers have chosen a particularly clumsy arrangement in deciding to put the explanatory, informative notes at the end of the book—probably so as not to impede the fluent reading of a work intended to popularize—while the references to sources have, *more scientifice*, been placed at the foot of the page. The reverse procedure would surely have been more correct. Yet even in this bad solution they have not been consistent, for numerous source references are nevertheless at the end of the book, while some explanations are given as footnotes.

It is not our aim, however, to fall into the pedantic ways of philological hair-splitting, but rather to provide an informative survey of the book as a whole. The problems that require further research and discussion, the lesser and the greater errors, cannot influence the overall picture—the pioneering significance of the book. It is the incontestable merit of Zoltán Horváth, that he has shown a progressive heritage of our past that was earlier falsified and nowadays neglected, that he has, in a colourful, attractive, thought-challenging manner, brought it near to our generation, restoring the correct proportions and the yardstick of appreciation and critique, and separating the lasting from the passing features.

May I finally be permitted to conclude this review with a subjective feeling that has grown ever stronger within me as I have read this book? It is to the mode of evaluating men and their works, deeds and intentions—a mode which, though not new, is also not generally accepted—that I would like to refer. Our present generation, the majority of our historians, have received more or less ready-made an approach and a method which we are convinced are an excellent approach and method for learning about reality. Possessed, however, of this superior theory, we have frequently abandoned the modesty that is obligatory in every science, a historical sense of values, and a readiness to understand others. Often we have passed judgement with what we have considered to be the severity of an incorruptible judge, standing outside and above all disputes. Like Radamanthys with the shades passing before him, we have judged the protagonists of the past—human heroes, fraught with great virtues and defects, who, being the silent dead, have not been able to argue and to defend themselves. Well, this method of passing judgement is far removed from Zoltán Horváth. He has formed his judgements—or, as he calls them, his opinions—with a knowledge of the self-explanatory evolution of events, of the course history took, and therefore with the critique that posterity is obliged to exercise, yet with an inner comprehension that has also paid attention to the conditions and possibilities of the period, the opportunities and situation of its participants. For us it is not only the subject and material of the book that is important and instructive, its spiritual "radioactivity" that gives rise to a "chain reaction" of further thoughts, but also its humanely historical mode of forming opinions and judgements.

PÉTER HANÁK

THE ARTS

THE CERAMICS OF ISTVÁN GÁDOR

The exhibition staged at the Ernst Museum in Budapest to celebrate the seventieth birthday of István Gádor shows a novel feature. Arranged with praiseworthy taste and moderation, the show differs from conventional jubilee exhibitions in that past strivings and achievements are only demonstrated by a few significant works, whereas greater emphasis is laid upon the artistic output of recent years, presented with the rich diversity of a kaleidoscope.

István Gádor was born in 1891. He began his career as a sculptor, his imagination being fascinated by Michelangelo's works and the aspirations of monumental plastic art. His first works, shown at the Budapest Art Gallery between 1912 and 1918, were life-size marble figures of baroque animation. It was the exhibition of the Wiener Werkstätte, the centre of Austrian applied arts, in the beginning of the twentieth century, that drew his attention to ceramics. From that time he has been active both as a sculptor and as an artist-potter.

To this day interest in sculpture and pottery are merged in his art. From time to time one of these lines grows predominant, to disappear again, like a mountain brook, and make way for the other. The sculptor's outlook and inclination towards modelling have developed his abilities for creating form; but as a born potter, he has always been interested in the rich interplay of colours and surfaces and in the creation of an up-to-date world of ornament. This felicitous blend is completed by decorative fantasy and peerless draughtsmanship. In his different periods of style, showing an undulating course due to these qualities, the problems of form and ornament, of colour and surface (various glazes and techniques) make themselves felt with alternating emphasis. However, his periods of style overlap and melt into an interwoven pattern. A new problem of form and ornament will recur over and over again in his art, growing always richer in shape and in mode of expression.

In 1919 he played an active part in the arts policy of the Hungarian Councils' Republic; after its fall he had to go into exile. He went to Vienna and worked at the Wiener Werkstätte. In his first artistic period, under the influence of the Wiener Werkstätte, he drew inspiration from primitive art. He came to learn decorative modelling, with an expressive stress on the essential. Mostly he produced small-size, grotesque compositions of animal-figures, employing glazes of mellow aspect.

After the failure of the Wiener Werkstätte he returned home. He fought hard to popularize interior ceramics, a branch of art at the time still unknown in Hungary. He had a successful exhibition at the Belvedere in 1921. The 'twenties were István Gádor's heroic period. Without a studio of his own,

suffering from cold and starvation, he struggled to make the public accept artistic pottery, to develop a higher level of general taste, and all this in the years of poverty following World War I, when the country was weighed down by one economic crisis after the other.

In his second period, after his show at the Tamás Gallery in 1927, his interest turned to Hungarian peasant art. His sculptural endeavours became fainter in this phase. Systematically he studied Hungarian peasant costumes, investigated the relics of ancient Hungarian pottery; nor was he less attracted by Hungarian rural life and the world of Hungarian folk tales. His decorative fantasy was roused by the treasures of peasant ornamentation, by the innumerable variations of birds, fishes and flowers it contained. The gems of this period are vessels, dishes and vases decorated with singular slip-trailed ornaments, derived from the elements ancient potters had used: semi-circles, curves and lines. Employing the technique of raised contours, he represented scenes of Hungarian peasant life on tiles, utilizing his studies of the traditions of Hungarian popular art to promote creative effort. The scenes were depicted on one plane, in one-dimensional representation. His work "Village Wedding" shows a peasant custom that is now becoming extinct: escorted by a gipsy band the happy bridegroom is taking home his bride on a cart. In his "Noah's Ark," apt to raise merry laughter, Noah in shirt-sleeves, with a meerschaum-pipe and circular felt-hat, leans out of the window, and an ingeniously charming giraffe, with a leafy spray in its mouth, sticks its head out of the ark on whose top the Hungarian colours are hoisted. The numerous animals, all drawn with an enchanting sense of humour, enhance the jocularity of the whole scene.

A summary of all his aspirations towards monumentality in his tile-tableaux is "The Fair at Debrecen," made in 1935. This work, so rich in the results of close observation, depicts the gay festival—famous all over the country—of the big, old town of Eastern-Hungary. Assuming a peculiar decorative attitude the artist has solved the problems of perspective by superimposing the scenes, one over the other. The rhythm of movements, or else the insertion of a small still-life, provides for transition from one scene to the other. Overbrimming with the pleasure of story telling, Gádor portrayed in his numerous small scenes the richness of rural life.

Gádor has never ceased to experiment with harmonies and contrasts of multicoloured glazes and different glazing techniques.

The liberation of Hungary brought about a complete unfolding of Gádor's art. As a mature artist he has produced remarkable works in all branches of ceramics. "Girl of Sióagárd" has opened up new paths for large-scale plastic works made on the potter's wheel, works based on the traditions of folk art. In his series of fawns, presenting with simplified form the awkward charm of the young animal in the idiom of ceramics, he gave a summary of his close observation of animals. Up to his exhibition in 1954 the decoration of his dishes and vases showed stylized variations of his own studies of the animal and vegetable kingdom, mingled with the traditional elements of peasant art. With the combination of various techniques in the treatment of glazes to obtain crackled, coarse, and smooth surfaces he contrived to achieve a peculiar decorative effect. In recognition of his creative activity he was awarded the Kossuth Prize by the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic.

The third line of his art, that of modern European trends striving towards the abstract, has lately again become apparent in his works. Over half of the pieces exhibited at this jubilee show have been produced in the last three years. In these works, particularly in the sculptural pieces, his own stylistic aspirations of the 'twenties have reappeared, but in richer and more varied forms. As so often before, he is a pioneer again, and it is especially in the field of

monumental ceramics—where the gravest indecision prevails—that he points to new possibilities. With boundless craftsmanship he fuses into a higher synthesis the forms of peasant carvings with modern concepts of form and with his own earlier achievements. Several new fruits of these endeavours are very felicitous indeed, for instance the wall decoration of fawns within an irregular frame, which is striking and, although rooted in national traditions, uses the artistic idiom of the present; corresponding in style, it may be applied as a cheerful and effective decoration of modern buildings and interiors.

The other trend is represented by wall decorations like "The Fishes," "Two Girls," *etc.*, markedly simplified in their lines and built upon the effects of colour and the rhythm of movement. Notwithstanding its seeming spontaneity, the composition of the "Two Girls" is very delicately balanced, even the line of the small undulating ribbon that falls from the head to the shoulder has been calculated to a nicety.

Quite recently Gádor has taken up experimenting with sculptural works composed of several elements, meant to be placed in an open space. Some of his exhibited works raise new problems in this field. In an exceedingly witty manner he adapts the contemporary trends of plastic art based on negative modelling. The figure in white glaze meant either for a large room or for a garden, suggestive of a squatting female figure with softly folded arms above her head, belongs to these, and so do the pieces in which the motifs of shells and fishes are ingeniously combined, furthermore the fountain, designed for a kindergarten or school, the hollow of the shell providing the basin of the fountain. Though sparing with means of expression, Gádor can convey a great deal; his talent for grasping the essence—the greatest achievement of his first artistic period—has by now completely unfolded, enabling him to interpret the serene experiences an artist with plenty of imagination has gained in our present world. Out of the shapes and lines of the human—mainly the female—figure, of fishes, shells and pebbles, he creates new forms and compositions, which, drawn with a dashing sweep of lines, also adorn his asymmetric dishes and vases, these charming decorations of a modern home. They are sometimes reminiscent of the forms of *art nouveau*, others again reflect the memories of Hungarian peasant toys (whistles), like his vases in the form of sitting birds, or the cock-vase with its dotted grey glaze.

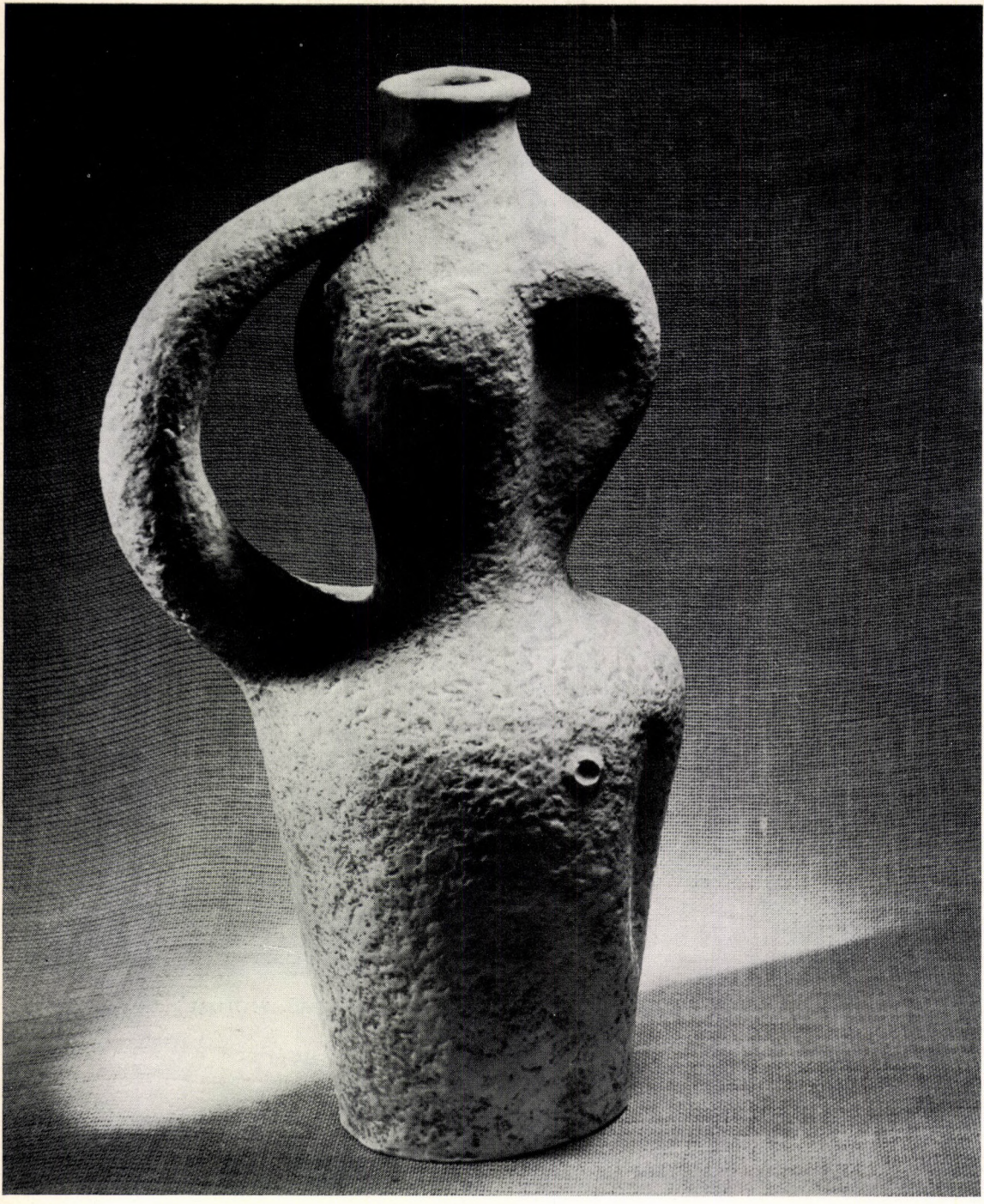
Having absorbed Western effects, his creative talent transforms the elements of the world which surrounds him (grapes, pears, apples, glasses, fishes, *etc.*,) into playful, easy-flowing decorations to adorn his dishes.

