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The New Hungarian Quarterly

VOLUME XXI * No. 80

WINTER 1980

FROM THE PRESS

ECONOMIC LIFE

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ARTS

MUSICAL LIFE

THEATRE AND FILM

This issue went to press on August 1, 1980

OPEN DOOR

When we started to work on *NHQ 80*, bearing in mind that a round number would once again appear on the cover, we tried to think of something special but soon abandoned the idea. Fifteen months ago *NHQ 75* amply satisfied all desires to look back, there was no need for further self-celebration. All we did was to divide eighty by four. The result is twenty years of publication, plus of course another three months since, as old readers and those who have used the Index we published last year know, there were two first numbers. I shall not dwelve deeper, how could I make the time to look through the old volumes on the shelf?

But I did all the same, for a sad reason. C. P. Snow has died, the first and chief English supporter of this paper, and a personal friend. Thinking of him I looked at some of the early issues, the second in which he discussed the "un-neutrality" of science, and the seventh in which I wrote of our first meeting in London. I took my leave of him in *Élet és Irodalom*, the literary weekly and have done so in this issue as well, using the Hungarian text as a basis.

Having thus abandoned the idea of a common theme, nevertheless, now rereading the typescript the day before going to press, I notice that, without any special plan or intention, every one of the articles bears evidence that Hungarian political, economic and cultural life keep an open door towards the world. As chance has it, I am writing on July 30th, the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act. These five years are discussed by Frigyes Puja, the Foreign Minister, in "From Helsinki to Madrid." He surveys the achievements and difficulties of the period, pointing out the reasons why international relations ground to a standstill, and then goes on to expound the basic thesis of Hungarian foreign policy—I think I can safely add: of Hungarian policy as a whole—that there is no alternative

to détente. This is what other articles in this issue argue as well, naturally in a more indirect way.

An article on a Conference of American Studies held in Budapest, and some of the papers there given refer more directly to the links between Hungary and international intellectual life. There is no need to draw special notice to something that will not have escaped the attention of readers anyway: it was precisely in the spring of 1980, at a time when attempts were afoot to revive the Cold War, that specialists in American studies assembled in the capital of a socialist country joining their efforts in the study of questions which range far beyond the limits of scholarship. A few months later no fewer than six thousand attended the International Congress of Physiological Sciences in Budapest. Articles on it are planned for our next issue.

György Kepes's "Dignified simplicity" takes us to an altogether different area. The piece, written in a witty and personal manner worthy of the scholar-artist, examines the place of Hungarian folk art in social progress, and in furthering understanding between the nations, approaching the subject from the angle of aesthetics.

A few words on two historical subjects with international aspects. Everyone in Hungary knows, though the world at large is less aware of the fact, that, early in the Second World War, after the Nazi *Blitzkrieg* swept through Poland, Hungary provided a refuge for more than a hundred thousand Poles, soldiers and civilians, offering shelter and sustenance, providing jobs and educational facilities. The facts and circumstances and the motives of those involved were discussed in the press and at scholarly meetings. Two of the papers, one by a Polish and one by a Hungarian historian, are here given. István Bart's review of a book on Kossuth by István Deák, who teaches at Columbia University, New York, complements and further develops the ideas which Nicholas Halász and his son Robert presented in *NHQ* 79 under the heading "Washington and Kossuth." Taking note of what is current on the international intellectual scene, and interpreting it, is also typical of the openness of Hungarian culture. Péter Nagy's writing on John Irving's book: "The world of Garp according to a Hungarian reader," exemplifies this spirit.

The international and cultural material in *NHQ* 80 is as it were linked by two articles on the recent Hungarian avante garde exhibition in London, one by Júlia Szabó, who organized it, the other by Paul Overy, a London art critic. In this, as in the previous number, Attila József, who would have been seventy-five this year, is the primary focus of the articles on cultural subjects. We publish his brief and moving "Curriculum Vitae," which he wrote not long before he took his own life. It is annotated, so to speak,

by György Tverdota, who fills in many of the gaps. László Lator asks whether Attila József can be translated. The question is rhetorical, as this journal alone has published many Attila József poems in English, a number being included in the current issue.

It gives me particular pleasure that three of the grand old men still active on the Hungarian cultural scene figure in the present issue. We print a section of Illyés's most recent prose work and major articles on Kadosa and Korniss. Gyula Illyés owes his international reputation mainly to his verse though he is of equal importance as a writer of prose. His *People of the Puszta* (1934), largely inspired by his own life, has been translated into many other languages. Fictionalized autobiography offers a counterpoint to most of his life. *Koratavasz* (Early Spring), tells of the immediate post-Great War period, *Hunok Párizsban* (Huns in Paris, 1946) is the story of his first, and *Franciaországi változások* (Changes in France, 1947) of his second sojourn in France. In his most recent work *Beatrice apródjai* (Beatrice's Pages) he returns to his early manhood, to the Hungary of the twenties and the years of the White terror which followed the Republic of Councils.

János Breuer writes on Pál Kadosa, the composer, pianist and teacher; and Zoltán Nagy on a retrospective exhibition of paintings by Dezső Korniss. István Homolya writes on András Pernye, our good friend, member of the Editorial Board, and regular contributor who took his own life this year. András Pernye's last article for this journal exemplifies the qualities Homolya finds in his work. The grotesque dramatic technique of István Örkény, the playwright who died last year, is discussed by Tamás Koltai.

A third group of articles could well bear the subtitle Hungarian reality. Two long and thorough articles compliment each other, though, let me admit it, they were not commissioned with that idea in mind. One is Pál Romány's article on the tasks that lie ahead and the new questions that face Hungarian agriculture, the other is István Láng's on the connections between the long-term prospects of agriculture and resource endowment. If there is a field in which Hungarian socialist society has achieved something of importance, and results that cannot be doubted then this is the modern socialist—socialist and therefore modern—transformation of agriculture. Pál Romány was, for five years, Minister of Agriculture, and István Láng is Deputy General Secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with special responsibility for the natural sciences. Both these articles are evidence for one of the less well known but increasingly important basic propositions of socialism, that every step climbed raises new demands, and with them, new problems.

THE EDITOR

FROM HELSINKI TO MADRID

by

FRIGYES PUJA

In the first half of the seventies détente clearly and speedily got off the ground. A major shift in the balance of power in favour of socialism and progress, the establishment of military equilibrium and a more realistic estimate of the situation on the part of certain western leading circles placed major obstacles in the way of a revival of cold war policies of the sort the world had known earlier. True enough, the imperialists had not renounced their basic aims, but they were forced to switch to policies more closely adjusted to real events, and to accept the notion of peaceful coexistence with the socialist countries, of a relationship that made negotiations possible. This was the only way in which one could hope to cope with problems that the world had been stuck with since the Second World War which had, for twenty odd years, weighed heavily on international relations.

During that period healthier interstate relations took shape, and the political atmosphere improved. Bilateral relations between socialist and developed capitalist countries were normalized and extended, Soviet-American relations, of outstanding importance, included.

The German question, pregnant with serious dangers for the peace and security of Europe, as long as it remained open, was essentially solved thanks to agreements between the Federal Republic of Germany and a number of socialist countries and the Four Power Agreement on West Berlin.

Improvements in the world situation also favourably influenced relations in Europe. Let me just draw attention to the fact that the American aggression in Vietnam, which had caused so much suffering, came to an end at that time.

The peak of this progress was the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Helsinki in August 1975. The leaders of thirty-three European and two North American states signed the Final Act "moved by the political will to improve and spur their relations in the interests of the

nations, contributing to peace, security, justice and cooperation in Europe and to mutually coming closer to each other and to states elsewhere in the world."

Looked at from the perspective of the five years which have passed, and in the present, more confused international situation, one can nevertheless state that the Conference, and the signing of the Final Act were deeds of historical importance. Ever since the first socialist state came into being, and then when socialism became a world system, the policy *vis à vis* the capitalist countries has always been one of peaceful coexistence, and it continues to be that. It was a magnificent success, due to this policy, that the representatives of the countries of our troubled continent—together with North American leaders—met in full strength, for the first time, jointly setting themselves such noble aims as assuring lasting peace, furthering cooperation, overcoming confrontations deriving from the character of past relations, as well as strengthening mutual understanding and confidence. The growing strength of socialism made it possible that equals should discuss and accept long term plans covering security and cooperation in Europe, contrasting with the Vienna Congress which met more than a hundred and fifty years earlier, at the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars.

János Kádár, who signed the Final Act for Hungary, justifiably stated after the Conference: "There were no victors or vanquished there, only winners. Every nation there represented, gained by the Conference." A programme was passed which morally and politically committed participants to the consolidation of peace in Europe, to the establishment of security and the extension of cooperation. The most favourable compromise feasible at the time came about between countries in Europe with different social systems, one which included an acceptance of the realities of the situation in Europe, and of endeavours to develop mutually advantageous relations. No illusory aims were proclaimed, a programme was offered which every country concerned could call its own, regardless of the there prevailing political or social system.

Prospects were therefore encouraging. Diplomatic and political activity in Europe was revved up following the conference. Important measures were taken as part of bilateral relations between the socialist and the developed capitalist countries to further the implementation of the Final Act. Multilateral negotiations also got moving. Preparations were made for all-European conferences on environmental protection, energy supplies and transport, as suggested by the Soviet Union, to mention only a few important subjects. Representatives of participating states at the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe met in Belgrade in the autumn of

1977 and exchanged views on the implementation of the Final Act and on the further development of détente and cooperation in Europe. Experts met to discuss the peaceful solution of interstate conflicts, security and co-operation problems connected with the Mediterranean region, as well as cooperation in science.

Everyone was aware at the time of the signing of the Final Act that it would be no easy matter to implement its recommendations or to preserve and further develop what had already been achieved. At bilateral and multilateral talks everyone of the participating countries expressed its intention to carry out the provisions of the Final Act signed at Helsinki, with one or two exceptions among the developed capitalist countries, however, the socialist countries alone took practical steps in this direction.

The activities of certain member countries of NATO or the EEC were contradictory to the duties undertaken, and were aimed at asking the socialist countries only to account for the way they implemented the Final Act while they, giving transparent excuses, evaded carrying out their duties. They interfered in the internal affairs of the socialist countries and once again raised difficulties in the area of East-West economic cooperation, potentiating discrimination.

The American administration went furthest in this respect. They tried to increase tension at the Belgrade meeting. Not long after the signing of the Final Act American ruling circles started to reevaluate their attitude to détente. Their efforts were largely directed towards slowing down the process of détente. It can now be established unequivocally that the change in American policy occurred sometime around 1978 when cooperation was increasingly replaced by elements suggesting confrontation. Recognising the simultaneous success of détente and social progress they wished to link cooperation with the Soviet Union to unacceptable conditions. Certain cold war elements returned to American policy and attempts were made to obtain military superiority and to negotiate once again from a position of strength. The Americans received the enthusiastic support of the Chinese leadership in these endeavours. The hegemonist foreign policy of the latter increasingly coincided with such unhelpful American endeavours.

The socialist countries stressed from the start that there was a need to extend détente to the military field. The known initiatives in the interests of disarmament taken by the Soviet Union have served this aim and will continue to do so. Numerous Soviet-American agreements on the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons were signed in the course of the seventies. For the first time since the Second World War negotiations were started in Vienna in 1973 on the reduction of forces and conventional

weapons in Central Europe. Because of the changes in American foreign policy it took six years to reach agreement on the limitation of strategic offensive weapons, but this agreement, SALT-2, has not been ratified yet by the U. S. Senate. Instead of intensifying disarmament talks the American leadership has essentially frozen all negotiations aimed to produce disarmament. A new wave of rearmament was started and the American defence budget was increased. In 1978 the NATO summit passed an armaments programme the like of which there has never been before.

Leaving out of account the repeated proposal by the socialist countries that every question, or type of weapon, which produces disquiet here or there can, and should be discussed, NATO, in December 1979 reached the most serious decision since the beginning of the process aimed at security and cooperation in Europe. It was decided to site 572 medium range American nuclear weapons of a new type in five countries in Western Europe.

The United States wish to justify their present policy by the events in Afghanistan, more precisely by the Soviet assistance given to Afghanistan. This however, is no more than an excuse, designed to incite hostility against the Soviet Union, and to put pressure on the countries of Western Europe to make sure that they live up, without reservations, in support of American policies. After all the American administration began to elaborate, and implement in practice, its present policy two years ago.

A special role in attaining American aims devolves on the next stage of the security and cooperation in Europe process, that is on the Madrid conference. It seems that certain American circles would like to transform a platform designed to strengthen cooperation into a scene of confrontations, of skirmishes against the socialist countries.

The Belgrade meeting three years ago was already held in a far less favourable atmosphere than the Helsinki Conference. As a result of changed American policies, it was only the steadfastness of the socialist countries and the fact that a number of western countries recognised this, which prevented a failure with the result that a tightening of the scope of cooperation might destroy all those achievements from which these countries as well had benefited for the past decade.

The international situation is more troubled today than it was at the time of the Belgrade meeting, and it gives rise to greater anxiety. Admittedly, after the passing of the first few months of political hysteria the number of those western European leaders waxed once again who clearly recognised the disadvantages of the present political cooling off and that détente might suffer irreparable damage. A relevant sign is that, after a pause, negotiations at summit level have started again in Europe. The voice of progressive

organizations in western Europe once again rings out loud, and the western European working class movement is showing growing determination. The number of western politicians is growing apace who boldly support the continuation of détente and oppose aggressive sabre rattling.

The socialist countries have emphasized throughout that the struggle for the consolidation of peace and security continues to be at the centre of their activities and they wish to develop relations with the capitalist countries. They systematically oppose attacks against détente and desire to strengthen the process of security and cooperation in Europe. It suffices to mention that every Warsaw Treaty conference displayed sobriety and a readiness to initiate. Since 1978 proposals were made particularly in the military field which, if they were implemented, would consolidate what has been achieved by détente.