For a few years now he has dealt with the problem of fashioning the female figure into vessels or ornaments. By shifting proportions or cutting off the figure, he imbues the form—which has been turned into a vessel or an ornamental element—with a peculiar rhythm. The traditional shapes of the potter, like pitchers and jugs, have also been transformed by his masterly hands: these pieces have decorations conceived in a modern spirit: the girl with the pony-tail; a heron, birds and fishes, emerging from among bulrushes and other water-plants. But all these motifs are rooted in reality; never does Gádor lose contact with the forms of nature. By concentrating on the essence he gives food for new thought. This is the key to his art and this is the link that connects his work with contemporary artistic trends abroad.

The exhibition which presents István Gádor's work in the past fifty years, not only summarizes his achievements but also evokes new stimulating ideas. His aspirations raise the most burning problems of pottery today; they indicate new directions in architectural ceramics and a new phase in interior ceramics.

ILONA PATAKY-BRESTYÁNSZKY

István Gádor: Noah's Ark (ceramic wall picture)



István Gádor: Vase

István Gádor: Vases

István Gádor: Compositions

MUSICAL LIFE

LISZT AND 20th CENTURY MUSIC

by

HUMPHREY SEARLE*

The question of Liszt's relationship to the music of this century can be discussed from two viewpoints — how far he anticipated 20th century developments and how far he influenced them. It is certain that he anticipated a number of features of the music of our time, and we will discuss these later, but it is difficult to say how far his music directly influenced them. One reason is that many of the most interesting and experimental of his later works were not published during his lifetime, and indeed many did not appear until long after his death; but I think that enough of these works did appear while he was still alive to make clear to the more intelligent of his contemporaries and followers the direction in which his mind was moving. It is true that most of his contemporaries did not understand these later developments; even von Bülow, previously a devoted follower of Liszt and a highly intelligent man, deserted to the Brahms camp and regarded Liszt's later works as nonsense. But Liszt's influence can be felt in the music of many different 20th century composers, including Debussy, Ravel, Skriabin and of course Béla Bartók, and Schönberg too in his earlier works owed a good deal to him.

One can analyse Liszt's influence on 20th century music under various headings. First the question of form; here his principal contribution was the one-movement symphonic poem. (A similar form, but unrelated to a descriptive purpose, may be seen in the one-movement piano sonata.) The object of this form, as used by Liszt, was greater unity; it was only later composers who allowed the purely pictorial elements to dictate or destroy the symphonic form. The piano sonata contains all the elements of the classical sonata—exposition, development, reprise, slow movement in song

* Text of a lecture delivered in Budapest by the noted British musicologist on the occasion of the Liszt-Bartók music festival in the autumn of 1961.

form, even scherzo-like passages, but within the framework of one movement; and we find exactly the same form in early works of Schönberg, such as the 1st Chamber Symphony and the 1st String Quartet, not to mention his early symphonic poem "Pelleas und Melisande," which of course has a more directly descriptive basis. Even a late work of Schönberg's, the String Trio, still keeps the one-movement form with contrasting sections within it. And there are many other examples in 20th century music of one-movement symphonic works—in the symphonies of the Dutch composer Willem Pijper or the German composer Karl Amadeus Hartmann, to take only two examples.

The unifying principle of the one-movement symphonic form was of course the method of transformation of themes. You will remember how in the piano sonata practically the whole material of the work comes from three themes. Of these the second theme is used in an endless variety of forms. Now this is very similar to Schönberg's use of the serial technique. There are differences, of course: Liszt does not use a series of 12 different notes, and he uses his theme melodically and does not normally create harmonies from it (though there are passages of an arpeggio-like character where this does occur). But in both cases the principle is the same: both Liszt and Schönberg use a basic theme or series of notes in an endless variety of forms in order to promote the unity of the composition as a whole.

Our third point is the question of harmony. Here there is no doubt that Liszt went much further than any of his contemporaries and anticipated many modern developments.

The fourth point is the question of tonality, or rather the lack of tonality in Liszt's later works. Much of the harmony of these pieces is based on augmented chords or the whole-tone scale, which do not express any particular tonality. The whole-tone scale was not invented by Liszt of course; one can find it in Mozart or in Glinka's "Russlan and Ludmila"; but Liszt was the first to use it radically, for instance in his melodrama "Der traurige Mönch" of 1860, which is almost entirely based on the whole-tone scale. By using these methods consistently in his later works he saw to it that the tonality of them was not clearly expressed—it is left in the air, as it were; and, as you know, Dr. István Szelényi has recently discovered and published a piece of Liszt's which is actually called "Bagatelle ohne Tonart." Clearly then Liszt was working towards the atonal music which was characteristic of the early part of this century, and also towards the free and equal use of all the 12 notes of the chromatic scale.

Another question is that of texture. In his earlier virtuoso works Liszt could and did write textures of great complexity, which are reflected in the works of many later virtuoso piano composers, such as Rachmaninoff and Scriabin. But his later works show a different approach: there are long passages in single notes, or perhaps only two lines, one in each hand, which clash dissonantly.

How similar this is in style and feeling to one of Bartók's more experimental works, the Barcarolle from his Suite "Im Freien."

As we all know, Bartók was greatly influenced by Liszt, and the question of this influence is so big that it would need another complete paper to discuss it. All I will say here is that many of the later works of Liszt bear an astonishing resemblance to many passages in Bartók's works, though the resemblance is almost certainly unconscious, as most of these late works of Liszt were only published quite late in Bartók's lifetime. If I may add a small personal reminiscence, I had the privilege of visiting Bartók in Budapest in 1937, and of showing him the MS of Liszt's "Csárdás Macabre," which was then unpublished. He played this over on the piano and showed great interest in the work.

But to return to the question of texture. This purity of style in the late piano works is in many ways like the methods of Stravinsky and even Webern, and the same may be said of many passages in the earlier orchestral works, where Liszt's use of solo instruments and of transparent textures—in contrast to the rather thick orchestral writing of many of his contemporaries—anticipates the idea of "chamber music for full orchestra" which we find in many works of Schönberg, Stravinsky, Webern and others.

Before I end I would like to say something about the appreciation of these late works of Liszt in England. Twenty-five years ago they were almost completely unknown, but in 1936, in honour of the 125th anniversary of Liszt's birth, the Sadlers Wells Ballet, then a very new company, presented a ballet called "Apparitions" to some of Liszt's later piano pieces, including "Unstern," the 3rd "Mephisto Waltz" and pieces from the "Christmas Tree" Suite. These pieces were chosen by the well-known composer and conductor Constant Lambert, who was musical director of the Ballet at that time, and they were orchestrated by another English composer, Gordon Jacob. The ballet was a great success, and has remained in the repertoire ever since. During the war the Sadlers Wells Ballet created a second Liszt Ballet, to the "Dante Sonata," arranged for piano and orchestra by Constant Lambert, and with the solo part played by the well-known Hungarian pianist Louis Kentner. After the war I was asked by the BBC to arrange a series of broadcasts of

Liszt's music, and as a result of these there was a demand for the formation of an English Liszt Society. The chief object of this was the publication of unpublished works of Liszt or of interesting works of his which were out of print. In the four volumes published since 1950 we have printed for the first time the "Csárdás Macabre" (from a MS in the British Museum which is a slightly shorter version of the piece than that published more recently in Budapest by Dr. István Szelényi), also "Am Grabe Richard Wagners," the 4th "Mephisto Waltz" and two "Pieces in the Hungarian Style." In addition we have reprinted a number of the interesting late works—"Unstern," "Nuages gris," "La lugubre gondola," the 3rd "Mephisto Waltz," and many others which were only available in the pre-war Breitkopf *Gesamtausgabe*, as well as some of the lesser known earlier works, such as "Lyon" and the "Apparitions." We have also given recitals of Liszt's music in London and have stimulated performers to play these works of Liszt and recording companies to record them—at our request our greatest conductor, Sir Thomas Beecham, recorded the "Faust Symphony" and "Orpheus" only a short time before his death. We are glad to say that Liszt is now much better appreciated in England than before, and we are glad to join our Hungarian colleagues in the work they are doing for Liszt, for instance by the publication of the "Historical Hungarian Portraits," the "Bagatelle ohne Tonart," and other works, and also Dr. Bence Szabolcsi's excellent book "The Twilight of Franz Liszt." I feel that as the result of our joint efforts the true importance of Liszt will be more and more appreciated in the years to come.

UNPUBLISHED BARTÓK DOCUMENTS

The January 1961 issue of THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY *(Vol. II. No. 1) contained a study by János Demény on Bartók research in Hungary. Our article has induced János Liebner, the well-known Hungarian 'cellist and musical critic, to disclose further facts about the life and work of Bartók, revealing the existence of a fifth movement to the Piano Suite opus 14, hitherto known as consisting of four movements, and to quote the complete text of the last radio interviews in Béla Bartók's life.*

A FORGOTTEN WORK OF BARTÓK'S

At the close of the year 1912, after his return from a tour to collect folk songs in Transylvania and the Northern Highlands of Hungary, Bartók again fell ill. His weak constitution was worn out by the two fatiguing journeys, but his ever active, searching spirit could not relax even while he was confined to his bed. He studied Eastern languages and Arab writing, in preparation for his subsequent visit to Africa where he wished to continue his investigations into the sources of the idiom of Hungarian folk music and to trace its assumed relationship to Arab peasant music.

That he might have the miserably poor peasants and nomadic shepherds on the fringes of the desert sing for him under the most natural conditions, Bartók spent several months living with them, sleeping in their small, circular, thatched mud huts, eating highly seasoned mutton stew and rice *pilaf*, drinking fermented palm juice and the slightly sour *cuscus*. He roamed about the Biscra region southeast of Algiers, became acquainted with strange and ancient string instruments played with a bow or plucked, and took down with his phonograph the peculiar music of the Arabs which almost defies recording, a major second being divided into three tones instead of two semi-tones.

His journey was successful. In addition to its scientific value, the collected material enriched his creative art. The intonation of Arab popular airs merged into Bartók's music with no less unobtrusive naturalness, and welled forth in his compositions with no less fluency and freedom from any "foreign accent," than did the special, so different and yet fundamentally so similar, styles of Hungarian, Slav, Rumanian or, later, American Indian folklore.

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The Piano Suite opus 14 composed in February, 1916, partly reflects this new influence. The musical idiom, mood and atmosphere of the third novement—its wild, impetuous, bewitching bedouin rhythm—incorporated the world of Arab folk music. This was, of course, no simple transcription of folk music, but its re-creation on a higher artistic plain, inspired by personal experience.

For several decades the Piano Suite, op. 14, was known as a composition in four movements; only quite recently has it come to light that originally the work was conceived as comprising five movements. After the first Allegretto, the following Scherzo movement was to be introduced by a slow Andante; then the Allegro molto of "bedouin" rhythm, which we mentioned above was to lead to the last Sostenuto movement of the suite. Ending with a slow movement, like the second string quartet composed in the same period, intermittently, from 1915 to 1917, the suite in its original conception already differed from the classical suite form terminated by a traditional fast movement. When Bartók published the work leaving out the Andante movement, this deviation became all the

more conspicuous. Instead of the classical alternation of fast and slow pieces, the final version of the Piano Suite consists of three successive fast movements of varying character, to emphasize more poignantly the dreamy, *dolce* mood of the last Sostenuto movement.

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The omitted Andante movement has been found by János Demény (the eager and devoted Bartók scholar) in the possession of Irén Egri, a pupil of Bartók's, who copied the five-movement version some time between 1916 and 1918 from the original manuscript at the music publishing house of Rózsavölgyi. She had studied the suite in this form, and that is how Bartók played it to her in the lessons. Later the work was printed without the original second movement, and Irén Egri cannot remember whether Bartók ever played or even mentioned the omitted movement. Presumably he may have withdrawn it when he changed his publishers, leaving Rózsavölgyi's for the Vienna Universal.

The Andante op. 14 is dreamy, transparent music, rising and sinking over a sustained F-sharp organpoint, moving, as if improvised, with delicately floating harmonies. The rhythmic pattern and melodic material point to the Scherzo that originally followed it, virtually preparing it; but, in atmosphere, the Andante displays more affinity to the last movement of the suite. Bartók may have been induced to omit it from the final version by the feeling that two movements radiating a similar atmosphere tended to jeopardize the varied, multicoloured wealth and unity of a work whose movements, though completely different in character, nevertheless formed a harmonious whole. This youthful work of Bartók's, fallen into oblivion, will hold its own also as a separate piece—just as the other movements of the suite.

The Andante op. 14 is a bagatelle of no more than a few minutes, yet it gives a faithful reflection of the master's modest and slender, yet gigantic figure.

BÉLA BARTÓK'S LAST AMERICAN RADIO INTERVIEWS

Béla Bartók's two American radio statements were made in 1942, the year of grave and exasperating financial straits ("...a terrible situation...") and inexorably progressing disease ("...no hope of recovery..."), at a time of darkest pessimism ("...I have lost all my confidence in people, in countries, in everything...") and creative barrenness ("...on no account shall I ever compose another work..."). From the tape his voice sounds tired and broken; several times he stopped speaking, hampered by frequent coughing and hard breathing. The first interview was short, embracing only one question and one answer. We do not know who the interviewer was, his question permits the inference that he was a journalist or radio announcer with a limited knowledge of music; at all events, he was a layman, not an expert.

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INTERVIEWER: "Do you consider the Suite op. 14, which Mrs. Bartók is going to play next, representative of your abstract compositions; and if so, what qualities make it so?"

BARTÓK: "If by abstract music you mean absolute music, without program, then yes. The Suite op. 14 has no folk tunes. It is based entirely on original themes of my own invention. When this work was composed I had in mind the refining of piano technique, the changing of piano technique into a more transparent style, more of bone and muscle, opposed to the heavy chordal style of the late romantic period, that is, unessential ornaments like broken chords and other figures are omitted, and it is a more simple style."

That was all. Then Mrs. Bartók played the Piano Suite op. 14.

In the second interview the questions were put by a musicologist of the Brooklyn Museum; the third party at the interview was Tibor Serly, Bartók's pupil and faithful help during the last years of his life.

INTERVIEWER: "The Microcosmos, which Mr. Serly has transcribed for 'cello and string orchestra is such a vast work; I wonder if you could tell us briefly what it comprises?"

BARTÓK: "The Microcosmos is a cycle of 153 pieces for piano written with didactical purpose, that is, to give piano pieces which can be used from the very beginning and then going on; it is graded according to difficulties. The Microcosmos may be interpreted as a series of pieces in different styles which represent a small world, or it may be interpreted as a world, a musical world for little ones, for children."

INTERVIEWER: "Do you know whether Mr. Serly found it necessary to alter the material in transcription?—Perhaps Mr. Serly would be the best to answer that."

TIBOR SERLY: "No treatise or textbook has ever been written that so tellingly reveals the story of the development of musical styles as these brief, minute Microcosmos sketches. These miniature gems illustrate scale structures, chords, modes, forms, rhythms, harmonies, imitations and canons with dazzling ingenuity. Regarding the transcriptions we are to play, I have selected six to illustrate that they are more than piano pieces. As is often the case with the music of Bach, a more expanded treatment brings to the fore many actual and implied inner voices that are not apparent in the original piano form. Naturally voices have been shifted, contrapuntal parts have been separated into instrumental units and occasional sonorities have been filled out. Otherwise materially nothing has been altered, nor has anything been added."

The first question is somewhat vague because it does not define the transcriptions alluded to. We possess no information concerning Serly's transcriptions for 'cello and string orchestra of parts from the Microcosmos. We know two transcriptions, a series of five pieces for string quartet, including Overtones, op. 102; Wrestling, op. 108; Song, op. 116; Punch, op. 142; Tale of a Little Fly, op. 148; and a series of seven pieces for orchestra, including Overtones, op. 102; Bourrée, op. 117; Unisono, op. 137; Punch, op. 142; Tale of a Little Fly, op. 148; Two dances of Bulgarian Rhythm, op. 151 and op. 153. Serly, however, distinctly mentioned six pieces at the interview. Is it possible that there actually exists a still unknown third arrangement of the Microcosmos for 'cello and string orchestra?

I think that apart from being precious artistic and personal documents, Bartók's two statements before the American radio, notwithstanding their brevity, offer useful data to scholars of his life, his compositions, and life-work. The title of Microcosmos has been given various interpretations in the international history of music. According to some commentators the word stands for its meaning in medieval philosophy, implying that the individual mirrors the whole of the universe. Others maintain that the title expresses love for the minute organic world: "The collector is fascinated by the completeness manifested in the unique, attracted by the variety of species, captivated by the correlations between the regular and the extraordinary," Erich Doflein wrote in his study on *Bartók and Musical Instruction*. Others again find the sense of Bartók's title partly in the kinship between artistic compositions and creation, partly in the "balance of musical and pedagogical forces" (Jürgen Uhde, *Bartók's Microcosmos*). Conclusive elucidation of this much-debated question will be promoted by the double definition given by Bartók in the radio interview.

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To the best of my knowledge, there are only three Hungarian recordings of Bartók's voice, beside the two American recordings in English. One contains the words of the *Cantata Profana* as told by Bartók himself; this record is in the possession of the Hungarian Radio. In the second, an account of his folk-song collecting tour in Turkey was taken down; this is the property of a Budapest sound engineer, who with his own gelatin recorder "illicitly" took down for himself Bartók's address on the subject, broadcast by Radio Budapest in the year 1930. The third, also a radio address, was put on record by the writer Sophie Török, the wife of Bartók's friend Mihály Babits, the poet.

JÁNOS LIEBNER

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by Gábor Győry

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(Present Situation and Problems of the Hungarian Film)
by Ervin Gyertyán

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by László Gerő

THE FRONTIERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN HUNGARY
(with a map and illustrations)
by László Barkóczy

AUTUMN FISHING
(a short story)
by Ferenc Karinthy

A SELECTION OF SHORT STORIES BY YOUNG HUNGARIAN AUTHORS

THEATRE AND FILM

A NEW HAMLET IN BUDAPEST

For the past hundred years the home of Shakespeare in Hungary had been principally in the Budapest National Theatre. Lately, however, more than one of his plays has been successfully performed in other theatres of the capital as well as on provincial stages. This season the Madách Theatre's production of Hamlet has been an outstanding event. It affords an opportunity for a brief survey of the history on the Hungarian stage of a masterpiece that is surrounded with so many mysteries.

The Hungarian public's reverence and admiration for the Bard have continually increased over the past two hundred years. Ever since the 1770's his name came to be mentioned among the greatest and it was in 1841 that these lines were written of him by Mihály Vörösmarty, the most illustrious representative of romanticism in Hungary and an eminent Shakespeare translator himself: "We do not hesitate to declare that a good translation of Shakespeare is worth at least one half of even the richest of literature." Enthusiasm since then has continued to grow. After an edition of the complete works numbering 20,000 only a few years back, a recent new edition of 35,000 was fully subscribed to in advance—a fact which amply proves the popularity of Shakespeare in Hungary.

It has become a proud custom to refer to the British giant as one of our own classics, as if beyond England this were the case only in Hungary. But in this respect too the nations around us and to the north of us are engaged in friendly competition with us. On the development of their literature and stage Shakespeare's works have also had a decisive influence. In the formation of the national cultures which emerged in this region, in the development of their peculiar characters, and in the achievement of their spiritual and political independence his works have served as an enlivening ferment and ideal. Voltaire, though aware of the British dramatist's greatness, reproached himself none the less at the sight of his success for having admitted this "monster" into the trim garden of French enlightenment. Lessing, on the other hand, inscribed Shakespeare's name on his banner when he took the lead in the struggle for an independent German drama. And it was in Shakespeare's works that Goethe discovered the continent in whose vast wilderness the poetry of the renascent nations of northern and eastern Europe, liberating itself from Latin and French tutelage, was to find the world of pure nature and free imagination, the lost world of northern humanity.

The cult of Shakespeare reached Hungary through German intermediary. It is worth mentioning in this context that the first translation of Hamlet into German by the Viennese theatre director Franz Henfeld

was printed in Pozsony (Bratislava) in 1774. H. Schröder's translation—for a long time the most popular one in German-speaking territories—was inspired by Henfeld's, and it was in the latter's version that the Danish prince first spoke the Hungarian language. The first of Shakespeare's plays to be translated directly into Hungarian was also Hamlet; the year was 1790 and the translator Ferenc Kazinczy, founder of the new school in Hungarian literature. An ambitious young man, he had embarked on his literary career in the town of Kassa (Košice), at the end of the 18th century one of the most important cultural centres of the country. It was probably in Kassa society, keenly interested in the theatre and in close contact with both Vienna and Pozsony, that he first heard of Hamlet, which, moreover, was one of the Shakespeare plays that for the first time appeared on the repertoire of the German theatrical companies touring Hungary at the time (we know of a Pozsony performance in 1774 and of another in Pest in 1776). Kazinczy first saw the play in 1786 in Vienna and was "shaken in soul and body." When a few years later he decided to contribute to the development of a national stage by translating some of the most important dramatic works of world literature, his choice among Shakespeare's plays fell on Hamlet. He published it in 1790, together with Lessing's Miss Sarah Sampson and Goethe's Stella, in the first volume of a series entitled *Külföldi Játékszín* ("Stagecraft Abroad").

Besides extolling the author of Hamlet in the foreword to the volume, Kazinczy also drew attention to the national importance of his own venture. Joseph II, who died that same year, had repealed the decrees of his that were considered so detrimental to the national interest, and the first waves of the Hungarian reform movement were beginning to sweep over the country. Amidst the stormy waves of national enthusiasm Kazinczy and his friends of the reformist party sought to preserve the more enlightened measures of the Emperor apt to serve the cause of bourgeois advancement and "the nation's beautification." Hamlet was thus intended to influence public opinion, for Kazinczy considered the emotional atmosphere of the play as "harmonizing with the nation's present-day none-too-rosy spirits." Amidst the turbulent hopes and great disappointments, the meditations and bold ventures of the age, it was as though he were anticipating by fifty years and adapting to his own country the famous formula of the German poet Freiligrath. "Hamlet is Hungary!" He desired his translation to serve the cause of enlightened progress, and for this reason he published it together with Lessing's and Goethe's two outstanding examples of bourgeois drama. It was in this spirit that the evolving Hungarian theatre and the public received it. The publication of the book constituted a literary event, and after the first performance in Kolozsvár (Cluj) (1794) Hamlet was constantly on the playbills of the Hungarian theatrical companies touring the country among so many vicissitudes. Only Schiller's "Die Räuber," another tragedy touching upon the vital problems of contemporary society, could compete with it in popularity.

For half a century, until 1841, Kazinczy's Hamlet retained its place on the Hungarian stage, despite the translator's own dissatisfaction with his work. He was preparing for a new translation that would be complete and accurate in form. The task initiated by him was carried out only in 1839, by Péter Vajda, a representative of the romantic school in Hungarian poetry, whose rather awkward and ponderous translation was, however, incapable of rendering the play in its full poetical beauty. This wonder was to be achieved only by that classic of poetic realism, János Arany. In the 1840's the demand for a suitable "transplantation in spirit" of Shakespeare's complete works became ever more importunate, and in 1848 Gábor Egressy, one of the most celebrated actors of the day, called upon the triumvirate of

Vörösmarty, Petőfi and Arany to carry out this task—an idea obviously originated by Petőfi, with his keen sense for every genuinely national literary undertaking. Indeed, Petőfi's translation of Coriolanus was published as the first volume, heralding on its title-page the alliance of the three poets.