The foreign ministers of the Warsaw Treaty, at their 1979 Budapest meeting, suggested the convening of an all-European conference on military détente and disarmament. The proposal was further developed at the 1979 Berlin meeting, with proper regard to other European proposals related to disarmament. The May 1980 Warsaw conference of the Consultative body of the Warsaw Treaty worked out and passed a comprehensive programme designed to serve the defense and further development of détente.

The programme accepted in Warsaw, in keeping with its importance, also deals with the next stage of the process of security and cooperation in Europe, that is with the Madrid meeting. The member states of the Warsaw Treaty have made it clear that the Madrid meeting will be able to carry out its function if participating countries go there with the political conviction that, whatever their opinion on certain elements of détente might be, everyone is equally interested in the continuation of the process. The purpose of the meeting is the reactivation of the East-West dialogue, that alone can contribute to improving the international situation and to strengthening the process of détente. The consolidation of what has been achieved so far on the other hand demands that progress be made on military détente and disarmament. One must not allow issues which fall outside the competence of the Madrid meeting to jeopardise the success of the conference, and with it the future of the process of security and cooperation in Europe. Europe stands most to gain from the success of the conference, and its failure would weigh most heavily on the countries of the continent.

The position of the Hungarian government on the most important present international issues, such as détente, or the Helsinki Final Act, is clear. As the recent 12th Party Congress stated: "The peace and security of Europe are of outstanding importance in the way the international

situation shapes. Hungary is therefore directly interested in their being further strengthened. The government of the Hungarian People's Republic is continuously engaged in putting the principles of the Helsinki Final Act into effect, in the realisation of the proposals, and the successful holding of the Madrid Conference. It is ready to contribute actively to the defence of jointly achieved results, and the furthering of relations."

Hungary, basing itself on the resolutions of the Party Congress, is determined to work for the implementation of the Warsaw Peace Initiatives of the socialist countries. Everyone is aware that the complete implementation of the Helsinki Final Act takes time. There is no reason to doubt, however, that, given good will all round, progress can be made even in the present difficult situation. In Madrid one will have to concentrate on questions where the common interest of all the countries in Europe is in evidence, issues which are most likely to influence the future of Europe in a favourable way. For that very reason it is our opinion that a decision will have to be made in Madrid on a mandate for a European conference on military détente and disarmament. It would favourably influence the success of the meeting if a decision on the convening of such a conference could be reached in Madrid, and that would certainly also improve the atmosphere of other conferences where disarmament matters are discussed. Given the highly troubled present international situation, this would be the greatest possible contribution to the defense of the achievements of détente. In my opinion a number of questions—for instance a number of proposals concerning measures likely to improve mutual confidence—are ripe enough for agreement to be reached.

Hungary is also extraordinarily interested in a possible contribution by the conference to the realization of economic relations free of discrimination, as well as to issues that can count on shared interests, such as energy, and transport and communications in Europe, so that all-European meetings similar to the Environment Protection Conference can be arranged as soon as possible.

Keeping in mind mutual interests and the Helsinki principles there are also prospects for progress in the areas of culture, education, the arts and human relations. What is of the essence is that there should be concentration on problems where progress can be achieved. This would create the right conditions for a sober discussion, free of recriminations, of other questions to which the approach is still difficult at this moment in time.

There is some hope that the success of the Madrid meeting will be furthered by the way the international situation is shaping. The opposition in developed capitalist countries to the military designs of extremist Ameri-

can circles are an encouraging sign. Talks between Leonid Brezhnev and Giscard d'Estaing, the President of France, as well as Helmut Schmidt, the German Federal Chancellor, prove that the fate of the world is not a matter of indifference to developed capitalist countries in Europe. There are numerous signs that bringing back the Cold War in a new guise is an illusory enterprise these days. In any event, the socialist countries, Hungary amongst them, will do all in their power to prevent a turn for the worse in international relations, to further the consolidation of peace and security and to lend a new impetus to the process of détente. Madrid may well be a milestone along this road.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

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József Bognár

DIGNIFIED SIMPLICITY

by

GYÖRGY KEPES

These notes are not written by a trained ethnographer or anthropologist but by a Hungarian painter, who, having lived most of his adult life in different parts of the world, removed from his native country, has never lost his love for Hungarian folk art. I owe very much to the inspiring vitality of these humble objects made by the peasants of Hungary.

I am not the only artist, of course, who owes a debt to folk art. It is now well-known history that the rediscovery of this pure source has played a germinal role in the transformations of twentieth-century art. Seeking honest, contemporary artistic forms, some of our most consistently revolutionary artists tapped the root sources of folk art, using time-tested forms to liberate their own creative powers. In their search for authentic expression, modern artists discovered the strength of the simple, familiar objects and learned to respect the rhythmic, melodic richness and chromatic freedom of peasant artifacts. Important were the imaginative combinatory variations of peasant embroideries; and above all, the dignified simplicity of village architecture.

The search for roots and the need to replenish the waning strength and fading honesty of western culture was not limited to a response to folk art. Elementary and straightforward images made by unspoiled spirits from all parts of the world were likewise seminal. The *Almanac of the Blaue Reiter*, a landmark publication by Kandinsky and Franz Marc, reproduced Bavarian and Russian mirror paintings, votive objects, Peruvian fabrics, and North American Indian carvings. The French Nabis collected the popular woodcuts of Epinal. And in the background there was always Gauguin, who tried frantically to reinforce his jaded confidence with the honest vision of a South Sea islander. Finally, the Cubists, searching for coherent forms in an ever more complex world, reached back to African tribal carvings for

guidance. The absolute clarity of these native sculptures were the first steps on the road towards a pictorial space which became a basic ingredient of this century's plastic art.

In the late twenties, a few friends, young Hungarian painters, writers, or poets, sensing the spirit of the age and inspired by the examples of the two great figures of indigenous music, Bartók and Kodály, went from village to village, collecting peasant embroideries and pottery and looked with awe on the symbolic power of old wooden grave-posts in village cemeteries. The sensuous richness of these objects not only delighted us but revealed by contrast what we lacked in our own lives: an interconnected sense, the community of man and object. We recognized that the objects we admired had more than an aesthetic message; we felt with Franz Marc that "renewal should not be simply formal, but a rebirth of feeling." We also agreed with Kandinsky when he complained about "the total loss of a mutual relationship between art and human society."

A note Béla Bartók made at the end of his life while living in America expressed our own longing for a central core of values: "The time I devoted to the collection of folk-songs has been the finest part of my life, which I would not have missed for anything. The finest, in the noble sense of the word, for I was permitted to witness the artistic manifestation of a still homogeneous but evidently vanishing social order. Beautiful to the ears, delightful to the eyes. Here in the West people hardly believe that there are still regions in Europe where practically all utensils, from clothes to tools, are made at home; where one simply does not run across manufactured stereotyped trash; where the shape and style of objects varies from area to area, often from village to village..."

To avoid misreading Bartók's words and the meaning of my own notes, it should be emphasized that our desire was not to shrink the world nor to limit horizons. A mere sentimental return to optimum moments of the past would obviously fail to function in contemporary terms. It is not just nostalgia we were looking for. We cannot renounce the dimensions of the twentieth century and the new perspectives that science has created simply because adjustment to these experiences has not been achieved without distress. We may suffer from exposure to a new scale, but it is obligatory to meet it. Only authentic grasp of the world that is developing can make our lives genuinely acceptable. The strong response of modern artists to folk art did not force them to deny a commitment to their own century. On the contrary, their respect for folk art was a declaration of faith in the necessity and possibility of finding such richness in terms of the complex, urban, industrial civilization. The purer the patterns in these objects, the more

obvious the need to transmit this wealth into the life of our own time. For an honest life today, a continuity with the past is as much a necessity as is a projected image of the future. Without sensing the jubilant, glowing, climatic richness of a truly lived life, expressed in the rhythmic, melodic and tectonic, simple forms of folk art, one can hardly expect to find a guide in rebuilding our shaky but powerful twentieth-century existence. On the other hand, without having a strongly sensed pattern of the future, the old values could become inhibiting, seductive bait, anachronisms of the past.

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We began to see that a healthier future, a more complete life could not be reached by blind hero worship of the power of our technological world. For such an anachronism of the future is as much a trap as is the anachronism of the past. In this context, the values of folk-art objects, as we young artists felt so strongly fifty years ago, lie not in warmth and decorative wealth but in their deeper message as symbolic forms of the completeness of life. No doubt, they often have been made under the social difficulties of poverty and humuliation; nevertheless, their maker's joy expressed their unshakable faith in life.

What I personally admire above all in these humble objects is not the workmanship but the belongingness in a coherent interdependent unity. Each object is related to a community of objects, where every piece had a friend in colour, shape, tactile feeling, position, space and, above all, in its social, human role. Rarely identified by name, place, or date, these works like nature were anonymous. Nature's workshop is an ecological community where each form and pattern is produced through the interaction of the whole community. Forms shape forms, events generate events, mutually defining each other's contours, path, rhythm, and fate. To find the way to a happier life, man must accept and understand his own ecological laws. For his abilities are shaped to a great extent by his knowledge of the total community. The shape, size, strength, and life-span of a tree depend upon many factors: the genetic character of the seed; the fertility of the ground; rain and sunshine; shadows cast by fellow trees; and sundry other features of the ecological fabric. We recognized how crucial this ecological interdependence was and how much it was lacking in our own work conditions. We felt isolated, torn away from life's base. We scarcely knew why we were doing what we were doing; we missed links with the past, with our own environment and, above all, with the purpose of our activities as part of the entire community.

There were certain obvious reasons. Living in cities, we existed in sensory deprivation. The industrial world, as is only too well known, developed without regard to human needs. Our technical, scientific wonders have not provided us with wider vision, but instead evolving without plan, have jumbled the technological wealth into a dazzling kaleidoscopic pattern which at once shocks and numbs our sensibilities.

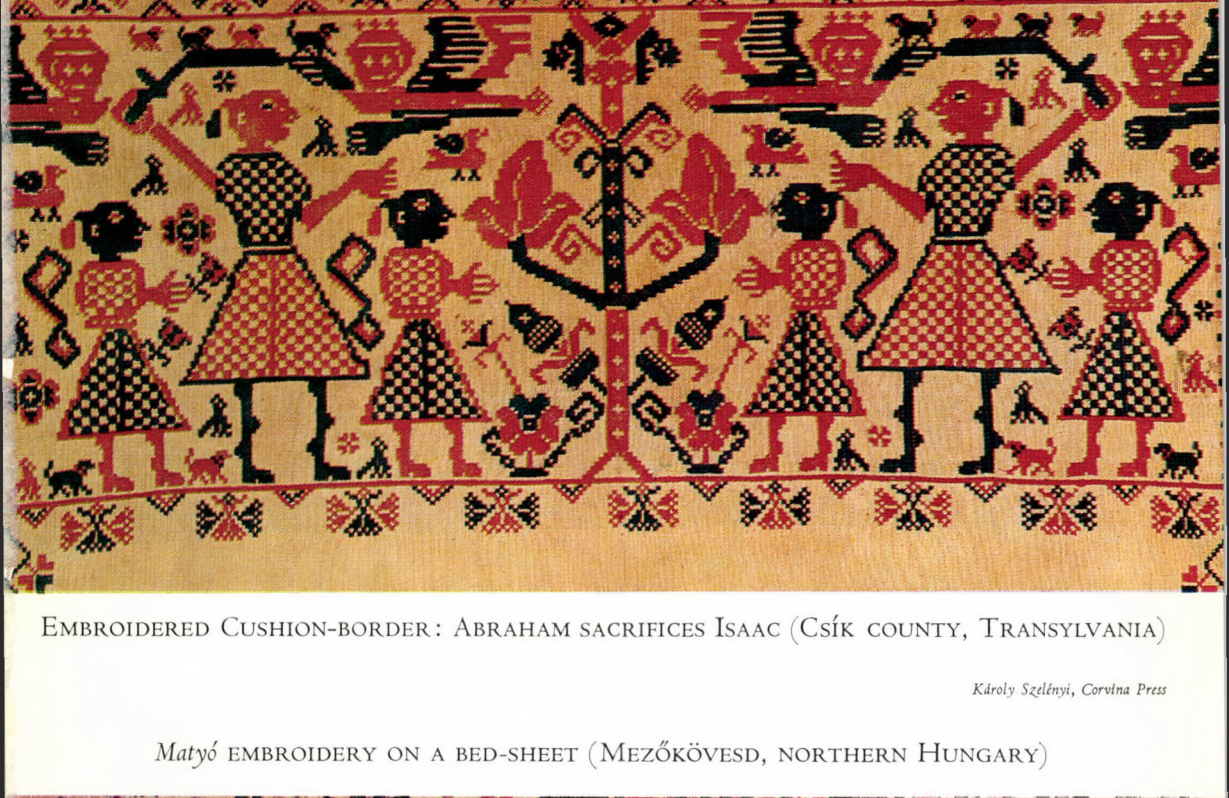
Though we were aware of the odds that the Hungarian peasants faced—their poverty and the consequent distortions of their self-confidence and humaneness—still we could not help but envy a certain, happy oneness they enjoyed with their surroundings, something that was evident in their words, in their faces, and in their way of going about their daily work.

In our lives there are dim, half-buried, collective memories of a oneness that we yearn to recapture often without any expectation of doing so successfully. In addition to this unobtainable and almost forgotten happy land, we have more easily revived individual memories of oneness with our human and natural surroundings. There are moments in which single feelings take over and we seem to dissolve into the world around us. Children who are allowed to be children sometimes reach such complete involvement. So do communities that have, by good fortune, a sense of connectedness among their members as well as with the world around them.