With the collapse of the War of Independence this project, too, was buried; the heritage was left to Arany. A sense of obligation to the public was here combined with his own inmost desire, for Shakespeare was the source of inspiration that pervaded Arany's whole *œuvre*. Not for nothing was he called "the Shakespeare of the Ballads." He was related to the Swan of Avon in more than one respect: in his conception of the world, his psychology and his moral sense, in the dramatical concision of his exposition and the bold ingenuousness of his narrative, in his skill as a craftsman and his virtuosity, which did not shrink even from mannerism, in the magic of his poetry permeating with life even the most commonplace things, in the hovering yet compactly realistic spontaneity of his expression, individual even when easily intelligible, united as it were with the spirit of the language in the act of creation. It was thus more than conventional homage, it was a conviction rooted in the deepest strata of the creative genius, that made him exclaim: "Of Shakespeare's poetic powers one may say what the psalm sings about the Lord: Great art thou, my Lord, in things both small and great." His translation came into being not at the inspiration of national policy. When working on it he wrote: "In his endeavour to foster the advancement of his nation, there is no need for the poet to borrow his ideas from politics. Let him sing as if he had no other aim than poetry itself, and he will already have fulfilled his duty by the nation." To this day it is in János Arany's translation that the Hungarian reader and theatre-goer becomes acquainted with A Midsummer Night's Dream, with King John, with Hamlet. Several attempts have since been made at translating Hamlet but none have succeeded in surpassing Arany's work. The Madách Theatre too has adopted his version, and this was an important factor in the success of the production.

Theatrical experts throughout the world have come to regard Hamlet as a play with great potentialities for the principal role. In Hungary too the greatest names in local theatrical history can be met with in the contemporary productions of Hamlet. Several of the most famous foreign actors and companies staged Hamlet in the course of their guest performance in Hungary. Ernesto Rossi played in it in 1889, Tommaso Salvini in 1897, Sarah Bernhardt in 1899, Alexander Moissi in 1908 and in 1918, Raoul Aslan in 1924, Edward Sterling and the English Players in 1930. The German theatre in Pest also saw a number of guest Hamlets; in 1854, for example, B. Dawison scored a great success. His performance was all the more interesting in that it almost exactly coincided with that of Gábor Egressy in the National Theatre, considered as the most outstanding interpretation of Hamlet's part in the past century. A comparison shows Egressy's Prince of Denmark to have been a considerably more human and more determined character than that of the English actor with his use of theatrical effects and skilful techniques. Egressy's rendering was noteworthy in several respects. His staging of Hamlet was carefully prepared, and his was the first serious dramaturgical analysis of the play in Hungary (1839). Though he continued to play the part until a ripe old age, he adhered throughout to the main points of his conception of the role. In the words of one of his most reliable critics, who particularly stressed the vivid realism of his acting, "...his carefully balanced Hamlet is a wilful and lively character whose indecision in action is due not to cowardice but to exaggerated caution." This realistic interpretation, conventionalized only to the degree necessary, has become the most cherished traditional conception of the

role in Hungary, and its absence was the feature to which the critics took the greatest exception in the much discussed performances of Sarah Bernhardt and Moissi, while its presence was most valued in the celebrated renderings of Imre Pethes (1908) and Arthur Somlay (1925).

In this country too the most stormy controversies and the most strenuous efforts centered around the staging of the full Shakespearean text. As late as half a century ago mutilations, abridgments and rearrangements in the text were still frequently the subject of critical discussion. It was Sándor Hevesi who first succeeded in breaking with the circumstantial and cumbersome traditions of the historical school. His very successful Shakespeare cycles at the National Theatre in the 1920's, with their mobile, symbolically stylized settings and their series of rotating scenes, went a long way towards enabling the use of the full texts. His productions were rendered still more lively, still richer and more witty by Antal Németh, who introduced the use of staggered and mobile stages. Now and then a more or less forced solution would slip in, such as that of putting the great monologue ahead of the play, an overture as it were, told by Hamlet at the side of his father's tombstone (1935, National Theatre). The staging of Endre Gellért and Tamás Major (1952, National Theatre) went farthest in this direction. However, the combination of the full text with a much too detailed and realistic style made the production almost unendurably long. As a consequence it failed to score a genuine success, in spite of the multiple casting of the leading parts, triple in the case of Hamlet himself.

The production of the Madách Theatre has preserved two important traditional features. The text is rendered unmutilated, but the five acts are reduced with skilful economy to three, with an interval following the fifth and twelfth scenes, respectively. The poetical and realistic interpretation of the characters is achieved in a vivid and modern manner. Stage-manager László Vámos has made a point of realizing the cast's unity. At the same time he has given an opportunity to a number of actors, hitherto known for their excellence in social drama, to make the best of their talent in a classical role. The eclectic features of the production too go to prove the erudition of the young stage-manager.

The whole production is characterized by a simplicity that aims at monumentality. This is suggested in the first place by the staging itself. There is a single semicircular high backdrop, which when sufficiently illuminated gives the impression of an immense stone wall embossed in the Romanesque style; in twilight or in complete darkness it resembles the background of some dreary Appian square or some black sea drapery by Gordon Edward Craig, extending into infinity. Into this semicircular backdrop, however, openings of various shape appear at various levels. With their aid a whole range of windows, galleries, arcades may be indicated and the platform before the castle converted in a matter of minutes into a room of state, a castle-yard, a hall, a churchyard, a plain, as the case may be. This device, for instance, permits a very original solution of the ghost scene: in his heavy armour the ghost of Hamlet's father moves about like a human being, but the illusion of a genuine ghost, lightly flitting away, is evoked with the aid of doubles appearing in the openings at various levels. Above, the stage is open, and with the aid of reflectors placed in the rigging-loft the space may be enlarged upwards to monumental dimensions. The flood of light falling upon the Prince left to himself on the dark stage suggests most effectively the shock which Hamlet must have experienced after his encounter with the ghost—as if the whole world, suddenly out of joint, were really falling upon the head of the young man whom fate has submitted to such an ordeal.

Most striking is the atmosphere of disorder in the scene in which the courtiers

and soldiers, in search of Hamlet after he has dragged away the body of Polonius, tread on each other's heels in the rambling medieval castle, while the blurred figures in the background of the dimly lit stage become phantomlike shadows. The characters are consistent in their simplicity, and there is an economy in both mass movement and theatrical gesture. The reduction to a minimum even of gestures sanctioned by tradition is a welcome innovation, which serves to augment the staggering effect of the grave scene, with its almost motionless simplicity, and the condensed excitement of the fencing scene in the last act, thus avoiding excessive acrobatics.

Both costumes and make-up are characterized by simplicity striving towards monumentality. The stage designers have taken account of the fact that in the case of historical dramas, the spectator demands magnificent robes and alien exotism; bright colours and playful forms are rendered equally effective by the novelty of individual variations and the familiarity of traditional types. It is here that the barely concealed eclecticism of the staging becomes most manifest. Hamlet's black-clad, slim figure and short fair hair are much too reminiscent of Olivier's on the screen, and contrast excessively with the bushy hairiness of Polonius' head recalling St. Peter, and with his conventional robe of red velvet; and, even more so, with the King's portly figure, all purple and gold, and his exaggeratedly brutal and repulsive make-up beneath an immense sparkling crown. It is as if the producer only had in mind the words of the text, in which the King is called an "adulterate beast" by the ghost of Hamlet's father in well-motivated but certainly not unprejudiced rage; but having in fact won the affection of the wife of a stately king he could not have been an altogether repellent figure. The handling of Horatio is also too literal: his intention of following Hamlet into death, conceived in the spirit of Roman virtue, is certainly no sufficient motive for putting the head of a Roman statue on his shoulders, thereby making him a stranger to his surroundings.

These and similar mistakes and contradictions are, however, overshadowed by the excellence of the production as a whole. Having in the course of the past years staged more than one classical or semi-classical play in verse, the company was prepared for the great test. A noteworthy, if not complete, success was recently achieved also in The Tempest. The Hamlet performance, nevertheless, stands head and shoulders above these productions. A polished unity has been attained by the ensemble, an inner harmony and a willingness to face the common task in a friendly spirit of cheerful and friendly discipline, in which the leading performers subordinate themselves to the interests of the performance as a whole. The playing thus reaches a remarkable unity, with each performer maintaining a pure and consistent declamatory style such as even the National Theatre, the traditional home of classical drama, rarely achieves.

Some time the task should be undertaken of demonstrating that even an unabridged Shakespeare play can be fitted into the normal framework of a theatrical evening—as is done in England, for instance. There is still a shade too much pantomime in our performances: the slow exits, the "meaningful" silences, designed to deepen the dialogue and to increase the tension, are remnants of the old-style cothurnus.

The acting of Miklós Gábor, a reformer of the part of Hamlet, is almost entirely free of these disturbing elements. In the course of his theatrical career, he has gained rich experiences both in conversational and declamatory plays, and now he has developed an articulation of rare beauty, equally excelling in neutral, prose speech and in stylized declamation with raised voice. In realizing Shakespeare's characters he had his ups and downs too. His Iago reflected an individual conception that was something of a failure. His Hamlet shows him now at the summit of his career. It represents a meticulously

prepared and carefully balanced re-creation, uniform in construction and carried out with rare intuition and force of expression. With a natural simplicity he moulds the part to fit his own endowments: his agreeably melodious voice, wide in compass, confident and thoroughly cultivated; his short, yet well-proportioned stature, virile in spite of an almost adolescent youthfulness, firm even in its delicacy. Equally simple in intonation, movement and bearing, he employs hardly any histrionic tools, or, to put it more exactly, his tools are derived from a skilful dispensing with any tool. In the present case, he very properly complied with the instructions hidden in the text of the play. Ophelia's devotion gives a hint of the Prince's real qualities: his manly good looks, his intelligence, his charm, his perfection as a courtier, his learned mind and disciplined body. The last words of Fortinbras also express the truth: "...For he was likely, had he been put on, to have prov'd most royally..." In the performance of Miklós Gábor all this comes to life. His Hamlet is an unsophisticated, simple yet clever young man, full of good intentions and longing for happiness, who—terrified at the great responsibility that has fallen on him and abhorring the gory deed whose inevitability he recognizes—seeks to remove each of his beloved companions from his fateful path, but is capable of taking a bold risk and acting with determination at the proper time and place. He is not abnormal for a moment; underlying his brooding is the anxiety of a true man seeking final certitude, not the confusion of an unbalanced mind. His playing the fool unequivocally serves the purpose of a self-defensive disguise, and his madness leaves the crystalline purity and lucidity of his character untouched. This unsophisticated and honest virility is the most attractive property of Gábor's Hamlet. His virility is tinted with a youthful, adolescent grace and freshness, with flashes of artless candour which lend it a peculiarly attractive and gentle charm. This highly individual trait is rarely met with in the stage-history of Hamlet.

The other members of the cast call for no such detailed discussion. Their work—with a few exceptions—remains at the average level of Hungarian stagecraft, aside from the remarkable stylistic unity of the performance, previously referred to. Sándor Pécsi's Polonius, nevertheless, deserves special attention. More often than not this important and complicated character is misrepresented by emphasizing either his unctuous servility as a courtier or his empty, loquacious senility. In Pécsi's conception Polonius has a distinct personality of his own: a courtier, advancing in years, a little more sure of himself than his mediocre experiences would warrant and at times taking liberties with the Prince, but clever in his own way, faithful and obliging. He is, moreover, represented as progressing from unsuspecting security through risk-taking to a death that sets the wheels of destiny in motion. It is perhaps to safeguard the outlines of this progress that Pécsi goes almost too far in reducing to easy playfulness the fatherly advice which Polonius gives to the travel-bound Laertes, for this advice, in significance and content, actually matches the histrionic "ars poetica" voiced by Hamlet.

Our evaluation of the Madách Theatre's production of Hamlet has taken up the entire space allocated to the theatrical review in the present issue. We must thus content ourselves with pointing out that the past three months have seen the revival of a number of successful and edifying plays and that a variety of Hungarian and foreign plays were staged both in the capital and in the provinces. Besides the early classics—Shakespeare, Molière, Goethe, Madách—and the more recent classics—Mæterlinck, Tolstoi, Brecht, Shaw—they include several examples of contemporary drama, such as Achard, Rosov, Arthur Miller, De Filippo. Two novel Hungarian plays—Endre Illés's "The Sand-glass," the first act of which is published in the present issue, and Iván Mándy's "Deep Waters"—also deserve review.