Inevitably, most of us lose the capacity that children and happy communities retain. Present adult civilized life is systematically cut up, scheduled and parcelled out. We live by timetables and maps. We can recount a year, a day, and an hour in which something happened and place it in the right house, street, and country, but we forget the individual flavouring and colour. The capacity for sensing our belongingness which gives life justification is drained out of most of us. William Morris, who sensed the difference between life as it is and life as it could be, demanded that joy in labour be birthright of labour: the joy in making things, in sensing the metamorphosis of dead matter into living, useful, man-made forms.

*

Gyula Illyés, the great contemporary writer-poet of Hungary, recalling his own childhood remembered how some shepherds, once their flocks had been set to graze, sat down and took out their jack-knives. Within a few hours they had carved from wood and bone veritable small masterpieces. He also recalls another scene from his early life in the country. He saw a slow-moving ox-cart with the hired hand balanced on the front of the cart

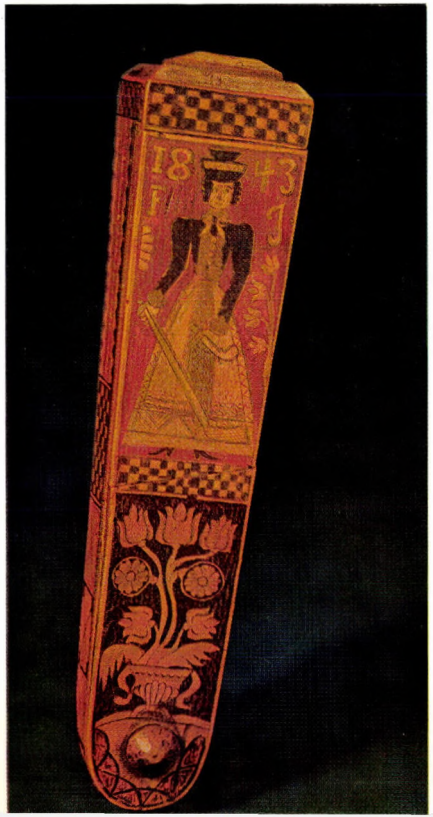


EMBROIDERED CUSHION-BORDER: ABRAHAM SACRIFICES ISAAC (CSÍK COUNTY, TRANSYLVANIA)

Károly Szelényi, Corvina Press

Matyó EMBROIDERY ON A BED-SHEET (MEZŐKÖVESD, NORTHERN HUNGARY)

Carved razor-box showing highwayman with gun (county Zala)

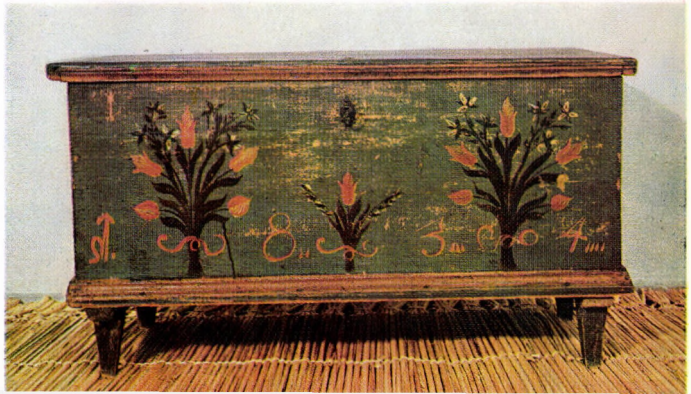


Károly Szelényi, Corvina Press

Painted salt-box (Kalotaszeg, Transylvania)

Carved chair-back from Transdanubia, 1837

Fratelli Fabri, Courtesy Corvina Press



Painted peasant chest (county Baranya)

Carved lid of a "peasant beauty box" with mermaid. (county Somogy)

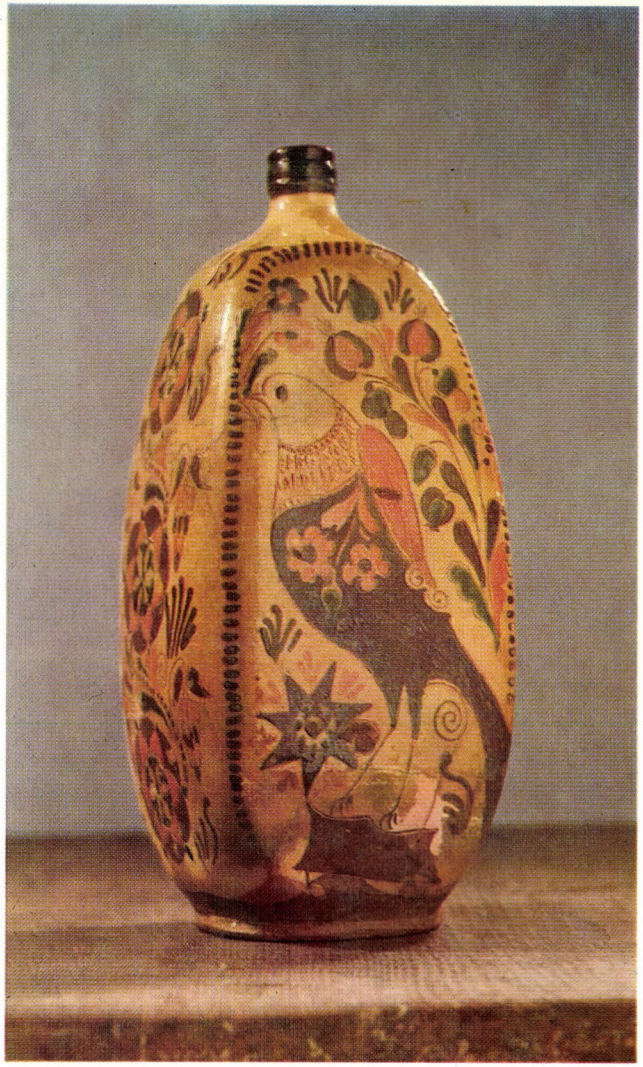
Earthenware plate with bird design (work of Mihály Rajczy, county Borsod)

Károly Szelényi, Corvina Press

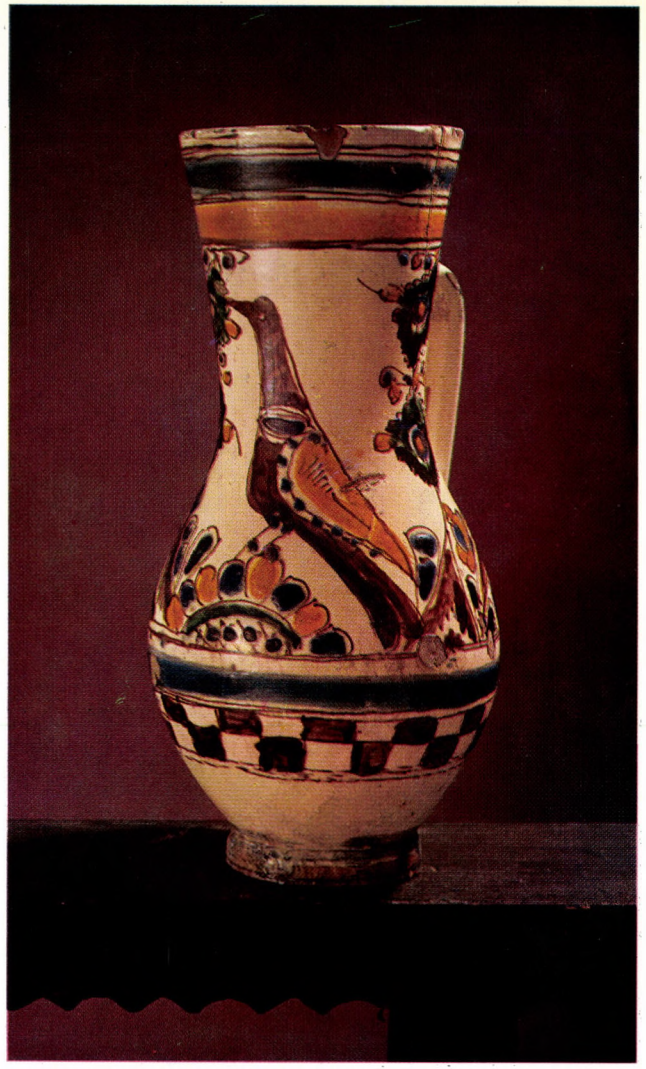
Carved box-top showing merry couple with violonist (county Somogy)

Károly Szelényi, Corvina Press

Book-shaped earthenware flasks (Hódmező-vásárhely manner)



PRISMATIC FLASK
THE WORK OF MIHÁLY RAJCZY (COUNTY BORSOD)



GLAZED *Székely* EARTHENWARE JUG WITH BIRD DESIGN (TRANSYLVANIA)

Károly Szelényi, Corvina Press

shaft, just beyond the heads of the oxen, and this man was carving with complete concentration rich and intricate ornaments on the yoke. They were not artists with a capital A, working in a studio making objects for the art market, but men who did what they did from inner necessity. Their studios were where their work was—in the fields, on the roads, under the open sky. We envied them because they were not frantically asserting themselves in a competitive art scene. They were free to be themselves. Their work, whatever they did, belonged to the meaning of their lives.

But art, as is practised today in our unresolved, complex society, is separate—a separation that causes severe deprivations. It isolated the artist, making him a displaced person in his own society, depriving him of the needed strength that comes from a sense of belonging. At the same time society, cut off from the enriching sources of artistic experience, is drained of the self-confidence that comes from a fully lived life.

This dual impoverishment of our daily lives has gone unchecked but not unnoticed. Over a hundred years ago, John Ruskin complained: "It is the vainest of affectations to try to put beauty into shadows, while all real things that cast them are left in deformity and pain." All that has been gradually lost from our daily existence—the common celebration of the changing seasons, the pleasure in making things, the expression of intimate moments and above all the collective rituals punctuating the essential interfaces of life: birth, maturing, marriage, and death—we only find in isolated works of art.

There have been pejorative ways of interpreting the present interest in folk art. Sometimes it is defined as a sub-species of a "primitivist cult" or "exotic excursions of the jaded sophisticated." We should know better. These simpler cultures which at times we call primitive, and that may be true, have a limited range of expression and technique but they have nonetheless an emotionally intense core of knowledge that makes life, or could make life, fulfulling.

Marcel Duchamp, the Socratic figure of twentieth-century art, made it clear that a man-made object is not only meaningful as a useful, physical form but as a genetic coding of life patterns. They are models of vision increasing the range of life experiences. The humble objects of Hungarian folk arts are models of vision in the Duchamp sense. For me, they are like wild flowers, birds, clouds, cleansing and refreshing my spirit in this exciting, explosive world. Among the electronic computers, hovering satellites, television receivers, electric bulbs, mad city traffic, slums, and violence, these objects help me to find poetry where poetry is not easy to find.

NEW QUESTIONS FACING HUNGARIAN AGRICULTURE

by

PÁL ROMÁNY

In retrospect the nineteen seventies seem to have opened a new age in the economic history of Hungary, so dramatic was the pace of change throughout the decade. As development prospects are reviewed at the opening of the nineteen eighties one of the pressing questions that cannot be ignored concerns agriculture: to what extent can earlier strategies be continued and to what extent are changed conditions demanding fresh approaches?

In every decade it has become by now a traditional feature of Hungarian economic development to work out two medium-term complex developmental plans. The first of these for the nineteen eighties (and the sixth overall) is now taking shape on the computers. Its main goal, as in the past, remains to go on raising the level of domestic consumption and to increase the level of domestic consumption and to increase the volume of profitable exports, but it is plain that narrower objectives vary from one period to the next and long-established goals may have to be given a new stress according to the imperatives of the conjucture. The outlook at present is that the growth in domestic consumption will be slower than it has been hitherto. Although data describing all the detailed branches of the economy have not yet been finalised, a moderate growth in total consumption compared with the present year can be reckoned with by 1985. Apart from the continual need to step up the level of exports, the perspective on the world market is one of tough competition, both as regards prices and as regards quality, and the country has to prepare itself well for this fray.

Squaring up to the facts realistically, it has to be admitted that the means and instruments to reach the declared objectives are not available in every case, or at any rate they are in shorter supply than five or ten years ago and this unfavourable situation seems likely to persist in the short term. If development is to continue there is hence a need for improved organization,

new ideas, thorough exploitation of reserves, swifter responses and more efficient working in both agriculture and industry. Higher levels have to be attained with lower stocks and reserves, and the targets themselves are no longer so striking as they were in the years gone by. It is important, however, not to lose sight of them; and in my own opinion the nation is going the right way about attaining them.

The natural endowment

Hungary's geographical endowment is relatively favourable. The agricultural surface (including arable land, meadow, pasture, and gardens) amounts to more than 70 per cent of the territory of the country, which is the highest ratio anywhere in Europe. Partly as a function of the size of the agricultural surface one finds that the ratio of population to agricultural land is relatively low (151 persons to 100 hectares of land), though far from being the lowest on the continent. Given the size of the population it is fair to say that potential cropland is available in abundance—a basic aspect of the geographical endowment which may be better exploited and needs to be better conserved in the future.

For example it has been calculated that Hungary's relative climatic productivity* exceeds that of Poland (lying 3–400 kilometres north beyond the Carpathians) by some 32 per cent and that of neighbouring Rumania by 10 per cent. It is inferior to the Bulgarian index (influenced by coastal location) by only about 5 per cent. It is also widely known that Hungary's climate is not particularly stable, and in fact it is realistic for agricultural production to reckon with three poor years in every decade. Even so Hungary remains the "sunny corner" of Central Europe, where a happy conjunction of various climatic factors goes to produce enzyme marvels such as the bouquet of Tokay wine (yet to be accounted for by any adequate scientific explanation) or the flavour of the traditional Hungarian spices. The misfortune which accompanies years when weather conditions are unfavourable can be mitigated by the appropriate production technologies and improvement schemes on the land; however, the pursuit of higher yields tends to increase the risk factor. The reason for this is that the most up-to-date strains and species of plant are generally the most sensitive as well. If all the parameters combine favourably then they will make for an excellent crop, but if any factor is lacking, be it rain, sunshine, heat or any other

* Calculated according to the effects of climatic factors on the quantity of output of annuals on arable land according to averages computed over many years.

factor, then production will show a more serious shortfall than is experinced with the old, traditional strains. There is therefore a need to plan to improve technical capacity in the field of crop production, such that the deficiencies caused by climatic vagaries (a wet harvest, an early autumn etc.) can be effectively combatted.

The "reserves" mentioned above are to be sought primarily on the agricultural land itself. Consistent observation of the present conservation laws will enable the decline in the area under cultivation to be kept to "only" about 90 thousand hectares over the next five years. This would represent only 40 per cent of the decline which took place over the last five year period, but it is still substantial, expecially if one bears in mind that about half of the cropland of this country has already been damaged in one way or another. A number of tasks must therefore be urgently tackled.

First of all it is necessary to take special steps to assure the conservation of lands where the quality of the soil and other ecological factors are particularly favourable. Secondly, where the land is susceptible to improvement via amelioration schemes active intervention is called for. And thirdly, on lands of approximately average quality, in addition to possible amelioration greater attention should be paid towards preserving the productivity of the soil. The chemical war that has been waged against agricultural land has had as its concomitant a serious neglect of organic manuring.

It has to be recognized in numerous agricultural regions that have been subjected to undue ecological strains that maintaining the fertility of the soil and making the most of available supplies of water demand to be treated together as complementary aspects of a complex programme. Even today, despite the high levels of production which have been achieved, over the greater part of the territory that is at all suited to agricultural production water remains a constraining factor. Further amelioration schemes and hydrotechnical improvements will, however, make it possible to improve the storage of water such that an increase in grain production in the order of 50 per cent over the next 15–20 years will not increase the risk factor to anything like the same degree. In view of the vast expenditure involved the question is one of economy as well as ecology, but the present proportion of the cereals area to which irrigation has been extended is clearly much too low.

Breakdown of the total area into smaller regions and the promotion of regional specialization can also help to bring about a more efficient utilization of the nation's reserves. This means that in every micro-region plant production should be geared to the local climate, soil types and the structure of local industry, with a view to minimizing costs and maximizing output.

Adaptation at the regional level is a problem that is making itself felt more or less conspicuously all over Europe. It has been calculated that if one could suddenly bring about a situation overnight whereby precisely the ideal cultures were produced in every micro-region (ideal from the point of view of the possibilities of the land, sunshine and temperature and other climatic conditions), then this alone would be sufficient to increase total agricultural production by some 20 per cent. To reach this enviable position, however, a good deal of planning and regulation has to be accomplished; the task of harmonizing local and national interests is itself not always an easy one, nor is it any simple matter to make the necessary adaptations to the agrarian infrastructure (processing and storage capacity) already in existence.

The livestock profile of the country is another central, structural problem which, although not directly bound up with questions of land use, is likewise to be resolved through improved adaptation to the national endowment. Obviously this will influence the evolution of the sowing plan and the extent to which the country imports intensive feeds and fodder. At the same time the country possesses some 700,000 hectares of meadow and pasture which cannot at present be converted to large-scale methods of production because the farms lack the material resources necessary to ameliorate and restore the land in question. Nor are farms in a position to invest in modern harvesting machines and ensure that the basic fodder demands of the country's cattle and sheep be met more cheaply than today and with fodder of a higher quality.

Unevenness in the level of production

As in almost every other country of Europe, in Hungary too considerable differences have emerged between various farm types in respect of production, income and the general level at which the farms operate. The indicators of yield, cost and profit in certain branches of production and for certain specific products vary significantly from one farm to another, and in many cases they vary within the same economic unit. Deviations apparent in the level of production may be partially explained by differences in the ecological conditions and divergence from the norm as regards material resources and technical capacity, but these factors can not always account for all the discrepancies. Observed differentiation between agricultural enterprises, both as regards production and profitability, also depends significantly on human factors, organizational efficiency within the enterprise and other factors besides.

Given the great economic variation which exists the question which inevitably arises is whether this differentiation, which for some groups of enterprise and cooperative is actually increasing all the time, represents a constraint or a potential source of reserves as far as further growth and total production nationwide are concerned. Up to what point does differentiation spark a positive, growth impetus and when does it begin to clamp on the brake? Is efficiency to be improved and output increased primarily through raising production standards where they are presently lowest or rather through continuing to support the strong, those which have already delevoped to reach a high level? The broad outlines of agricultural policy indicate where the ultimate solutions lie, but there is as yet no agreement on the concrete answers to these questions; no integral strategy to raise production has so far won universal backing, and two contradictory arguments continue to make themselves heard.

According to one camp the principal channel through which to raise production and efficieny in the future is that composed of well organized producers' cooperatives and state farms already functioning with a high degree of success.* Opponents of this view hold that efficiency and growth can best be stepped up through exploiting reserves and raising the level of production hitherto attained by the less successful farms. It is preferable and cheaper, so the argument goes, to work on bringing unfavourable indicators up to standard than it is to attempt to make further progress from an already advanced level. With new plans now taking shape and the costs involved very substantial indeed, these are the burning questions of the day.

The agricultural enterprises best placed for speedy and efficient growth are those already farming profitably at a relatively advanced level. On the one hand one must note that both this level and the growth potential which it makes possible are determined by the economic resources concentrated in the enterprise, by investments in the means of production carried through in earlier periods, by supplies of labour and, last but not least, by the natural environment of the farm. It is worth reflecting on the fact that in 1979 some 70 per cent of the funds set aside by cooperatives from their profits for the purposes of further development** were controlled by only 20 per cent

* The great majority of peasants in Hungary participated in the formation of producers' cooperatives, though a small percentage has continued to farm individually. State farms came into existence primarily on the large estates formerly in private ownership, as a result of the Land Reform of 1945. In Hungary neither the cooperative nor the state farm is an entirely new form (the oldest state farm dates back two hundred years), but neither was very common in the past, while the content, of course, differed tremendously.

** Hungarian enterprises allocate a proportion of their profits in accordance with their own wishes (within certain tax constraints) for developmental purposes. This is known as the development fund. The remainder (after all expenses have been covered) goes to form a "distribution fund."

of the producers' cooperatives (300 farms to be exact). On the other hand it cannot be denied that all the indicators of efficiency and profitabliity are more favourable in the farms operating at an advanced level of production. The economic development taking place in farms which are efficiently run and are fortunate in their natural environment also has a certain positive effect in the promotion of efficient resoure utilization throughout the economy. Finally it should be pointed out that some favourably endowed enterprises are unable to exploit all the opportunities open to them at present, either because they are insufficiently equipped with materials or because they are diverting some of their energies to less profitable branches of production. Hence in addition to the strenuous efforts of the enterprise itself there is also a need for governmental intervention to ensure that its advantageous resources (both ecological and economic) are fully harnessed to the benefit of the whole economy; the expenses incurred involve no risk and would be recovered within a relatively short space of time.

Agricultural enterprises at lower levels of production and profitability show only moderate growth at the present time but they do have exploitable reserves. Specific ecological conditions, lower profitability and inferior technical capacity combine to place restraints on growth, but there are also differences in the quality of the organization which *can* be ironed out, and with more efficiency here it will be possible to improve all the specific indicators relating to output. Raising the standards of organization and instilling a greater willingness to make use of all economic opportunities in the less advanced agricultural cooperatives must lead in the future towards changing the pattern of their production and the adaption of methods and techniques to local conditions. It is then up to the unit itself to do everything possible to ensure that production proceeds in harmony with the farm's endowment. The structure of production amongst weaker units, the unfavourably endowed farms*, is very often the same or almost the same as that of farms enjoying advantageous endowments, which would indicate that at present it is not sufficiently adjusted to basic conditions. The same is true of the techniques and methods used in production, where the spread of a more differentiated pattern has been significantly impeded and still is being impeded by inadequacies in the supplies of the means of production. Hence

* In Hungary this phrase has passed from the specialist vocabulary of agricultural economists into the vernacular of public administration. Unfavourably endowed farms include all those where the conditions of farming or the properties of the soil or the situation of the farm itself make for below-average levels of production. The government offers various grants and subsidies to such farms via the tax system and by other means, for it is a matter of both economic and ecological concern that such territories should not be lost to agricultural cultivation altogether.

there is a need for a wider range choice in the techniques applied to the land and the instruments to accompany them.

A successful strategy of agricultural development would be one which does not go all out to ensure that yields approximate to the same level everywhere through legislating for uniform techniques of production but one which approaches the problem from the opposite direction: target yields and output levels should be fixed in accordance with the given environmental and economic data and technology should be the variable which makes the necessary adjustments in every locality.

Without there being any need for significant expenditure on investment it is possible to reduce some of the factors making for losses at the moment simply through improving the organization of the enterprise, its division of labour and its production profile. Even the unfavourably endowed farms can benefit greatly from the introduction of more modern methods. Similar improvements will also result from a refining of the internal mechanism of the enterprise in line with the environment in which it has to function. The importance of bringing this mechanism up to date needs to be stressed for all enterprises, even though the majority of the detailed tasks will appear in different ways in different types of enterprise simply because the endowments and opportunities themselves vary so much. Other factors relevant to further development and conducive to an increase in efficiency include periodic revision of the organization of management and leadership to ensure that it maintains its enterprise character, increasing the efficiency of the chain of command, strengthening the independence and the material interestedness of units within the enterprise, relying more on incentives as a means of remuneration and bringing wages into closer correspondence with work performed and final output.

Rules and regulations bearing upon taxes and subsidies, loans and interest payments, etc., are the means through which the economic environment imposes its own strict demands upon all types of agricultural enterprise. The latters will be able to withstand the test only by carrying out detailed analyses of their internal conditions and ensuring that the demands they make are fully in unison with their endowment.

It is realistic to suppose that, in spite of the special grants and concessions which have been forthcoming, unfavourably endowed farms which have been functioning at a loss over a long period of time will nonetheless be more severely effected by a tightening of economic controls. Not all agricultural enterprises can be expected to grow in the years to come: some will stagnate, and in others there will be a carefully planned scaling down of production. There will be cases when it will prove inappropriate to recommend to the

enterprise an intensive course of development; but problems may still be tackled in an extensive manner too, and where there is no call for the application of industrial technology preference should be given to seeking improvements in traditional methods and procedures, to refining principles of remuneration and organization which have proved themselves already. The benefits of such policies could be considerable, provided they are correctly implemented.

All the same let us emphasize that there are very few farms even amongst the poorly endowed which are not to be presumed capable of stabilizing their economies in the years ahead (at least at the level of simple reproduction) via a careful exploitation of the reserves and possibilities outlined above. In doing so they would succeed in creating for themselves the basic conditions for expanded reproduction in some later period, and this despite an environment of stricter economic controls.

Cases also arise—and will no doubt continue to arise in the future—when solutions have to be sought through complex economic strategies with ramifications outside the agricultural sector. Development of the infrastructure or the rapid growth of particular branches of industry may naturally lead to far-reaching changes in the agricultural sector and in the context in which specific farms operate.

One thing is certain: the 1980s will call not for heroic zeal, nor for meditation, nor for spectacular turning points; it is time to put all this behind us, in agriculture as in other domains—steady progress is what the country needs, and this can only be achieved through the step by step implementation of consistent policies.

Changes in the labour force

According to the latest data available the decline of the agricultural labour force characteristic of the last three decades—both in abolute numbers and as a percentage of the total labour force—has now come to an end. The number of active earners in agriculture is no longer falling; in fact the latest figures show a modest increase, some 2,000 persons across the nation, insignificant in itself of course, but nonetheless a reversal of the time-honoured trend. There are very good grounds for supposing that the number employed in agriculture will not diverge substantially from this level in the future. The level is characterized by a ratio of 6.8 hectares of agricultural land to each active earner in the sector. Yet the ratio of territory to worker is much higher where agriculture is more advanced and biological transformation

more complete, and hence there remains some scope for further reductions in the labour force. Three reasons, three commonly accepted facts prompt me to mention this source of potential labour reserves (which will certainly be needed as the sector is already having to combat a labour shortage):

1. A younger and better qualified generation has replaced the last peasant generation, those who actually made the technological reform of agriculture a reality and transformed it along socialist lines in very difficult circumstances. Both in school and later in the course of their specialist training these young persons have been brought up with a taste for novelty and innovation rather than with any unconditional respect for the traditions of the land. Therefore what has come about is not simply the replacement of one generation by another but a radical extension of all the skills and knowledge applied by man in his cultivation of the land. At the same time let it be noted that today one no longer inherits the occupation of "peasant" —the truth is that more and more of those employed in agriculture deliberately choose this as their career field.

2. The selective development of regional industrial belts is beginning more and more perceptibly to exert a range of secondary effects over and above the original production targets. These are all bound up with the technical culture of the countryside, and nowadays it is taken for granted that agricultural experts can and do work alongside many other types of technical specialist to the common benefit of all concerned. This does much to increase the development of the village of today in other fields—e.g., in socio-economic and cultural development—and the consequences of all this are too important to be ignored. The fact that there is no longer any significant income differential between agricultural workers and those employed in other branches of the economy also tends to exert such effects.

3. Agricultural produce is also generated by workers employed outside agriculture. A quarter of all meat consumption in Hungary and 45 per cent of fruit and vegetable consumption takes place on the spot by the family responsible for production; the advantages to the families in question are obvious and the aspiration towards some degree of self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs is widely recognized all over the world.

The geographical conditions, the ecological factors bearing upon agriculture, the possibilities open to the enterprises, and the basic production data of the farm must all be weighed up together: they do not merely complement each other, they should presuppose each other. However equilibrium and maximal effectiveness also depends on the aptitude, knowledge and skills with which the labour force sets about its work; it is up to people to ensure that both the agricultural and industrial aspects of every new

situation are carefully scrutinized and adapted to all the other parameters. The correct definition of the tasks, fulfilment of the objectives specified and the efficacy of the methods by which they are achieved all depend upon the calibre of the people taking the decisions. It is vital not to forget that neither the productive endowment nor the human capital involved can become objects of trade and commerce, and the way to get the best out of them is to make sure that the policy instruments at our disposal—both industrial and agricultural—make the necessary adjustments.