DEZSŐ KERESZTURY

FOLK TALES AND THE SCREEN

More than a year has passed since the controversy which wound its way for months through successive numbers of the weekly *Élet és Irodalom* ("Life and Literature") about literary adaptations of folk tales and countless related questions. (Is it an effective pedagogy which finds expression in the folk tale? Does not the fictitious world of the folk tale come into conflict with the realist concept of literature? Are literary adaptations of folk tales justified? In what way do the primitive horrors of the fairy tales affect present-day readers? And so on, and so forth.) The upshot of the controversy could be none other than the recognition of the status of the folk tale in world literature. The fairy tale is one of the oldest—and, to this day, one of the richest—literary forms of human self-expression, a form that is inseparably related, genetically, to the novel and to all narrative genres. Its ancient treasure store, which is continually being added to, is immeasurable—not for nothing does the title of one of the oldest Hindoo collections refer to an 'ocean' of tales. This ancient genre is wide enough to comprise the garland of stories interred with the dead Egyptian child (its entertaining companion, in popular belief, in the other world) as well as the Greek and Latin animal fables, the parable-and-verse-interlarded Hindoo tale as well as the broad yet fascinating European peasant tales, the special stories for children, and the world of myth and romance of various primitive peoples. Naughty, salacious stories, fairy tales of magic, and miraculous stories about cunning animals all belong in the folk-tale category—and I have not given here anything like a complete list of all the possible groups of this protean genre, nor have I said anything of the literary adaptations and re-written versions. Folk-tale motifs keep cropping up in the Homeric epic, just as Boccaccio has incorporated in the *Decameron* a good number of humorous stories about Italian peasants and as the midsummer night's forest of Shakespeare's plays abounds with the flitting silver-green inhabitants of the English Fairyland. The list could be continued at length, but suffice it to point here to Petőfi's *János vitéz* ("János, the Warrior") or Áron Tamási's fairy-like imps.

It is hardly necessary for me to come forward with an apology of the folk tale, to vindicate its present-day literary status. Any national literature—or art, for that matter—which would decide to ignore the overflowing, inexhaustible riches of the folk tale, would certainly impoverish itself.

It is not in vindication of the folk tale, therefore, that this article is written. The question which again and again occupies both writers and people active in the various arts in this country is this: How can the folk tale be adapted and utilized by the various genres? I am not concerned here with examining every aspect of this problem (for motifs of folk tales *are* freely used in all branches of decorative art, from tapestries to little japanned boxes); my concern is to seek an answer to one question only: Can folk tales be adapted for the screen; and if so, to what extent? Is the folk tale capable of meeting the present—and future—aims of film-making?

The answer, I believe, can be an instantaneous Yes. Yet with this firm and assured Yes in mind, it will nevertheless be worth one's while to make a few points concerning the problem. I do not want, in this article, to touch upon such statistics from the history of the cinema as the number of pictures in which various types of folk tales have been adapted, and in what form. It may suffice to observe that the folk tale has always been a loyal companion of the screen, from animated cartoons all the way to feature pictures. In the initial period of the animated cartoon, film-makers discovered

(though they failed to utilize to the full) the countless possibilities of tricks offered by the "tall tales" and the theme material available in animal fables and jocular stories. In my opinion there are still untapped Hungarian reserves in this sphere that cry for exploitation by Hungarian film-makers with a view to creating a permanent Hungarian film character who—not unlike the young Ábel of Tamási's novels—could be made to go through numerous adventures in a series of pictures (or animated cartoons), interpreting folk stories in an even more charming manner than Mickey Mouse. And that permanent character—the "third" and youngest brother of Hungarian (and most Eurasian) folk tales—would also have a fair chance of achieving world-wide popularity.

I do not propose to offer particular folk-tale motifs, themes and characters to film-makers and script-writers in this country—a series of Soviet pictures, ending with *Stone-flower;* one of Cocteau's disputable pictures *(Beauty and the Beast)* and other western productions (to say nothing of Hungarian fore-runners) furnish sufficient evidence to show the wealth of themes and the great diversity of solutions that can be derived from the world of fairy tales. What I would prefer to point out—by way of encouragement, if I may be permitted to say so—is the astonishing liberating effect that the peculiar narrative and laws of construction of the folk tale are likely to have on prospective script writers. The principles governing the composition of stories have been evolved over thousands of years, by long lines of story-tellers (thousands of peasants and workmen and anonymous minstrels). This method of composition uses, at one and the same time, numerous elements of reality and a system of symbols. While it differs entirely from the creative method of socialist realism, it nevertheless provides a unity of reality and truth by means of its very symbols and through its utilization of realistic elements and types.

What are the traits of the creative method revealed in fairy tales? In one of his memorable essays, János Honti observes that the view of the world as expressed in the folk tale is characterized by a *breaking down* of barriers. True enough. Yet, what kind of barriers are broken down in the folk tale? The folk tale—

a) breaks down the categories of time;
b) keeps transgressing the most diverse forms, realistic as well as fictitious, of space; and
c) breaks through every barrier of the world of Nature: men are changed into animals, beasts and monsters into human beings, and plants and minerals—in fact, nature as a whole—continually produce ever new transitional forms.

And yet these barrier-breaking, free transitions of folk-tale composition manage to avoid creating confusion, for they belong to the austere order of symbols and are supported by the living and forceful social message they stand for. And all this is held together by the ascending three-stage development of repetitive construction, right up to the reconciliatory ending when justice is meted out to everyone. I should only add that the marvels occurring in the stories and the fairy-like transitions in all the borderlands of reality are, at the same time, inseparably interwoven with many living elements of reality. One scarcely has to analyse the realistic portrayal which shows us the rickety jade feeding off the garbage heap—outside the village or on the king's stud-farm—until, all of a sudden, it shakes itself and is changed into a magic steed that rushes on through space and time. And each marvellous fairy-tale element is enriched by this dual magic: even the old witch (with all her warts and croaking) is pure reality and, at the same time, impersonates almost other-worldly evil powers.

Here the folklorist might as well stop. For it is up to the script writers, film directors and editors to utilize as best they can this licence offered by the folk tale in combining the realistic with the unrealistic.

The folklorist can only suggest that, after the spoken word, the screen and television are likely to be the media best suited for conjuring up the world of folk tales. If there are artistic media which, in their particular idioms and according to the innermost laws of their art, can avail themselves of the compositional freedom offered by the space-and-time-transcending folk tale—a freedom that is capable of representing the full variety of transformations—such media are surely to be found in the cinema and television. Indeed, this method of composition would seem to be cut out for them. How eminently suited to the idiom of the screen such a bold principle of composition as this breaking down of "barriers" is hardly needs to be emphasized. At the same time, this highly imaginative creative method is held within a well-constructed framework by the folk tale's close-knit triple unity of structure.

The sum and substance of my argument is, therefore, that the cinema and television are the media best suited for expressing the modern version of the folk tale, at the same time enriching it as a genre. It only calls for the same creative daring that was characteristic of the anonymous minstrels and peasant and shepherd story-tellers of yore, who constantly renewed the tradition that had been handed down to them. (So much so, in fact, that—to mention but one of many examples—in a tale told by one of my peasant story-tellers in the Nyírség district, a witch uses an aeroplane in her pursuit of the lovers in flight.) It should be stressed, however, that real creative courage is needed, not in adopting this motif or that, but in translating the essential features of the fairy tale into cinematic terms.

Finally, let me point out two closely inter-related features in the contents of the folk tale which make it still better suited to be told over and over again in the language of the cinema. If we except the mythical stories of primitive clan communities, the folk tale serves to form a strong link among the peoples of the vast Eurasian continent. The tales and jocular stories, the marvels and parables here reveal a striking kinship throughout this immense area, as though there existed some common, cryptic language understood by all these peoples, from the Chukchees to the Irish, and as though they were telling, in fairy-tale language, the most profound of truths: the conflict between the good and evil ones, the weak and the overbearing ("the exploited and the exploiters"). This clash unfolds *via* a succession of ruthless—often dreadful—incidents (and, at times, malicious jests), only to end, invariably, in the triumph of the humiliated poor folk, the dispossessed underdog. This fundamental truth, this dramatic social justice and catharsis, is the most profound moral advanced by the folk tale. It is not by means of clichés, doctrinaire platitudes, that this truth is stated, or it would cease to be a tale and would be reduced to a boring apologue of no interest. Yet this social message is too valuable and convincing for us not to utilize its force, particularly if we realize that, when listening to the tales, the populations of vast continents give it their approval. The fundamental truth and power of the class struggle speaks to us through the centuries, rendering possible, and even calling for, an interpretation and artistic structure that may well prove the most modern. This truth should be permitted to make its plea—in as effective a manner as possible—through the diverse media of the cinema and television.

GYULA ORTUTAY

SMALL CHANGE

Sketches by

BORIS PALOTAI

THE DIFFERENCE

There is four years difference between them. They are both fair and chubby, their features and movements so similar, you would think Panni was actually an enlarged photo of Julika—with Julika more like an amateur snapshot and Panni a carefully taken, enlarged portrait.

Their natures on the other hand are all the more different. I could best explain by recounting a little incident in both their lives. Panni was three when I first told her the story of Little Red Riding Hood. As soon as the Wolf entered the story, Panni began to show signs of disquiet. She blinked more and more, and her face became increasingly worried. Her nose reddened and her eyes filled with tears. And when the Wolf swallowed Granny, she began to cry so loud, I had to modify the story. I quickly corrected myself: the Wolf did not really swallow Granny; he only wanted to.

Even that was no use. Panni continued to cry. The very intention was enough to terrify her, she sensed that there was only a shade of difference between the intention and the deed. If the desire to swallow someone is there, sooner or later he's sure to be swallowed. I was obliged to carry out fundamental changes in the story. I had Granny club the Wolf to death. But even this solution would not soothe Panni. The idea of revenge was unbearable.

She shook her head violently and shouted: "No, no, no! I don't want it!"

There was nothing for it, the story needed further alterations. Finally the Wolf and Granny had tea together in the cottage, inviting Little Red Riding Hood to have a cup with them, and also the Huntsman, who seemed a little superfluous to the story after the turn events had taken. To give him something to do, however, I had him crack the hazelnuts with his gun, so Granny could munch away at them contentedly.

The other day Julika demanded to be told a story. Well, I had another go at Little Red Riding Hood. I had hardly begun before Juli started asking questions: "What did the little girl take Granny in her basket? What kind of cake? Chocolate cake? And what else? Didn't she take cream buns? Why not? And is it good for Granny to drink wine? Why doesn't she drink cocoa instead?"

At long last we arrived at the stage where the Wolf came on the scene. Julika's face burnt with feverish excitement. "And?" she asked, with glistening eyes.

I spun out the dialogue between the Wolf and Granny somewhat, because I still vividly

recalled Panni's terrified face when the dramatic instant had ensued where the Wolf opened his mouth wide.

"And?" prompted Julika.

I shut my eyes. "The Wolf opened his mouth wide," I said in a voice that betrayed a readiness for compromise. I might still explain the wide-open mouth by turning it into a yawn.

"And?" asked Julika eagerly.

I took the plunge: "The wicked Wolf swallowed Granny."

Juli leaned forward curiously: "Which one? The one at Buda or the Szeged Granny?"

That, roughly speaking, is the difference between the natures of the two children.

A HEART OF GOLD

It was late in the afternoon. The garden of the Kékes Sanatorium was full of patients taking their walk. They only walked a small distance, up and down, up and down, in front of the Sanatorium buildings, along the flower-lined path. They walked gravely and conscientiously, till the gong should sound for supper. During their walk they gazed with yearning at the wrought-iron gate. That was where the world began. In here there were the hours of silence, the doctor's visit, the diet, the pine-trees and the flower-beds. Out there, the dusty highway, crowded buses, noise, confusion and danger... If they could only get out for half an hour!

A young woman with a blue cardigan over her shoulder was taking her walk in the company of a young man. Up and down, up and down, just like the rest.

"Thirty seven point four,"* said the young woman. "Still thirty seven point four. There's a place at the end of the park where the fence is broken. You can squeeze through it." And she laughed. "My room-mate, that black- haired girl, has slipped out twice. I wouldn't dare..." And she continued along the path, though she usually turned back here. This was the invisible line that was the boundary mark of their walk. Beyond were the dark green firs, lined up close to one another, thick and dense... "I've never been there yet."

"Don't hurry so... You mustn't hurry with thirty-seven point four," said the young man. "Just take it easy..."

The path was narrower here. They walked close to one another. Their arms and shoulders brushed against each other.

"What do you take?" asked the young man.

"Metotyrin." They strolled on, in the yellow dimness of the light that filtered through the branches. "They're also giving me Bazotyrin."

The young man's hand slipped under the cardigan. "Bazotyrin..." he said, and took her arm. "That's good... Bazotyrin..." His fingers were creeping over the smooth skin.

"Yes, they say it's good," whispered the young woman. "I was X-rayed yesterday. Do you understand anything about X-rays?"

"Well..."

"The shadow of my *struma* reaches the *jugulum*..."

* Degrees Centigrade = 99·3° F.

The young man's palm was feeling its way upward. "You must take care... No... no excitement..." he stammered.

"No, certainly not. I'm taking care of myself, now that I'm here... now that I've had to come here... just five weeks ago today... I thought I couldn't stand it for a week. My husband brought me up, though he's got so much on his hands... He bought me a camel-hair blanket, though I told him I'd get a blanket here..."

"You get everything here!" The young man's palm had now slipped in through the slit in her dress.

"Have you... don't... have you got a *struma* too?" she asked, catching her breath.

"Let's sit down... Over on that bench... I've got asthma. Excitement's poison for me too... it makes me choke," said the young man, and his voice grew heated.

They sat down slowly on the bench, and the sun became entangled in the light veil of clouds, leaving only one thin, golden strip...

"Shall we hear the gong here?"

The young man pulled her close to him. "I'll watch for it..."

"I'd prefer to have an operation. But my husband's so anxious about me..." said the young woman, her eyes growing dim, for the man's fingers were now gliding over her knees, with a light, yet weighty touch...

"He phones me every day... He doesn't even let me go to work. We have a charwoman every second day, she sees to everything."

The man swept the cardigan off the bench, but he did not so much as notice it. "You needn't be afraid of the operation... You needn't..." He thrust aside the woman's feebly resisting hand. "You needn't be afraid..."

"But he's anxious about me... he's such a good man. Only today, he sent me some more money to buy chocolates, fruit, whatever I fancy. Nothing's too much for him, when it concerns me. 'Take care of yourself, deary...' 'Don't mind the money, deary,' that's the sort of man he is... There isn't another like him..." she said in a halting voice, for the man was now hugging her quite close to him, and she felt her own heart beat in the man's chest.

"What is the *jugulum?*" she asked, at a loss.

"*Jugulum... jugulum...*" panted the man. For a moment there was silence. Only whispering, tiny sounds could be heard.

"We'll slip out through the fence tomorrow..."

"What for... My husband would be angry... I don't want him to be angry... No... don't... I don't want... He's so good... If only you knew... He has a..." The young man's mouth covered hers, and the words came choking, gurgling from between their lips: "a heart of gold..."

THE ETIQUETTE CHANDELIER

"Well now, there's Gabi!" Zeke had caught sight of his son on the opposite pavement. He crossed the street and whistled to him, but his whistle was swallowed up by the clanging of the tram. He quickened his pace, only two or three more steps, and he would catch up with him. He was walking just behind him now, about to raise his hand to clap him on the

shoulder. But at this instant his eye was arrested by Jurik, Gabi's friend, who was listening so intently to Gabi, you could see it even from behind... His neck, and the back of his head were almost bursting with attention. What on earth could Gabi... for he was doing the talking... Jurik only nodded and neighed occasionally... Gabi just went on talking—corky little chap that he was. Really he was just like a small cork being tossed about by the street traffic. Here he had stopped being "my dear son," here he was just Gábor Zeke, or "a boy from the second form of the grammar school," or not even that. "A boy in the street." So he decided to have a look at this boy in the street, to whom his friend, that great lout, was listening with such rapt attention.

A bit awkward... Yes, he was definitely awkward. He didn't know what to do with his hands either. He certainly couldn't be called handsome, thought Zeke, intent on curbing his pride. That "boy in the street" was surely telling the other something terribly interesting, because his great lout of a friend had raised his head high and just went on shaking it, as though completely lost in wonder. The awkward little boy seemed to be a good story-teller, if he could manage so thoroughly to retain the other's attention. A good story-teller and a good observer. He had always enjoined him not only to see the superficial aspect of things, but also what lay behind them. If he was to look at him as a stranger, all he would see was that he was a lively, agile teen-ager, with a faculty for engaging people's attention. That in itself was something! It would be good to hear what he was saying, what he was explaining with such vigour, thought Zeke. He carefully made his way up to them and pursed his lips forward, as though about to swallow a dainty titbit...

"...I call it the etiquette chandelier," said Gabi. "Good, eh?"

"Etiquette chandelier," said Zeke to himself. A good beginning...

"Because they always switch on the lights according to the rules... just the right number..." continued Gabi. "I can tell from down in the street... I just look up at the window and I can tell you straight away... I'll bet you. I can tell from the number of lights, when there's an important bloke come to see us."

Zeke reddened. "Bloke..." Imagine using an expression like that! What a disrespectful, vulgar word... and how did he dare... Jurik, of course, was guffawing. Why should they switch on all the lights? There were financial considerations, after all. You couldn't always have the flat in a blaze of light! A blaze... He'd have to stop using this word "bloke..."

"If I see from downstairs that there's only a solitary bulb burning, I know there's a poor relation come to see us and that Mum will serve the remnants of yesterday's rice pudding. If there are four lights on, one of Dad's colleagues has come for a visit, complete with wife. The accompaniment to four lights is black coffee, brandy and sandwiches," said Gabi, giggling. "I could do with a salami roll now. With a good thick slice of salami. As thick as my finger... What's on at the movies?" They stopped in front of the advertisement pillar and scrutinized the posters.

"And?" asked Jurik.

"And what?"

"About the chandelier."

"When we have guests for dinner, we switch on all the bulbs. But whom do we invite to dinner? Those who're better off than we."

Preposterous, thought Zeke. Where on earth did he pick up these... "Etiquette chandelier." What nonsense! How could he invent such a thing?

Instead of concentrating on school or on his hobby-group. They even have a modeller's hobby-group now... He'd certainly give him a piece of his mind!

"But there's also manoeuvres, you know," said Gabi, raising his adolescent voice.

"For instance?" asked Jurek, curiously.

"For instance when Dad wants to show certain people that though he's head of a Departnent now, he lives just as modestly as when he was a clerk. That he hasn't let it go to his head. Then he only switches on two bulbs. This kind of lighting is for tea and biscuits. And then there's the lighting we have for propaganda purposes. It consists of eight bulbs and means: 'You have to admit, comrade, the standard of living's rising.' Then there's cocktail-crackers and cream cakes..."

Zeke turned about and set off at a hurried pace in the opposite direction. If he listened for another moment to Gabi... He wiped his face with his handkerchief. What balderdash he had talked! Impertinent young cub! "Steady there, steady" he said, to soothe himself. Let's try and look at the thing as though he had really overheard a strange boy by chance. "A boy in the street..." "What a loud-mouthed chap that boy will be," he would think, and he would feel sincere pity for the parents who had probably been just as painstaking over the education of their son as he had been about Gabi's. Taking care of every step he took. Attending all the parents' conferences at school. Talking to him in a comprehending, friendly tone. The cheek of those superior airs! What a rascál! Of course, you involuntarily have to think... yes, well... it must be due to the lad's background... To the life he sees about him...

He couldn't, after all, stand his speaking so disrespectfully about his parents, without talking to him about it. Let the young man grow up and show his mettle, then we can chat about a thing or two. He decided at all events to give Gabi a piece of his mind.

This, however, he failed to do. He talked to him about everything, except "this thing." How was he to confess that he had eavesdropped on him?

During the next few days Zeke was painstakingly careful to see that the chandelier should always have four lights on. Always...

After a while Gabi noticed with surprise that the ornate glass chandelier had been replaced by a wrought iron lamp with four bulbs that were worked by a single switch. No grades...

Gabi stared at it in amazement. He compressed the corners of his mouth, as though suppressing a smile.

Gabi looked at the chandelier, and Zeke at Gabi.

"The other chandelier was old-fashioned," declared Zeke quickly. "I got rid of it."

And since Gabi did not reply, he snapped at him sharply: "What about it? Any objections?"

THE WIDOW

The writer's widow came from the publisher's and was going to the cemetery. She made this journey several times each week. The recent volumes of her husband's works, his newly discovered manuscripts and the luxuriantly flowering grave, all went to prove that she

divided her life between labouring on the immortality of her husband and tending his terrestrial remains.

The husband had been a notoriously lazy man. He worked little, and it was mostly trouble over the rent and unpaid bills that served to inspire him to do some writing. Nevertheless, after his death it turned out that he had left an amazing number of manuscripts... There appeared to be an inexhaustible quarry of them, in the drawers of a writing desk which had in his lifetime held his pipes, a four-piece gold denture wrapped in a paper napkin, some faded amateur snapshots and his discarded fountain pens. Since he had died, the magic drawer had opened for almost every special issue of the newspapers, revealing its profundities: unknown short stories, valuable memoirs came to light, poems from the author's youth, which were helped on their way by the restrained, yet tender reminiscences of the widow...

I met the widow at a florist's. She was clutching a bunch of carnations in her hand. "I'm going out to István," she said, and after a little reflection added: "I'll take you with me." This sounded as though she was bestowing a reward on me.

I did not even have time to blink with emotion, nor indeed to plead an excuse and to take a hasty leave of her.

"He liked you," she announced at the entrance to the cemetery, as though fortifying herself in the conviction that she had not made an unworthy choice. "He let few people come close to him," she said, moving in as homely a fashion among the graves, as she did in her husband's study. "If he once took someone into his confidence..." She stopped in front of a huge marble monument. "Here we are..." She stroked the gilded letters with the palm of her hand. For a while we stood there, speechless. Only the tear-laden breathing of the widow, and the indecent chirruping of a cricket could be heard. "If he once took someone into his confidence..." she repeated, turning towards me and showing the mournful oval of her face, which looked as though it had been designed as an accessory to the tombstone. "His confidence was a mark of honour," she declared, carefully shaking the bunch of carnations loose. "No one really knew him... only I... The moral force that dwelt in him!" Her throat, inured to tears, let the words escape as through a veil. "How can we ever become reconciled to having him with us no more..." She put the carnations in an empty tin. "Commemoration programs all over the country... the wireless broadcasting his name... And all those repentant self-criticisms! His books are appearing, one after another... But I'm only a frail woman, weak and helpless... I need him! Nicotine-drenched, unshaven, clearing his throat... His spirit belongs to everyone... What has been left of him to me... to me alone? Run along son and bring me some water in this can," she beckoned to a boy who was passing by, and energetically thrust into his hand a watering-can which she had pulled out from among the shrubs.

"What is the sense of it all?" she asked apathetically. "Without him I cannot... I don't want to..." She watered the flowers and also filled the tin. "One tries to go on living. One does all one can... In vain, you just cannot..."

The boy after bringing the water, had sauntered about round us, but now he stopped in front of her.

"Well, what is it?" asked the widow dejectedly. "Here's three forints."

"Not much," muttered the kid. "Give me five."

"Have you ever seen such cheek? Five forints! What on earth do you imagine?" said the widow with resounding vitality. She took a handkerchief from her bag and wiped the mud off the bespattered edge of the marble slab. "The way we were together... we didn't even need words any more." Her voice had regained its previous melancholy key. "I knew precisely what he thought, what he felt... Even his dreams..." She shut her eyes, with the dark, plumcoloured furrows under them. Distress forged her insignificant features into a pattern of nobility.

"I lived not only with him, but also in him," she said now, and suffering made her somewhat swollen lips narrow. "It is only now that I understand the meaning of the words: united, body and soul."

Suddenly she jerked her head up. "He had someone... I'm certain of it. A boyish, lanky girl of some sort... A little nobody." Her fingers trembled as she plucked the weeds from among the flowers. "She kept returning in his short stories, this figure. Boyish, lanky, with stiff strands of hair, he called it fair... She's there in his last novel too," she said in a choking voice, then, waiting till the earth had swallowed up the water, she loosened the soil with a bit of wood. "He had no imagination at all... I should know, if anyone does... no phantasy. He adhered rigidly to reality. He could only write what he had himself experienced... That lanky girl... of course she had long ceased to be a girl... and it was only he that called her lanky... A seedy, spindly creature she must have been... with nondescript hair! Maybe it was Ida, his typist. She had that towy kind of hair... The fuss she made at the funeral! Only those cry like that..." She snipped off the shrivelled leaves, with the same care she had shown in removing the down from her husband's coat collar. "I know he had an affair with Mrs. Krisztián. She's certainly weedy enough for him to have called her lanky and boyish..." she said, and the tears ran down in pairs on either side of her nose. "The next time I shall plant some wild roses here, István liked them very much. I used to put wild roses on his writing desk... in that majolica vase. I didn't see Mrs. Krisztián at the funeral. She stayed at the back, she had good reason to..." Swiftly she raked the earth on the mound of the grave with the tips of her fingers. "A couple of years ago he delivered a lecture at the bulb factory. That's where he struck up an acquaintance with a coil-winder, some sort of Emmuska... one of those flat-chested creatures... She was fair, to be sure... She used to come up to us for books, István of course devoted time to her. Whom didn't he devote time to!" she exclaimed in despair, shaking her muddy fingers. "He let everyone come close to him! He took everyone into his confidence!"