It would be wrong not to mention a few of the experiences and problems which have arisen most recently concerning how to influence and control production in the agricultural sector at lower levels. Perhaps the most important of these is the danger that the ever-increasing size of the plant will tend to distance the leadership of the enterprise from the technological processes themselves. Whereas in the past contacts were relatively direct, nowadays there are extreme examples of executives and cooperative chairmen who commute out to work from their residences in cities and county-towns. Of course this type is still far from characteristic; still I feel it is useful to cite and endorse the words of one deputy chairman of a cooperative, a man already honoured by the award of a State Prize*: "Our practice is to see that every agronomist and technician irrespective of his rank is there by the machines when the maize is being sown!" For the blunt truth is that an error at this point cannot be compensated for a whole year to come, no matter what the resources one diverts. This example should be applied to every phase of production in every branch of the food economy of the country, for the technological processes involved are such that all intervention has to be expertly timed; nothing can be postponed, for there are limits to what tampering may achieve with the biological process itself.

Technological Development

Further significant reserves can be gleaned from technology, for there is scarcely a single link of the production chain nor a single phase of processing which does not hold out the promise of further breakthrough to come. It is obvious that planning over the next 5–6 years has to be based on results already proven and verified in the laboratories and goods and equipment which the factories are already beginning to manufacture; in the longer term the still more recent achievements of science, some of which we have no

* One of the highest decorations of the Hungarian State, awarded for outstanding achievements in economic life, science or other fields of endeavour.

inkling of today, will come into the reckoning. As things stand experiments are being conducted with several hundreds of new strains and new techniques each year, the products of on-going research work conducted both inside and outside of Hungary.

The development of hybrids and breeds of shorter growth season which mature earlier than traditional strains will be of immense significance. Not only is it possible to reduce the risks associated with an early Autumn, but through better adaptation to climatic factors considerable savings will result in nutritive materials and more especially in the energy required to dry field crops. If the moisture content of the grain harvested could be reduced by only 1 per cent this would enable some 12–15,000 tons of fuel oil to be saved nationally.

When it comes to the question of how to reduce the energy presently consumed in the course of all the mechanical operations performed on the soil where field-crops are grown, significant savings can result from the application of new, energy-saving technology and ensuring that the stock of additional items of machinery (smaller in scale) is maintained in proportion to the numbers of tractors, combine harvesters and the like. It is perhaps not being wildly optimistic to hope that in the course of the 1980s further strides forward will be taken in the output of agricultural machinery in the framework of international cooperation between the socialist countries; in particular, that it will become possible to manufacture efficient and economical combine harvesters.

It is well known to those with some experience of agricultural problems that one of the main reasons why energy consumption in this sector is so high is the practice of shelling and drying maize before putting it to use as animal fodder. This is the technique followed almost everywhere in Hungary, but whilst it makes sense in an agriculture such as that of the United States (where practically all the corn produced is sold in commodity form) it has no sense at all in a country where most of the maize is consumed on the spot or a short distance away as fodder. Hence it is time to abandon such an expensive anachronism. It is true that in the age of cheap energy it was possible to defend such practices, and that many of the experts who take the practical decisions may well find it difficult to cease implementing a technology which in its time was accepted by everyone as an article of faith. No-one imagined that the future would turn out to be so very different, professional opinions can not adapt to new circumstances overnight, and adaptation is further impeded in the present case by the fact that trading concerns have gone on importing the same old machines. Special congratulations should therefore be extended to those who have nonetheless initiated

new methods, such as the leaders and workers of the production cooperative at Csávoly who pioneered a technique for preserving non-dried maize almost a decade ago, a technique now known throughout the country as the Csávoly method.

Naturally the grain that is destined for export and the production of various kinds of fodder-mix will still have to be dried. If up-to-date dehydration equipment (designed to avoid excessive drying) is installed everywhere then the dehydration of a ton of maize will scarcely require more than some 40 kilogrammes of fuel oil. The 6.8 million tons of fodder-mix produced each year in Hungary have also to be ground, making further significant if not particularly striking demands on energy resources. Techniques which accomplish granulation through the use of certain auxiliary materials and require much less energy are already being put into practice abroad, and hopefully they will also be adopted in Hungary without undue delay.

Compared to the widespread interest which has been generated by methods to improve energy conservation the process by which chemical methods have been introduced into animal breeding has not attracted the attention which it really deserves. Having at last penetrated the sphere of animal breeding it can be fairly said that chemical advances are now being applied in every sphere of agricultural production: given the time it took for pesticides and fertilisers to spread in the sphere of plant production infiltration into stockbreeding has proceeded almost imperceptibly and with remarkable speed. Nowadays many hundreds of chemical and biological products (manufactured industrially) aid the everyday tasks of animal maintenance, minimising losses due to disease, increasing yields, enabling fodder to be stored more efficaciously, and offering still further possibilities for improving efficiency via raising the quality (nutritional value, digestibility etc.) of the foodstuffs to animals. These factors are doing much to make the breaking of longstanding genetic barriers a palpable reality.

There is also a good case to be made out for encouraging the processing industries to explore every avenue by which their waste-products might be usefully deployed in agriculture. For example there was a case recently of an enterprise which allowed by-products corresponding to 25,000 tons of grain fodder to go to waste annually. It has now installed the appropriate equipment and instead of squandering the materials and polluting the environment it is producing valuable animal foodstuffs.

It is a fact that investments such as these, including many a proposal intended to conserve energy, are unable in the conditions prevailing today to match the return which may be attained by other, well-thought-out productive investments. Nevertheless they must be adopted, for unless all

aspects of fodder production are brought up to date Hungarian animal breeding will never be competitive on the world market. Incidentally it is worth pointing out that conditions prevailing in this sphere offer the most reliable guide to the general level of a country's agricultural development, and from the tendencies which can be observed in animal breeding a number of conclusions bearing upon underlying economic processes can legitimately be deduced.

The competitiveness of Hungarian exports also depends in no small measure on investments and trends in the agricultural sector. Agricultural exports increased fourfold in the nineteen-seventies, but commercial profits did not increase so dynamically; this was due in part to technological shortcomings, which it is essential to overcome in every sphere.

Hungarian agriculture has to reassess its goals, and the tasks that must be solved in order to achieve them, in the light of the overriding need to adapt to the rapid pace of change in the world economy. The problems that must be solved if the country's established place in the international division of labour is to be maintained are certainly difficult ones, but no obstacles are insuperable. The prime requirement is an objective weighing up of all the possibilities and the resources available. Then the most important task of the moment, if good intentions are to be effectively implemented, is to ensure that all reserves are fully exploited—by offering the appropriate incentives and creating an economic and political environment in which agricultural enterprises will themselves be stimulated into rapid adjustment to changing conditions. I myself see no reason to doubt that the agricultural sector will come through the difficult battles which lie ahead in the nineteen-eighties with colours still flying strongly, continuing to meet the expectations made of it in the national economic interest and particularly with regard to restoring equilibrium on the balance of trade. It will also be possible to maintain the present high level of supplies in the food industry at home, a valuable and essential ingredient of national living standards and the well-merited outcome of three and a half decades of purposeful effort, ably coordinated by consistently wise agricultural policies.

RESOURCE ENDOWMENT AND HUNGARIAN AGRICULTURE

by

ISTVÁN LÁNG

The production and utilization of energy at present constitutes one of the most serious problems facing the Hungarian economy. Almost the entire spectrum of Hungarian scientific research is in some way concerned with solving "the energy problem," and this is certainly true of agricultural and biological researches. A fundamental element of all research strategies for the future is the rational utilization of energy.

Owing to the relatively poor endowment, the production of primary fuels in Hungary is insufficient for the needs of industry, and the provision of transport and the services expected by a society accustomed to a high standard of living. Consequently Hungary has to import on a considerable scale. This in itself would not be such a great misfortune, since a high level of participation in foreign trade is the natural corollary of a dynamically developing economy. However, the price of fuels has increased enormously, much faster than the prices of traditional Hungarian export commodities. Conditions in the world economy have changed to Hungary's detriment, and it is likely that this unfavourable trend will continue in the longer term. The Paks nuclear power station will provide a new source of electrical energy, but it is hardly likely to reduce substantially the demand for oil and natural gas.

Given these conditions, the country is naturally forced to make economical and rational use of all its resources. It is certain that the country will also have to adopt some provisional solutions which—in view of the fundamentally new scientific and technical discoveries that are likely to be forthcoming in this field—may become outmoded and superseded within a few decades. But in the meantime as well it is essential to prepare for a period calling for entirely new ways of thinking, new orders of values, and a political programme to go with them. Every endowment, every resource and reserve must be explored and reassessed. It is certain that more emphasis will

be placed on the utilization of geothermic energy reserves than has hither to been the case. Research into the direct utilization of solar energy is being conducted on a large scale all over the world. It is likely that we too shall have to pay more attention to following up such research and adapting its achievements for our own ends. Among all the various sources of energy, given the conditions and circumstances which prevail in Hungary, an increase in the output of vegetable products is also going to play a special role in the period ahead.

Natural resources

The comparative data which follow are designed to facilitate the exploration of new ideas and the drawing of some conclusions. Let us first of all take the production of carbon.

Carbon is a key element amongst the primary fuels (appearing in black coal, brown coal, lignite, oil, natural gas, and peat) and the latter is also a fundamental component of the phytomass, which is reduced in the course of primary plant production. Dry plant material contains on average 45 per cent carbon, and the air-fried contains 39 per cent, and strange though this may sound, this is close to the average net carbon content of black coal in Hungary, which varies between 45 and 52 per cent. It greatly exceeds the carbon content of brown coal, which varies between 23 and 35 per cent in the Transdanubian deposits, and is around 24–25 per cent in North Hungary. The average carbon content of lignite is only 17 per cent.

Carbon content is, of course, a qualitative as well as a quantitative question. The value of a kilogramme of soot bears no relation to that of a kilo of diamonds; but though the carbon content of a kilogramme of soot is approximately the same as that of three kilos of bread, this does not imply identical values either.

I have sought to present the Hungarian data along with the data for other Central and East European countries which, as far as their territory and population is concerned, may be usefully compared with Hungary. They include Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, and Rumania. I have selected the per capita indices, because it is the level of per capita production which has the most bearing upon the standard of living.

In Table 1 the various types of coal have been converted to black coal equivalents in order to obtain a proper comparison. Hungarian production per capita is 1.96 tons annually. The GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia

Production of Primary Fuels per capita, 1978 Table 1

	Coal (tons)	Oil (tons)	Natural gas (.000 cu.m.)	Hydro-electric power stations (.000 kW)
Austria	0.24	0.24	0.28	2,73
Bulgaria	1.73	0.01	0.00	0.33
Czechoslovakia	5.64	0.01	0.06	0.29
Yugoslavia	1.09	0.19	0.09	0.94
Poland	6.20	0.01	0.23	0.06
GDR	9.11	0.00	0.00	0.07
Rumania	0.87	0.67	1.56	0.37
Hungary	1.96	0.20	0.68	0.02

(Source: *FAO Production Yearbook*, 1978.)

comprise a separate group producing treble this figure or more. Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Rumania, and Austria all show a lower level of coal production than Hungary.

In oil production Rumania has a spectacular lead. Hungary produces 0.2 tons per inhabitant, whilst Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the GDR have practically no crude oil production to speak of. Rumania leads also in respect of natural gas production, but here Hungary ranks second with a production index of 680 cu.m. per capita. In Bulgaria and in the GDR there is no exploitation of natural gas. The utilization of hydroelectric power involves a natural resource where stocks are not evidently exhaustible as in the case with coal, oil and natural gas. Austria is far ahead of the field here, and Hungary is last.

Figure 1 sums up the above data with all fuels expressed in their black coal equivalent and added together. The result shows that in the countries under examination the hierarchy is determined by the level of coal production. Though one country may be richer than another in oil, natural gas, or hydroelectric power, if it lacks sufficient resources of minable coal then primary energy production per capita is not essentially affected. Hungary's aggregate production figure is 3.14 tons per capita, which earns her fifth place on the list.

In summary it might fairly be claimed that among the eight countries of Central and Eastern Europe Hungary is somewhere in the middle as far as per capita primary fuel production is concerned. The situation might be worse; the country can rely on its existing natural resources, and must do everything possible to make the most rational use of them.

ton per head

Fig.1.

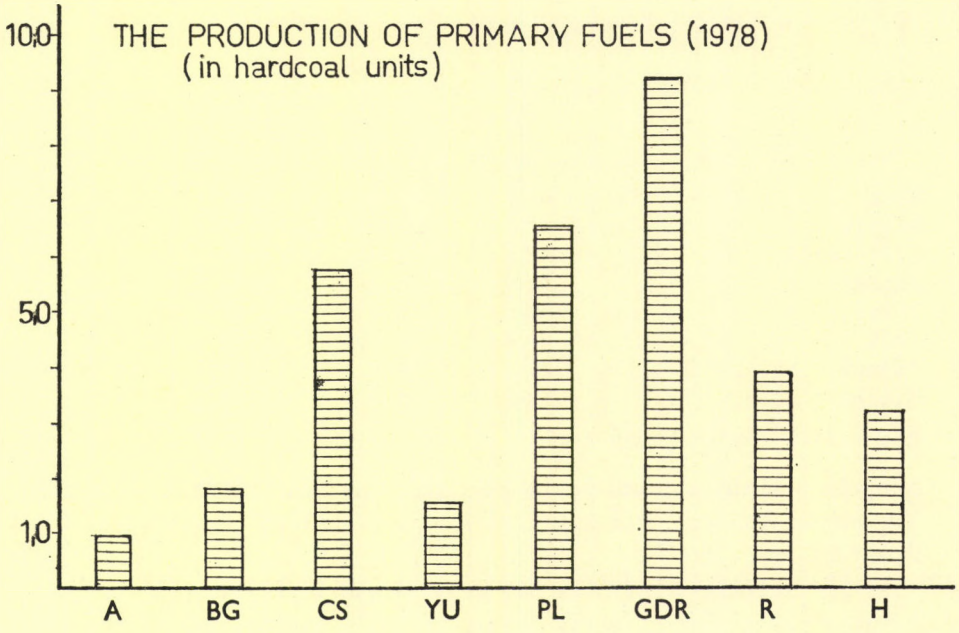


Table 2 presents some of the factors determining the production of plants and crops, and forestry, together with more per capita indices of production.

The Pattern of Agricultural Production Table 2
(all factors per capita)

Country	Area of arable land, gardens, orchards, and vineyards (hectares)	Area of meadows and pasture (hectares)	Cereal production (tons)	Grape and fruit production (kilogrammes)	Net timber production (cu.m.)
	1977	Average for the years 1976–1978			1976
Austria	0.22	0.27	0.56	123	1.75
Bulgaria	0.49	0.21	0.86	215	0.50
Czechoslovakia	0.35	0.11	0.67	35	1.11
Yugoslavia	0.36	0.29	0.71	111	0.64
Poland	0.43	0.12	0.54	37	0.62
GDR	0.30	0.07	0.52	25	0.62
Rumania	0.48	0.20	0.87	122	0.94
Hungary	0.51	0.12	1.15	209	0.51

In respect of the total value of arable land, gardens, orchards, and vineyards Hungary ranks first among the eight countries, followed by Rumania, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, and Austria. The soil is Hungary's most precious natural resource. Even when the comparison is broadened internationally the 0.51 hectare under cultivation per capita is a most favourable index. The basis for optimal agricultural production is an appropriate pattern of land use.

The data for per capita meadow and pasture area find Hungary in the lower half of the field, on the same level as Poland and just in front of Czechoslovakia and the GDR.

The production of cereals here comprises the total production of wheat, rye, barley, rice, oats, and maize averaged over the years 1976–78. Here again Hungary comes out top, and with a figure (1.15 ton per capita) which is very close to that of the United States. Bulgaria and Rumania also rank highly, but they have not yet reached the magic level of one ton per capita.

The aggregate data giving a measure of grape and fruit production show the eight countries under investigation falling into three groups. Bulgaria and Hungary are way out in front with a production exceeding 200 kg. per capita. Austria, Yugoslavia, and Rumania all vary between 100 and 110 per capita, whilst Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the GDR attain only a modest 20–30 kg. per capita. It has to be emphasized that fruit production means the total of apple, pear, plum, apricot, and peach production, and Hungary's natural endowments are much more favourable in all of these branches than those of her neighbours. If one were to look at fruit alone (ignoring vines), the picture would be still more advantageous to Hungary. Hungarian fruit production is in the order of 131 kg. per capita per annum, whilst Bulgarian production is around 89 kg. Vine cultivation is proportionately more highly developed in Bulgaria (126 kg. per capita compared with 78 kg.).

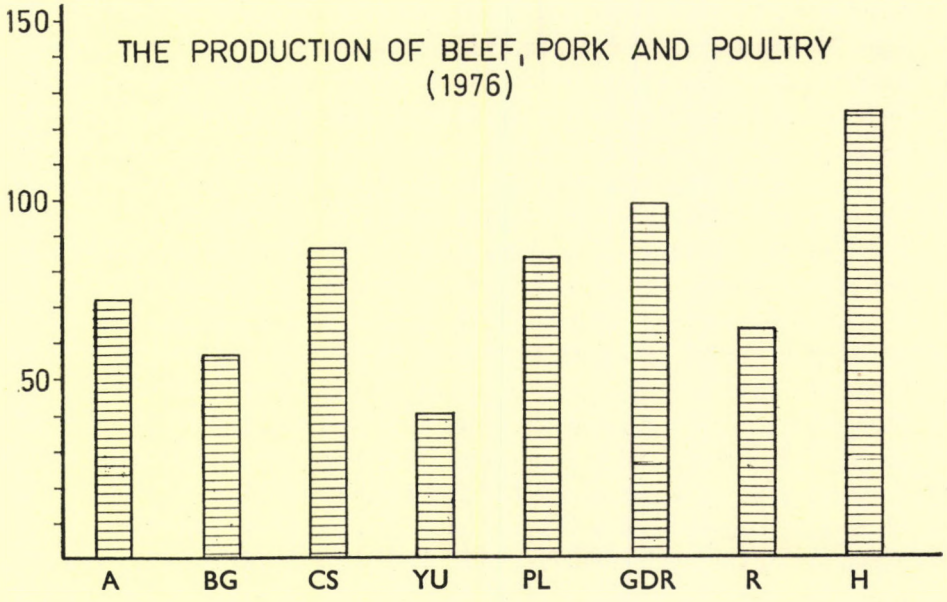
Timber production per capita is a function of the forest area and the standard of forest management. Bulgaria, the GDR, and Hungary bring up the rear, Austria stands out ahead of the field, followed at a distance by Czechoslovakia and Rumania. The main reason why Hungary ranks so low is that she has relatively few forests. The forest area was increased by half a million hectares after the Second World War by systematic planting in areas which are not suitable for intensive agricultural cultivation, a very positive development indeed. The intensity of Hungarian forest management is demonstrated by the following CMEA figures: the volume of timber produced per hectare of forest is 1.5 cu.m. in Bulgaria, 2.7 in Ruma-

nia, 2.8 in Poland, 3.2 in the GDR, 3.3 in Czechoslovakia, and 4.8 cu.m. in Hungary.

Figure 2 shows the combined beef, pork, and poultry production of the countries under examination. Once again assessment is per capita, but here we are no longer looking at primary plant production or factors in the endowment which influence production. Although the figure does not embrace all meat production, it can be seen that Hungary is in first place with a per capita production of 124 kg., achieved principally as a result of the con-

kg per head

Fig.2.



sistently high level of grain production, and this figure assures Hungary a place amongst the leading meat-producing nations of the world. Next, in order of ranking, come the GDR, Czechoslovakia, and Austria, and it is a little surprising that Yugoslavia's index is relatively low. This impressive result entails numerous problems for Hungary, including considerable and costly imports of protein fodder. Yet this high ranking in meat production deserves to be taken into account in any evaluation of natural resources.

Hence we see that, amongst the eight countries we have considered, Hungary ranks either first or second in the production of natural gas, in the total

area of arable land, orchards, vineyards, and gardens, and in the production of cereals, grapes, fruit, and meat. To complete the picture it may be added that agriculture and the food industry together are nowadays able to ensure undisturbed supplies domestically and also to divert a considerable proportion of final output for export. One-third of the income earned by Hungary on capitalist markets derives from this sector.

Ecological Factors

The agro-meteorologists of the socialist countries combined to calculate indicators of relative climatic productivity for the agricultures of the CMEA countries with respect to annuals. The following picture emerged:

The European territory of the Soviet Union (south of 60 degrees of latitude)	100
Poland	105
GDR	113
Czechoslovakia	118
Rumania	126
Hungary	139
Bulgaria	145

These data are further proof of Hungary's favourable natural endowment. On average, precipitation over the entire area of the country amounts to 58 cu.km. per annum (the water content of Lake Balaton is only 1.8 cu.km.). Some 40 cu.km. falls on agricultural land, and about half of this, i.e. 20 cu.km., has positive economic effects. A round 1 cu.km. of water is used for purposes of irrigation. In view of these magnitudes, it is clear that the nation's priority should be to ensure that water is utilized more efficiently on areas not irrigated at present.

Hungary's possibilities are limited and it is unrealistic to anticipate the production of ever larger quantities of plants and crops at low cost. The surface area cannot be increased: we can only try to moderate its inevitable reduction. The quality of our soil is uneven owing to environmental factors over which we have no direct control, such as configurations of the terrain and the mechanical composition of the soil. The greater part of the surface area is in need of soil amelioration.

The water at our disposal is likewise limited. On 85 per cent of the agricultural area it cannot be envisaged that any steps to promote irrigation will be taken before the end of the century, and so we shall have to rely

exclusively on precipitation. Where irrigation is a feasible undertaking water should be directed primarily towards plants and crops which yield the highest economic profit.

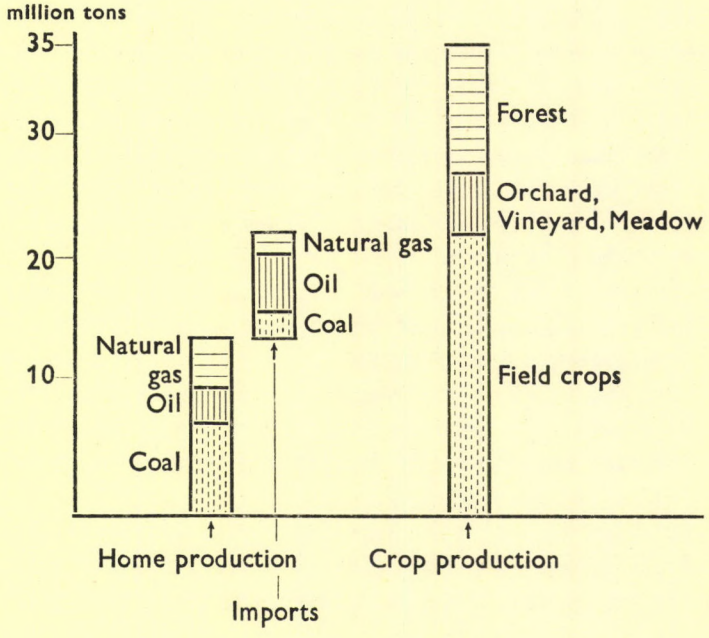
The Recycling of Carbon

The statistical data enable one to calculate the carbon content of the coal, crude oil, and natural gas produced in Hungary, and similar calculations may be made for primary fuels imported.

Pál Jakucs and his co-workers have assessed the quantity of vegetable and crop production in Hungary annually, and according to their figures this phytomass adds up to 93 million tons of air-dried vegetable matter. From this one may work out the proportion of carbon absorbed by the plants in the course of the photosynthesis. The resultant data are compared in Figure 3.

Altogether domestically produced fuels contain 12 million tons of carbon and imported coal, crude oil, and natural gas a total of 10 million tons. The vegetation utilizes 35 million tons of carbon annually from the air,

CARBON CONTENT Fig. 3.



two-thirds of which are accumulated in the crops produced on arable land. Our largest source of carbon today and in the foreseeable future is the atmosphere itself.

Let it be clearly understood that this is not so in every country. It is certain that, in the GDR for example, the situation is different, because the production of primary fuels is three times as high as in Hungary, and consequently the quantity of carbon is also that much greater. The total quantity of agricultural plant production cannot exceed the Hungarian by more than 15–20 per cent, the territory of the GDR being only this much larger than the territory of Hungary.

In the case of every country to which nature has been niggardly with supplies of irreplaceable primary fuels but relatively generous with renewable natural resources the economic role of the vegetation is bound to become more important in the future. Of the eight countries under investigation it is primarily Bulgaria and Hungary which belong to this category.

We are not yet in the position to utilize a considerable part of the carbon tied down by the vegetation adequately. Output, i.e. the phytomass, can be divided (with great simplification) into the following parts: the products and by-products of forests, meadows, and pasture land; the main and auxiliary products of plants and crops grown on arable land, viticulture, and fruit; roots formed and remaining in the soil. The last category comprises approximately 15 per cent of annual output. The share of the "main products" is 60 per cent in the case of forests, meadows, and pastures and 50 per cent for field crops, viticulture, and fruit. Consequently the share of by-products is 40 and 50 per cent respectively. Hence the carbon tied down from the air in the phytomass can be distributed between the five categories as follows:

	Main products	By-products
Forest, meadows, and pasture	12.0	8.0
Field crops, vines, and fruit	32.5	32.5
Roots	15.0	

Attention at present should be devoted primarily to the by-products, which are responsible for 40 per cent of the carbon tied down, the equivalent of 14 million tons of coal. This figure is approximately the same as the net quantity of carbon presently derived from domestic primary fuel production, and indicates the huge reserves which exist in the by-products of activi-

ties performed on the land. It is true, of course, that a great part of these auxiliary products is difficult to gather, and that we are not yet technically equipped to put them to any practical use.

In order to maintain the natural productivity of the soil over time it is necessary to reinvest a certain part of the organic material. In addition to the stubble and roots which remain in the soil approximately 3–3.5 million tons of elementary carbon is presently returned to the soil annually in the form of organic manure. The greater part of this is derived from fodder and fruit products that may also serve as principal products. Careful consideration has to be given to the quantity of organic manure, stubble and root residue to be allocated to the soil if a considerable increase in agricultural plant production is planned.

Part of the material and energy stored up in waste organic materials can also be utilized through technology to produce bio-gases—yet another question which merits further investigation.

Measuring total carbon content serves primarily to reveal the potential offered by the vegetation as a natural resource, i.e. a carbon-containing raw material. This is not a new trend, but the opportunities undoubtedly appear in a new light when one considers the paucity of the long-term alternatives.

Plants as a Novel Source of Energy

It is well-known that in several countries experiments are being conducted to devise new means of propulsion utilizing alcohol produced from agricultural plants. Once it was the constraint of war which provoked similar endeavours, as in Hungary during the Second World War, when experiments were conducted with a fluid called "motalkó." Today diminishing oil reserves and rising prices have again made this question topical. Brazil is blazing the trail in the substitution of alcohol to replace petrol as a means of propulsion. It is unlikely that in the near future the production of alcohol will seriously be considered as an alternative to petrol in Hungary. Nevertheless it is worth exploring in more detail just what is involved and what conditions are necessary for the production of various types of alcohol on a larger scale. Potentially Hungarian agriculture is certainly able to provide the necessary raw materials. Given present crop yields and the technologies of fermentation presently in existence one hectare of maize is sufficient to produce the quantity of alcohol necessary to keep the average passenger car on the road for a year.