She poured water in the palm of her hand and carefully sprayed the flowers. "My whole life was an agony of fear, lest he should give himself away and make himself ridiculous." Gasping, heaving sounds broke from her. I took her by the arm and tried to pull her away from the grave.

"No... not yet," she said, raising her streaming eyes to the mound. "It is only here, near him, that I feel well." She sighed and pressed her brow against the marble gravestone. "They're publishing it in the Cheap Library series... the novel he wrote about that Emmuska. I've managed to arrange for it..."

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Eősze, László (b. 1923). Musicologist, art director of Music Publishers (Editio Musica). Coworker in the preparation—now in progress—of the new Hungarian Music Encyclopedia. Acquired his diploma as doctor of philosophy at the Budapest Eötvös Loránd University in 1945 and his certificate as piano teacher at the Budapest Academy of Music in 1947. His works include: *Kodály Zoltán élete és munkássága* ("Zoltán Kodály's Life and Work"), 1956; *Kodály Zoltán élete képekben* ("Zoltán Kodály's Life in Pictures"), 1957; *Az opera útja* (Egyetemes operatörténet) ("The Road of the Opera—Universal History of the Opera"), 1960 *Giuseppe Verdi*, 1961; *Zoltán Kodály, His Life and Work*, 1962, Corvina; studies, articles, lectures.

Keszi, Imre (b. 1910). Writer and music aesthetician. Obtained a degree in philosophy and graduated as a scoolmaster at the University of Budapest; at the same time he studied under Zoltán Kodály at the Budapest Academy of Music. Became professor at a teachers' college; from 1946 to 49 he was the literaty critic of the daily Szabad Nép from 1950 to 57 he acted as professor at the Dramatic and Film Art School. His principal works are; *Alapkő* ("Foundation-stone"), a novel, 1952; published also in German; *Borszeszláng* ("Spirit Flame"), short stories, 1958; "Elysium," a novel, 1958; in French by Albin Michel; under preparation to be published in several languages; *Szőlőből bor* ("Wine from Grapes") a novel, 1961, reviewed on pp. 188—190 of this issues.

Vajda, Miklós (b. 1931). Essayst and literary translator. Studied English and Hungarian literature at Budapest University. Has translated into Hungarian Jack London, Irvin Shaw, and H. E. Bates. Recently transcribed the medieval alliterative poem of chivalry "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." (See also his essays in vol. II, N° 1 and N° 4 of the New Hungarian Quarterly.)

Boskovits, Miklós (b. 1935). Art historian Completed his studies at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. Devotes himself mainly to problems relating to Italian art in the 14th and 15th centuries. Studies of his on this subject have appeared in the *Acta Historiae Artium* (published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), in the *Bnlletin du Musée National des Beaux-Arts* and in other art periodicals.

Tamási, Áron (b. 1897). One of the most significant and most widely read of living Hungarian authors. His major works include *Címèresek* ("Titled Nobility"), 1931, a novel of manners; the "Abeltrilogy," 1932—34, a diverting Odyssey of a cheery and resourceful young Szekler all the way from his native village, through Hungarian urban life, to the bustle of America; *Bölcső és bagoly* ("Cradle and Owl"), 1949, a biographical novel; and *Szirom és boly* ("Szirom and the Others"), 1960, which is the story of a group of Szeklers resettled in western Hungary where they are building a cooperative farm village. Tamási's penmanship acquires particular pureness in his short stories. He is member of the Editorial Board of our periodical. (See his short story in Vol. II, No 1 of the New Hungarian Quarterly.)

Hubay, Miklós (b. 1918). Dramatist. His first play *Hősök nélkül* ("Without Heroes") was staged in 1942 by the Little Theatre of the National Theatre. In that period Hubay was working on the editorial staff of the *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie* and *The Hungarian Quarterly*. After the war his drama entitled *Coq d'Esculape* appeared in Paris. Up. to 1949 he was the head of the Hungarian Library in Geneva and a full-time delegate to the Bureau International d'Éducation. His film *Ba-*

karuhában ("Sunday Romance"), the scenario of which he wrote on the basis of a short story by Sándor Hunyady, has been shown in a number of countries. His plays include *Egy magyar nyár* ("A Hungarian Summer"); *István napja* ("Stephen's Day"); *Egyik Európa* ("One Kind of Europe"); and several one-act plays. Hubay has translated plays by Musset, Sartre, Marceau, Miller and Sheridan. (See also his essays in Vol. I, N° 1 and Vol. II, N° 1, and his play in Vol. II, N° 4, of the New Hungarian Quarterly.)

TREWIN, John Courtenay (b. 1908). Son of a Cornish sailor, has stayed obstinately on land, usually in or around the theatre. A journalist since the age of 17 and a drama critic since 18, he came to London from the West Country in 1932. Among his appointments he has been Literary Editor of *The Observer* (for nearly six years) and drama critic of a number of London newspapers and journals; at present he is critic of *The Illustrated London News* (since 1946) and *The Birmingham Post*. Author of thirty books (he specialises in stage history) and editor of many others. His wife, also from the West Country, is a drama critic, and the elder of his two sons is following more or less in the same path as a television critic in Plymouth.

ILLÉS, Endre (b. 1902). Writer of short stories and dramas, critic, literary director of the *Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó (Belles-lettres* Publishers). His concisely written short stories—*Zsuzsa, Kevélyek* ("Susy," "The Disdainful Ones")—and his exactingly elaborated dramas—*Méreg* ("Poison"), *Hazugok* ("Liars")—represent an analysis of Hungarian middle-class life. From the 'thirties, he was one of the leading critics of the magazine *Nyugat* ("West"); his reviews took stock of the significant results of Hungarian middle-class literature. His dramatic works include: *Trisztán* (in cooperation with István Vas); *Türelmetlen szeretők* ("Impatient Lovers"). His translations of Stendhal and Maupassant are outstanding for their careful adaptation. —*Hamisjátékosok* ("Sharpers"), short stories; *Krétarajzok* ("Chalk Drawings"), essays, reviews, studies. His short story "Epilogue" was published in Vol. II., N° 3 of our magasine.

BEÉR, János (b. 1905). Lawyer, professor at the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest. Since 1945 has taken an active part in preparing laws and statutes affecting the state apparatus, *e.g.* in working out the constitution of the People's Republic and the council laws. His scientific work is concerned mainly with research into the development of constitutions, systems of representation, problems presented by local organs and state administration. Lately he has edited and for the most part written a university monograph on the development of local councils in Hungary, which is about to appear.

FARAGÓ, Vilmos (b. 1919). Journalist and teacher of literature, member of the editorial staff of *Élet és Irodalom* (Life and Literature), a literary weekly. (See also his articles in Vol. I, N° 1 and Vol. II, N° 1 of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

TÓTH, Béla (b. 1913). Psychologist. Completed his university studies in Szeged. Worked for two years on a fellowship at the Institute of Psychology of the University of Arts and Sciences in Vienna (under Professor H. Rohracher and Fr. Kainz). Has been teaching in teacher-training institutions since 1945 and is an associate of the Institute of Child Psychology. Associate of the Faculty of Psychology of the Budapest Pedagogical Seminary since 1959. His books published so far are: *A félelem jelenségeinek lélektana és pedagógiája* ("The Psychology and Pedagogy of the Phenomena of Fear"), 1939; *Beszéd, jellem, személyiség* ("Speech, Character, Personality"), 1948; *A gyermek és az irodalom* ("The Child and Literature"), 1955; *Gyermek- és ifjúsági könyvtárak* ("The Child and Youth Libraries"), 1956; *Olvasó gyermekeink* ("Our

Reading Children"), 1957 (with co-authors); *Az irodalmi érdeklődés a gyermekkorban* ("Literary Interests in Childhood"), 1961 (in preparation). (See also his article in Vol. II, No 3 of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

KÉRY, László (b. 1920). Literary historian, critic and translator;, secretary of the Hungarian Pen Club. His works deal mainly with the history of English literature: *Shakespeare tragédiái* ("The Tragedies of Shakespeare"), 1959; editor of the Hungarian version of Shakespeare's dramas *(Shakespeare összes drámái)*; 1959.

ALBINI, Umberto (b. 1922) Italian literary historian and critic, translator. Lecturer at the Genoa University and member of the Florence National Library. One of the leading experts on twentieth century European poetry from which he translated numerous examples. A volume of Attila József's poems, a selection of Miklós Radnóti's poetry and Sándor Bródy's play, *A tanítónő* (The Schoolmistress) was issued by the Lerici Publishing House. Several plays of Miklós Hubay are about to appear at Einaudi's. For his translations Umberto Albini was recently awarded the medal of the Hungarian PEN Club.

NAGY, Péter (b. 1920). Literary historian and critic. Has published a number of works on modern Hungarian literature, and especially on the question of the Hungarian novel. (See also his essays in several previous issues of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

ZÁDOR, Anna (b. 1904). Art historian, specializing in classicism. Professor at the Budapest Eötvös Loránd University. Her main works are *A klasszicizmus építészete Magyarországon* ("The Architecture of Classicism in Hungary"), Bpest, 1943; *A magyar művészet története* ("History of Hungarian Art"), Bpest, 1958; *Pollack Mihály*, Bpest, 1960 (see our review in Vol. II, N° 3 of The New Hungarian Quarterly); "Some Problems of Classicism in Architecture" (in English), Acta Historiae Artium, Bpest, 1960. Member of the Editorial Board of The New Hungarian Quarterly.

SZABÓ, Magda. Made her appearance in the literary world in recent years with novels analysing social problems of present-day Hungary. Tense inner monologues and delicate nuances in psychological portrayal lend her writings a peculiarly individual tone. Her novels are: *Freskó* ("Fresco"—a German edition of this book has been published by Insel Verlag); *Az őz* ("The Deer"); *Disznótor* ("Pig-killing"—a stage version of which has been produced in Budapest); *Mondják meg Zsófikának* ("Tell it to Zsófi"). Other works include: *Sziget-kék* ("Island-Blue"—a novel for children), the script of the film *Vörös tinta* ("Red Ink"), and sundry short stories. She translated, among others, works of Shakespeare, Burns, Thomas Kid, Glasworthy, Walt Whitman, Poe, into Hungarian. (See also her short story in Vol. II, N° 2 of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

HANÁK, Péter (b. 1921). Member of the Institute of Historical Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Studied at the Universities of Budapest and Rome, and subsequently specialized in the field of Italo-Hungarian historical relations and the 1848 revolution. Works at the Institute of Historical Sciences since 1949 and lectured at the faculty of modern Hungarian history, Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest) from 1953 to 1957.

PATAKY, Mrs. Dénes (née Brestyánszky Ilona). Art historian. Graduated from the Pázmány Péter University, Budapest. Worked in the Municipal Art Gallery, the Budapest Historical Museum, the National Museum of Industrial Art, and the National Gallery. Since 1957 art historian at the Ministry of Education. Teacher of ceramics at the Industrial Art College. Special fields of research: ceramics, goldsmith's craft, Hungarian pictorial art in the 19th and

20th centuries. Main works: *A Zsolnay kerámia* ("Ceramics of Zsolnay"), Budapest, 1954; *Mednyánszky László naplója* ("László Mednyánszky's Diary") Budapest, 1960; *A modern magyar kerámia*, ("Modern Hungarian Ceramics") Budapest, 1961.