Today the vegetation is the only major factor tying down and storing

up new energy in the country. Thanks to the combined effects of solar radiation, the soil, water, and other ecological factors green vegetation is increasing the energy resources available to the country. The derivation of energy from such materials is nothing new, since man was using wood as a fuel long before he was burning coal or oil. For decades the utilization of the energy accumulated by the vegetation in short-term production cycles was relegated to the background, and only the energy derived from ancient fossil remains was consumed. In recent years a considerable change of attitude has set in all over the world. Dozens of articles and studies are being published in numerous countries on the serious possibilities of adapting the bio-mass itself as a source of energy. In Hungary too, for some years past several researchers have been engaged in an examination of the energy balance of agriculture, the role of the vegetation as an energy-producing system, and the utilization of the energy accumulated by the by-products of production on the land. According to calculations made by Bálint Nagy and his co-workers the present energy balance of plant production is very favourable; energy inputs (mechanical work, human labour, fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation, amelioration schemes, etc.) result in an energy yield which is two and a half times as big (calculated from the main crops produced and the by-products actually utilized today).

The utilization of waste materials for heating is at present being explored experimentally on several Hungarian farms. According to calculations of the Institute for Energy Management agricultural waste in Hungary is presently capable of generating heat equivalent to the energy of 2–3 million tons of oil.

The Agro-ecological Potential

At the 1978 General Meeting of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences a proposal was put forward to consider the relationship between natural endowments and the development of plant production in Hungary for the period up to 2000. When the resolution was adopted, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the National Hydrological Office, the National Technical Development Board, and the National Office for the Protection of the Environment and Nature established a joint committee to carry out this task. The work became known as the "survey of the agro-ecological potential," a survey in which thirty research institutes, universities, and computer centres took part, and which engaged 400 scientific researchers and experts in different phases of its work.

The fundamental objective of the survey was to obtain an answer to the following questions: first, what quantity of agricultural plant production can realistically be attained by the end of the century given the natural endowment of the country? Second, what conclusions may be drawn as regards the long-term targets of economic policy? Third, how can the potential be better realized to increase production and reduce costs in the medium term?

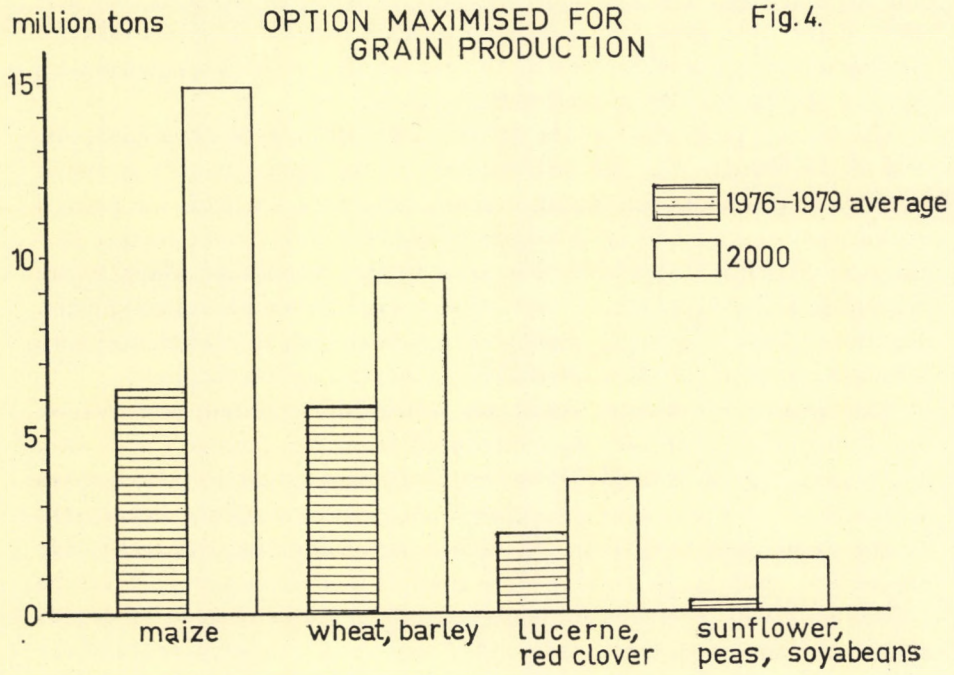
The survey consisted of several important phases. First of all the country was divided into 35 geographical regions and data were collected for each region concerning the soil, hydro-electric potential, the climate, and past experience in crop production. Next a prognosis was prepared for each region as to the crop yields likely by the year 2000. The expected pattern of land utilization over the whole country was surveyed, and forecasts were made of the future consumption habits of the population. Calculations to determine the optimal agricultural structures for the year 2000 were also performed. The prognosis covered all branches of arable cultivation, meadows and pastures, fruit and vegetable production, viticulture, forestry, and the natural reservations. In respect of field crops separate prognoses were made for all 35 regions according to four characteristic climatic types: dry-hot years; dry-cold years; wet-hot years; wet-cold years. Irrigation potential was surveyed by region, and within the region according to every important type of soil. Complex amelioration of the soil and its anticipated results on crop yields were assessed for the nation as a whole. A mathematical model was constructed and used to calculate optimal crop structure when different sets of social goals were hypothesized.

Some Major Conclusions

Improved utilization of Hungary's relatively favourable natural endowments can be achieved only through sensible management of the country's soil and water reserves. Reduction of the agricultural area will be moderated nut nevertheless one has to reckon with a decline of 5–10 thousand hectares annually until 2000. It is necessary to strive to ensure that all land be put ab optimal agro-ecological use. The conservation of the soil, implementation of large-scale complex amelioration projects, and a rational pattern of land-use are the fundamental conditions for a substantial increase in overall production.

The field-crop prognosis has shown, that in optimal conditions approximately 22 million tons of grain could be produced by the end of the century,

compared with the 12–13 million tons being produced today. This would mean Hungary's attaining a level of 2 tons per capita. The output of alfalfa, red clover, sun-flowers, fodder beans, and soya beans will be greatly stepped up, whilst in an optimal crop system sugar-beet and potatoes would be produced to satisfy local demand only.



Further optimalization techniques have shown that improvements in the crop system to enable full advantage to be taken of the endowments of specific areas would increase total crop production by 15–20 per cent.

Hungary has intensive grasslands covering approximately 1.3 million hectares. The quality of roughly half of this area might be greatly improved through water engineering, irrigation, fertilizers, and the more modern utilization of grasslands: productivity on such lands may well double by the end of the century.

A doubling in size of the irrigation network, the application of geothermic energy, the appropriate utilization of waste heat, and more discriminating use of land may lead to considerable increases in the output of vegetables. The introduction of versatile species resistant to disease and offering high yields together with improvements in technological standards can result in the production of green vegetables going up by approximately 50 per cent.

In order to satisfy increasing fruit demand (both domestic consumption and exports) towards the end of the century, large-scale reorganization has to be undertaken in the orchards of the nation. The next two decades should see the establishment of 95–170 thousand hectares of new orchards, whilst simultaneously 75–77 thousand hectares of aged fruit trees will be phased out of production. The area under irrigation needs to be increased considerably. If the right steps are taken one may look forward to an annual fruit production of 2.2 million tons by the end of the century, compared with the 1.1 million tons being produced at present.

The average production of the nation's vineyards can be doubled by the end of the century, but this will require the establishment of 5 thousand hectares of new vines per annum over the next 20 years, with the parallel elimination of almost as large an area of old vinyeards. It is desirable that the new vineyards be established in areas where the risks are lower, where the vines are better protected, and enjoy a more favourable micro-climate. Resilient strains with high yields must be developed, in conjunction with a modern structure of plantations and an advanced agro-technology.

The forecast for forestry could not realistically entertain any increase in the volume of timber being produced from the present forest area, i.e. 7 million cu.m. annually. However, there are substantial forest reserves which have not been exploited hitherto, either because of the deficiencies of the timber-processing industry, or because exploitation was technically impossible. Such is the scale of these reserves that if the problems can be overcome, it will become possible to increase Hungary's annual timber production by 20–30 per cent by the end of the century. After the turn of the millennium timber production may be increased by a further 50 per cent; the preconditions which have to be met include an increase of 300 thousand hectares in the forest area, and the introduction and dissemination of new improved species of wood and modern methods of forestry management and timber production.

In the natural reservations the goal is the conservation of the original ecosystems through time, and consequently no increases in plant production are planned.

It was pointed out in the course of the survey that the effects of natural endowments do not make themselves felt automatically. Their optimal exploitation over a long period presupposes several favourable social and economic trends of development. Economic levers have to assure that production is stimulated to adjust to the agro-ecological endowment, skilled labour has to be forthcoming, the technical and chemical bases of agricultural production have to be developed, resources have to be deployed to

implement irrigation and amelioration schemes, the infrastructure of agricultural settlements has to be strengthened constructively, the food industry must be supported and locational criteria respected, transportation must be modernized, and the willingness and ability to innovate must everywhere be enhanced.

Hungary's natural vegetation and the plants and crops she produces constitute renewable natural resources which not only guarantee domestic food supplies and exert a healthy effect on the balance of payments, but also offer countless possibilities as alternative raw materials and sources of energy in the long term. The present level of production may be increased considerably, and the bio-mass obtained can be reproduced year after year if the requisite social, economic, and technical conditions are also fulfilled.

POEMS

by

ATTILA JÓZSEF

NIGHT ON THE OUTSKIRTS

Slowly the light's net is lifted
Out of the yard, and our kitchen
Fills with darkness
Like the hollows deep in a pool.

Silence—
The scrubbing brush creeps to life,
Above it, a patch of wall
Hesitates, hangs, not sure
Whether to stay or fall.

A night that wears oily rags
Heaves a sigh,
Halts in the sky;
Then settles on the outskirts,
Waddles over the square
And lights a bit of moon to see by.

Like ruins the factories loom.
But inside them a denser gloom
Even now is being produced. It sets,
A foundation for silence.

Through the windows of textile mills
Fly moonbeams in sheaves—
Moon thread till morning weaves
On motionless looms a fabric
Of girl workers' dreams.

Farther on, like a cloistered graveyard,
The foundry, bolt makers, cement works—
Echoing family crypts.
Too well these workshops keep
The secret of resurrection.

A cat's claws on the fence;
And the simple night-watchman sees
A ghost, a flashing signal.
Coolly gleam
The beetle-backed dynamos.

A train whistle blows.

Dampness seeps into
The shadows, the boughs
Of a fallen tree.
The dust on the road grows heavy.

In the street a policeman,
A muttering workman, pass.
Now and then a comrade
Flits past with leaflets—
Keen as a dog on the track ahead,
Listening, cat-like, for noises behind him;
Avoiding the lamps.

The tavern door belches out
A tainted light, its windows
Vomit, leaving puddles.
Inside, a half-stifled lamp
Slowly swings,
A solitary labourer keeps awake.
While the inn-keeper snores and wheezes,
He bares his teeth at the wall,
His grief climbs the stairs. He weeps,
Cries out for the revolution.

Cold metal, the water clinks.
A stray mongrel, the wind
Wanders. Its great tongue hangs
To touch the water, and laps it.
Straw mattresses are the rafts
That drift on night's currents.

The warehouse's hulk is aground.
In the foundry's iron dinghy
The smelter dreams red babies
Into the metal moulds.

All is damp and heavy,
Mildew draws a map
Of misery's regions.
And there, on the dry meadows,
Rags and paper litter
The ragged, papery grass.
How they would whirl and fly!
They stir, but inertia holds them.

Night, your sluggish breeze
Is a flapping of soiled sheets.
Like frayed muslin to cord
You cling to the old sky,
As wretchedness clings to life.
Night of the poor, be my coal,
Smoulder here on my heart,
Melt the iron in me, to make
An anvil that never will split,
A hammer that clangs and glints,
A smooth blade for victory, night!

Grave this night is, and heavy.
I too shall sleep now, my brothers.
May our souls not be smothered by want.
Nor our bodies be bitten by vermin.

(1932) *Translated by Michael Hamburger*

HUMANS

In our family goodness is a guest.
Interest arranges all things like a host
Foolishly, but the rich were long aware
Of this, and now it dawns on most of the poor.

Every entanglement works loose at last.
While we are sure of our truth and hold it fast,
Our lives gloss over those with bad designs.
A change of setting does not change the lines.

Yet at the top of our voices we all sing,
Borne on the gusto wine and powders bring.
Mouth empty, our spirit sinks: we drain the vats.

He is best who, bearing disillusion, pauses.
We are as full of small and mordant causes
As the murmuring willow grove is full of gnats.

(1935) *Translated by Vernon Watkins*

WELCOME TO THOMAS MANN

Just as the child, by sleep already possessed,
Drops in his quiet bed, eager to rest,
But begs you: "Don't go yet; tell me a story,"
For night this way will come less suddenly,
And his heart throbs with little anxious beats
Nor wholly understands what he entreats,
The story' sake or that yourself be near.
So we ask you: Sit down with us; make clear
What you are used to saying; the known relate,
That you are here among us, and our state
Is yours, and that we all are here with you,
All whose concerns are worthy of man's due.
You know this well: the poet never lies,
The real is not enough; through its disguise
Tell us the truth which fills the mind with light

Because, without each other, all is night.
Through Madame Chauchat's body Hans Castorp sees,
So train us to be our own witnesses.
Gentle your voice, no discord in that tongue;
Then tell us what is noble, what is wrong,
Lifting our hearts from mourning to desire,
We have buried Kosztolányi; cureless, dire,
The cancer on his mouth grew bitterly,
But growths more monstrous gnaw humanity.
Appalled we ask: More than what went before,
What horror has the future yet in store?
What ravening thoughts will seize us for their prey?
What poison, brewing now, eat us away?
And, if your lecture can put off that doom,
How long may you still count upon a room?
O, do not speak, and we can take heart then.
Being men by birthright, we must remain men,
And women, women, cherished for that reason.
All of us human, though such numbers lessen.
Sit down, please. Let your stirring tale be said.
We are listening to you, glad, like one in bed,
To see to-day, before that sudden night,
A European mid people barbarous, white.