SEARLE, Humphrey, B. A., British composer, b. 1915. Educated at Winchester College, New College, Oxford and Royal Academy of Music. Studied privately with Anton Webern: mem. BBC Music Dept., 1938—40; army service, 1940—46; producer BBC Music Dept., 1946—48; Gen. Soc. Int. Soc. for Contemporary Music, 1947—49., mem. Sadlers Wells Ballet Advisory Panel, 1951—57; Hon. Sec. Liszt Sec., 1950.— Compositions include First Piano Concerto, 1944, Trilogy on Texts of Edith Sitwell and James Joyce, 1949—52. Poem for 22 Strings, 1950, Piano Sonata, 1951, First Symphony, 1953, Second Piano Concerto, 1955, Noctambules (ballet), 1956, The Great Peacock (ballet), 1958, The Diary of a Madman (opera), 1958, Second Symphony, 1958. Publications: The Music of Liszt, 1954, Twentieth Century Counterpoint, 1954, Ballet Music: An Introduction, 1958. (From the International Who's Who, 1961

KERESZTURY, Dezső (b. 1904). Literary historian and aesthetician, our regular theatre reviewer (see our previous issues).

LIEBNER, János (b. 1923). Professional 'cellist, musical aesthete and critic. Attended the National College of Music in Budapest and finished his studies at the Paris *Conservatoire*. Soloist of the Hungarian State Opera House, the Budapest Philharmonic Society and the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and 'cellist of the Hungarian String Trio. (See also his article in Vol. II, N° 4 of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

ORTUTAY, Gyula. (b. 1910) Ethnologist. Rector of and Professor at the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest. One of the founders of the Association of the Young Artists and Writers of Szeged, which did pioneering work in exploring village life. Conducted extensive ethnographic research in the 'thirties. Between 1947 and 1950 was Minister of Education. Since 1946 has headed the Chair of Folklore. General secretary of the People's Patriotic Front. Main works: *Székely népballadák* ("Transylvanian Folk Ballads"), Budapest, 1935; *Nyíri és rétközi parasztmesék* ("Peasant Tales of Nyír and Rétköz"), Budapest, 1935; *Fedics Mihály meséi* ("Mihály Fedics Tells Stories"), Budapest, 1941; *Magyar Népművészet* ("Hungarian Folk Art"), Vol. I-II. Budapest, 1942; *Parasztságunk élete* ("Life of Our Peasantry", also in English), Budapest, 1947; *Magyar Népmesék* ("Hungarian Folk Tales"), in German: Ungarische Volksmärchen, Berlin, 1957. English edition: Corvina, 1962). See also his essays in Vol. I, N° 1 and Vol. II, N° 4 of The New Hungarian Quarterly.)

PALOTAI, (Mrs.) Boris (b. 1907). Writer, Lived in Czechoslovakia until 1939, where she worked on local Hungarian papers. After the liberation in 1945 she took part for some time in editing the *Népszava* central organ of the Hungarian trade unions. Since 1945 she has written number of works in which she turns to the problems of social and private life in the new society. Novels: *Kegyetlen ifjúság* ("Merciless Youth"); *Keserű mandula* ("Bitter Almond"); *Viharos mennyország* ("Stormy Paradise") *etc.* Short stories: *Varázsige* ("Magic Word"); *Válogatott tévedéseim* ("Selected Errors of Mine").

A SHORT ENCYCLOPEDIA

of some places, historical events, personalities and institutions mentioned in this number

ÁMOS, IMRE (1907—1944). Painter, worked under expressionist, then surrealist influences. Murdered by the fascists in a concentration camp.

BARCSAY, JENŐ (born 1900). Painter and graphic artist, professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, with an exceptional knowledge of art anatomy. Paints pictures of small size, but of monumental effect, in which he explores the problems of objects, space and the human body.

BATTHYÁNY, COUNT LAJOS (1806—1849). One of the leading figures in the Hungarian feudal Assembly in the first half of the 19th century, chairman of the opposition party which demanded bourgeois reforms. In April 1848, when the independence movement against Hapsburg rule triumphed, he became Prime Minister of the first responsible Hungarian Government. After the crushing of the freedom struggle the Austrians executed him on October 6, 1849.

CSONTVÁRY, TIVADAR (1853—1919). Self-taught painter who united elements of the *art nouveau* and impressionism. His giant-size paintings as well as his smaller pictures give expression to his childishly naive and exceptionally intuitive power of imagination.

DERKOVITS SCHOLARSHIP. The Derkovits Scholarship was founded in memory of the great Hungarian proletarian painter, Gyula Derkovits (1894—1934). It is awarded to young artists to ensure their further training and creative work after they complete their studies in art school. The scholarship is for a duration of three years and amounts to 3,000 forints per month. On Derkovits, see The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. II, N° 1, "Gyula Derkovits" by Gábor Ö. Pogány.

EGRY, JÓZSEF (1883—1951). Painter. See The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. II, N° 4, "József Egry" by Sándor Láncz.

THE EIGHT. A group of artists formed in 1911. Its members proclaimed the importance of composition in opposition to the departure from form of the impressionists. During its two years of existence the group left an indelible impression on the development of Hungarian painting with its sympathetic attitude to socialism and the working-class movement; it had a great influence on the poster art of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919. Its members were Róbert Berény, Béla Czóbel, Dezső Czigány, Károly Kernstok, Ödön Márffy, Dezső Orbán, Bertalan Pór, Lajos Tihanyi, as well as two guest sculptors, Vilmos Fémes Beck and Márk Vedres.

ESTERHÁZY COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS. Was one of the famous European art collections in its time. Its founder was Prince Miklós Esterházy (1765—1833), who purchased more than a thousand paintings, some 50,000 engravings and 3,500 drawings. In 1865 the collection was placed in the building of the Academy of Sciences, where during the same year the Esterházy Collection was opened. In 1871 the State purchased the collection, which is incorporated in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.

EUROPEAN SCHOOL. A group in Hungary after the Second World War (1945—1948) which followed the then modern styles in art. Its members strove to de-

velop a new principle of form, and their artistic experiments were often of a formalistic character. Some of its members were József Egry, Ödön Márffy, Dezső Kornis, and Margit Anna.

GRESHAM GROUP. A group of artists in Budapest between the two world wars; they met at the Gresham Café, hence their name.

GROUP OF SOCIALIST ARTISTS. A group that came into existence in the middle of the 1930's; its members proclaimed Marxist aesthetical views and paved the way for socialist realism. One of the foremost members of the group was István Dési Huber (1895—1944).

INMATE OF FORCED LABOUR CAMP. From 1940 on, the Hungarian governments allied with Hitler's Germany sent left-wing and progressive elements, members of national groups, Jews, or men considered as Jews, to forced labour camps. And from 1941 on they forced these people to perform dangerous tasks at the battle front. As a consequence of the inhuman conditions and of the cruel treatment a large part of the inmates of the forced labour camps perished.

JÁNOS VITÉZ (John the Hero). The first great folk epic of Hungarian literature, written in 1844 by Sándor Petőfi (1823—1849), Hungary's greatest poet. Its hero is a poor shepherd lad who after many struggles and trying adventures wins his beloved Iluska. Pongrác Kacsóh composed an operetta based on the work.

JUSTH, ZSIGMOND (1863—1894). Novelist and short story writer, who criticized the aristocracy in his works.

KERNSTOK, KÁROLY (1873—1940). Painter and graphic artist, whose pictures of socialist and revolutionary content reveal a search for form. In 1919, at the time of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, he directed the free school of fine arts. Later, while living as an emigré in Germany, he came under the influence of the expressionists.

KORNIS, DEZSŐ (born 1908). Painter and graphic artist, a member of the "European School" and exponent of the abstract trend.

KOSSUTH, LAJOS (1802—1894). The greatest figure in the struggle for Hungarian national independence, for the abolition of feudal privileges and for civil rights waged in the 19th century. Lawyer, editor, leader of the opposition. Headed the anti-Hapsburg struggle in 1848—49. At first he was Minister of Finance in the Batthyány Government, then chairman of the National Defence Commission which exercised executive powers. Following the Independence Proclamation of April 14, 1849, when the National Assembly declared the dethronement of the House of Hapsburg, he was elected provisional head of state and governing president. After the defeat of the freedom struggle he emigrated. He lived in Turkey and Bulgaria, visited England in 1851, the United States in 1851—52, then returned to England, where with emigrés of other nationalities he made plans for the overthrow of Hapsburg rule. In 1861 he went to live in Italy. From 1865 on—with brief interruptions—he lived in Turin until his death.

KÚT (Képzőművészek Új Társasága—New Society of Artists). A group of artists formed in 1924 with progressive views, in opposition to the official art policy of the time. It was close to the post-impressionist, cubist and expressionist trends in French painting. Among its members were: József Rippl-Rónai, János Vaszary, Ödön Márffy, Béla Czóbel, József Egry, Károly Kernstok, Aurél Bernáth, István Szőnyi, Ferenc Medgyessy and Pál Pátzay.

MAJÁLIS ("Picnic in May"). The foremost work of Pál Szinyei Merse (1845—1920) and one of the finest works of 19th century Hungarian painting.

PAÁL, LÁSZLÓ (1846—1879). One of the foremost Hungarian landscape painters. Painted realist pictures of forest depths, houses on the edge of the forest, the puszta landscape, under the influence of the teachings of the Barbizon masters.

PROVISIONAL NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. The legislative assembly which convened in Debrecen on December 21, 1944. After the liberation of the Eastern part of the country by the Soviet Army the people's meetings convened by the National Committees of the liberated towns and large villages elected the 230 members of the Provisional National Assembly. This legislative body elected the provisional government and enacted a number of important laws, among them the land-reform law which did away with the system of large-landed estates that comprised half the country's arable land. Under the land reform about 4.5 million acres of land were distributed among 642,000 peasant families.

RIPPL-RÓNAI, JÓZSEF (1861—1927). Eminent painter of the turn of the century, the only significant Hungarian representative of style trends linked with the *art nouveau*. Studied in Munich, then in Paris, where he later worked as a member of the *Nabis* group. In Hungary, he depicted the typical petty bourgeois figures of the Transdanubian small towns, the customs and life of their families and friends.

ROMAN SCHOOL. A group of Hungarian artists who studied in the Collegium Hungaricum in Rome between the two world wars and undertook monumental tasks under the influence of Italian neo-classicism. Among the group were Vilmos Aba Novák, Jenő Medveczky, Béla Kontuly and Pál C. Molnár.

"SECOND SHIFT". The term popularly applied to the household tasks—cooking, cleaning and looking after the children—that women working in factories, offices and in agriculture have to perform after going home from work. Although society is extending help to make the burden of the "second shift" lighter (by household machines, pre-cooked meals, the delivery of low-priced restaurant dinners to the home, *etc.*) this problem is still regarded as unsolved. In many families the bulk of the household tasks are left to the grandmothers.

SOCIALIST TOWN. The industrial-cultural centres like Kazincbarcika, Dunaújváros, *etc.*, established since the country's liberation. Some of them were built *ab ovo*, others grew into industrial cities from little villages and insignificant towns. (See The New Hungarian Quarterly Vol. II, N°. 2, "The Adolescence of a Town, by Iván Boldizsár.)

SZÉKELY, BERTALAN (1835—1910). Noted painter, who in the years of Hapsburg oppression placed his art at the service of revolutionary ideas and against Austrian tyranny.

SZEMERE, BERTALAN (1812—1869). One of the most important figures in the 19th century Hungarian reform movement, and together with Lajos Kossuth one of the leading representatives of the radical group of nobles. In 1848 he was Minister of the Interior, in 1849 he became Prime Minister. After the defeat of the independence struggle he carried on his activities in England and France in support of the Hungarian cause.

SZINYEI SOCIETY. A group of painters named after Pál Szinyei Merse (1845—1920), a significant exponent of impressionism, of *plein-air* painting in the first half of this century. Its members were left-wing bourgeois painters, supporters of a style of painting that was true to nature.

SZOLNOK ARTISTS' COLONY. Formed in the latter half of the 19th century, the colony attracted many Hungarian and Austrian painters. Among its founders was Adolf Fényes (1867—1945), the great exponent of critical realism.

TELEKI, JÓZSEF (1790—1855). Historian, first president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences founded in 1825.

VAJDA, LAJOS (1909—1941). Painter of the "European School" formed by the young people of avantgarde spirit. Produced surrealist compositions.

WESSELÉNYI, MIKLÓS (1796—1850). Outstanding figure among the liberal opposition of nobles who demanded civil reforms. At the time of the terrible flood in 1838 caused by ice on the Danube he saved the lives of many residents in Buda and Pest.

"ZSERBÓ" (GERBEAUD). A well-known Budapest confectionary shop at Vörösmarty Square in the heart of the town. Between the two world wars it was a so called *chic* meeting place. It is very popular today under the name of Vörösmarty Confectionery.

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