(1937) *Translated by Vernon Watkins*

BEHOLD, I HAVE FOUND MY LAND...

Behold, I have found my land, the country
Where my name's cut without a fault
By him who is to bury me,
If he was bred to dig my vault.

Earth gapes: I drop into the tin,
Since the iron halfpenny,
Which at a time of war came in,
Has outlived its utility.

Nor is the iron ring legal tender.
New world, land, rights: I read each letter.
Our law is war's, the thriftless spender,
And gold coins keep their value better.

Long I had lived with my own heart;
Then others came with many a fuss.
They said: "You kept yourself apart.
We wish you could have been with us."

So did I live in vanity.
I now draw my conclusion thus.
They did but make a fool of me,
And even my death is fatuous.

I have tried all my life to keep
My footing in a whirlwind fast.
The thought is ludicrously cheap
That others' harm matched mine at last.

The spring is good and summer, too,
But autumn better and winter best
For him who finds his last hopes through
Family hearths he knew as guest.

(1937) *Translated by Vernon Watkins*

These four poems by Attila József are reprinted by permission from *Attila József: Poems*. Edited by Thomas Kabdebo. The Danubia Book Co. London, 1966.

ATTILA JÓZSEF

CURRICULUM VITAE

I was born in 1905 in Budapest, a member of the Greek Orthodox church. My father, the late Áron József, emigrated when I was three, and the National League for the Protection of Children placed me with foster parents in Öcsöd. I lived there until I reached the age of seven and like the children of the village poor generally, I already worked, minding pigs. When I was seven, my mother, the late Borbála Pőcze, fetched me back to Budapest and enrolled me in the second form of a primary school. My mother supported us, me and two older sisters, by doing washing and cleaning. She worked in other people's houses and was away from home from morning to night. Being left without parental supervision, I played truant and got into mischief. In my third form reader I found interesting stories about King Attila, which I pounced on. The tales about the king of the Huns interested me not only because my name is Attila, but also because my foster parents at Öcsöd had called me Pista. After talking the matter over with neighbours, they established within earshot that there was no such name as Attila. This had shocked me, I felt they questioned my identity. I think the discovery of the tales of King Attila had a decisive effect on all my endeavours from then on and, in the final analysis, it was perhaps that experience which led me to literature, it made me a thinking man, someone who listens to other people's opinions, but inwardly revises them; someone who answers to the name Pista until what he himself knows is confirmed: that his name is Attila.

When I was nine, the Great War broke out, and we grew even worse off. I did my share of queuing up at shops—sometimes I joined the queue at the grocer's at nine at night, and at half past seven in the morning, when it was finally my turn, they said right in front of my face that there was

no lard left. I helped my mother whichever way I could. I sold drinking water in the *Világ* cinema; I pinched wood and coal from the Ferencváros railway yard to give us something to put on the fire; I made coloured paper pinwheels and offered them for sale to children who were better off; I carried shopping baskets and parcels in the market-hall, etc. In the summer of 1918 I went to Abbazia, on the Adriatic, a holiday arranged by the King Charles Children's Holidays programme. By that time my mother was already ailing, she developed a uterine tumour, and so I went to the League for the Protection of Children on my own, and through them found myself in Monor for a time. I got back to Budapest, sold papers, and traded in stamps, and later in blue and white bank notes, like a little banker. During the Rumanian occupation I sold rolls in the *Emke* café. Meanwhile, after completing five forms of the primary school, I attended a *polgári iskola.**

My mother died at Christmas 1919. The Chancery Court appointed Dr. Ödön Makai, who died recently, as my guardian. During a spring and summer season I served on the steam tugs *Vihar*, *Török* and *Tatár* of the Atlantica Marine Corp. At that time I sat for the *polgári iskola* leaving examination as a private student. Later my guardian and Dr. Sándor Giesswein sent me to Nyergesújfalu as a seminarist with the Salesians. I spent only two weeks there, as I am Greek Orthodox and not Roman Catholic. From there I went to Makó, to the Demke boarding school, where I soon got a free place. In the summer I coached children for my board and lodging in Mezőhegyes. I finished the sixth form of the *gimnázium* with top marks in all subjects, even though, owing to pubertal disturbances, I attempted suicide on several occasions. In truth neither then, nor previously, was there anyone near me, giving me advice as a friend. My first poems had appeared by that time; poems I wrote at the age of 17, were published by *Nyugat*. They considered me an infant prodigy, though I was merely an orphan.

After finishing the sixth grade, I dropped out of the *gimnázium* and the boarding-school, I felt idle in my loneliness: I did not have to work at my lessons, I knew them after the teachers' explanations, as the top marks showed. I went to Kiszombor as a *garde champêtre* and field hand payed by the day, and signed up as a domestic tutor. But when asked by two favourite teachers I still decided to sit for the *érettségi*.** I sat for a combined examina-

* *Polgári iskola:* an inferior sort of secondary school, of four forms only, ranking far below the *gimnázium*, both educationally and socially.

** *Érettségi:* the Hungarian secondary school leaving examination.

tion of the 7th and 8th forms, and thus finished the *gimnázium* a year earlier than my former class-mates. But I had only three months to get up the Syllabus and so it happened that, for the 7th form I was marked "good" all round, but merely passed the 8th. My *érettségi* certificate was better than that for the 8th form. Hungarian and history were the only subjects in which I merely passed. By that time I had already been charged with blasphemy because of one of my poems. The *Kuria** acquitted me.

After that I was a book salesman here in Budapest for a time and later, during the inflation, I did clerical work for Mauthner, the private bankers'. After the introduction of the Hintz system I was assigned to the accountancy section, and soon, to the annoyance of older colleagues, I was entrusted with the supervision of what bonds should be issued on stock-exchange settling days. Here my assiduity was somewhat undermined by the fact that, in addition to doing my own work, my older colleagues also pushed some of their duties my way, and they never failed to be disagreeable over my poems in the papers. "When I was your age, I also wrote poems," all of them kept saying. Later the bankers went bankrupt.

I finally made up my mind to be a writer and also to qualify for a profession closely connected with literature. I enrolled at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Szeged, as a student of Hungarian, French and Philosophy. I registered for 52 classes and passed examinations at the end of the term in twenty, obtaining top marks. I lived from hand to mouth, and used what I got for my poems to pay the rent. I felt very proud when Professor Lajos Dézsi declared me to be fit to do independent research, but I was completely discouraged when Professor Antal Horger, who was going to examine me in Hungarian Language, summoned me, and declared in front of two witnessess, I still remember their names, *they* are both teachers, that I would never be employed as a secondary school teacher as long as he lived, because, as he put it, "we cannot entrust the education of the future generation to someone who writes such poems," and he pointed to a copy of *Szeged*.**

One often speaks of the irony of fate, and this was really it. This poem of mine, *Tiszta szívvel* (With a Pure Heart) has become widely known, seven articles were written about it, Lajos Hatvany on more than one oc-

* The highest court of justice in Hungary at the time.

** A newspaper.

casion declared it a document of the whole post-war generation "for times to come," and Ignotus "caressed, fondled, mumbled and murmured" this "wonderful" poem "in his soul," as he wrote in *Nyugat;* in *Ars Poetica* he chose this poem as the paradigm of new poetry.

The following year—I was twenty then—I went to Vienna and enrolled at the university. I made my living selling papers at the entrance of the Rathauskeller, and cleaning the offices of the Vienna Collegium Hungaricum. When Antal Lábán, the head, found out who I was, he put a stop to it. He arranged for me to have free meals at the Collegium Hungaricum, and found pupils for me to coach, including the two sons of Zoltán Hajdu, the general manager of the Anglo-Austrian Bank. From Vienna—where I lived in a dreadful slum without even a sheet on my bed for four months—I moved straight to the Hatvany château in Hatvan as a guest. The mistress of the house, Mrs. Albert Hirsch, provided me with travel expenses, which took me to Paris at the end of the summer. There I enrolled at the Sorbonne. I spent the summer in the south of France in a fishing village.

Then I returned to Budapest. I attended the University for two semesters. Nevertheless I did not take the examination that would have qualified me as a teacher. With Antal Horger's threat in mind I thought I would not get a position anyway. When the Foreign Trade Institute was formed, it employed me as a Hungarian and French correspondence clerk; the managing director, Mr. Sándor Kóródi, will, I am sure, be pleased to give me a reference. Then, however, such unexpected blows hit me that, though life had toughened me, I still could not endure them. Social Insurance first placed me in a private hospital and later took me on sick pay, as a serious case of neurosis. I resigned my office, realizing that I could not be a burden on a young institution. I have earned my living by my pen since then. I am one of the editors of the literary and critical journal, *Szép Szó*. In addition to Hungarian, my native language, I read and write French and German, and I can do commercial correspondence in Hungarian and French, as well as being an accomplished typist. I could also write shorthand and given a month's practice, I could refresh my knowledge. I am familiar with newspaper typography, and can express myself in writing with precision. I think of myself as honest, and am confident that I quickly understand the nature of a problem, as well as showing staying power in my work.

(1937)

GYÖRGY TVERDOTA

ADDENDA AD CURRICULUM

Attila József's application known as *Curriculum vitae* was first published, after the poet's death, in the journal *Szép Szó*, of which he had been an editor during the closing years of his life. The following footnote was added: "In the spring of 1937 Attila József was applying for a clerical job and submitted the above piece." This writing is at the same time a confession, the sombre reckoning with life of a man who suffered from a pathological lack of self-confidence. Practical and subjective considerations alike moved the author to leave important facts of life unmentioned; on the other hand, the same reasons induced him to see, and to make his reader see, his passage through life from a singular point of view. Thus *Curriculum vitae* is a good basis for understanding the life of Attila József, but only together with certain additions and explanations.

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The poet's parents were carried to the steadily industrializing capital on the crest of that great wave which abruptly inflated the number of the city's inhabitants at the end of the nineteenth century. The poet's father, named "the late Áron" (who actually was still alive, but his son did not know this), was a master soap-boiler, a Rumanian from the Bánát, at that time a part of Hungary. The mother was one of those village poor who sought a big city job as an escape from poverty.

By the time Attila was born in 1905 after two girls, Jolán and Etel, the Józsefs had become a typical proletarian family with three children, hard up but managing to make ends meet on the earnings of the head of the family. Ferencváros, the district of Budapest where the young Attila lived until he turned fourteen, was described by a contemporary as follows: "This tiny little town is no small town. The diminutive cottages, rough pavements, and the peculiarly mixed population poor throughout, do not breathe the air of a Hungarian market town, they exhale the same odour of the big city poor which pervades Cheapside in London, Clignancourt in Paris, and Kamenny Ostrov in St. Petersburg..." The József family lived on the outer fringe of this district, in an area where most men worked in large factories.

His father had moved to Budapest in the hope of a better job and larger earnings, and since his hopes did not materialize, he moved on not towards North America, as so many others did—more than a million in number—and as his family imagined, but to return home. The restless, inconstant father not only emigrated but abandoned his wife and children. He did not get to America, as his son believed, but found himself in parts which became Rumania after the Great War, and having rid himself of his family, he married again. His departure left the József family up in the air. The father's place was taken by the mother who then became the bread-winner. Lacking qualifications she took in washing and went charring but drudgery and self-sacrifice was insufficient to eke out a living for the four of them. They not only suffered privation but, being always behind with the rent-they had to move from digs to digs, loosing all their possessions on the way.

After two years of hopeless drudgery Mrs. József was forced to accept institutionalized assistance. Early in 1910 her two younger children, Eta and Attila, were placed in the care of an elderly farmer couple at Öcsöd, a village a long way from Budapest. The circumstance that the mother went to see her children only once, and that parental

functions were exercised by strangers, in their own way, left an indelible mark in the memory of Attila. For example, one of the poet's biographers, Andor Németh, attributes the poet's personality disorders to the fact that his foster parents called him by the name of their former servant, that is, they took his name away from him, and renamed him Pista (the diminutive of István, that is Stephen).

It is certain that the archetype of being forced to accept humiliation, something that frequently recurred in his short life, can be detected in Öcsöd. He was patronized there for the first time, as it were anticipating his utter defencelessness of later times. For a proletarian child born on the urban fringe this was the first encounter with rural ways and village life.

Released from the care of providing for her two smaller children, the mother tried, in their absence, to create the material basis for reuniting the family, but failed. She met with an accident at work, and most of the money she had scraped together went on doctors and hospitals. In 1912, bearing in mind that he had grown two years older, the life of the child Attila József essentially continued where it had been interrupted in 1910: he became a typical Ferencváros urchin who, like his mates, grew up in the streets and squares.

A new sad chapter in the family's history nevertheless already started in the second half of 1914. With the outbreak of the Great War the food and fuel situation in Budapest deteriorated, prices soared, and things stayed that way for many a long year. At the same time Mrs. József fell ill, she developed cancer of the womb. The older sister, Jolán, got married as soon as she was old enough to do so. This meant a certain relief, but the József family had dwindled to three in practice: a sick mother getting worse apace, becoming less and less able to work, and two teen-age children.

All these changes made it more necessary for the children to contribute to the upkeep of the family, shouldering adult burdens. The boy first worked with his foster parents in Öcsöd. "Like the children of the village poor generally, I already worked minding pigs," he writes in *Curriculum vitae*. "I helped my mother whichever way I could," this is how he sums up the great variety of his later legal and illegal, independent and auxiliary activities.

Again they had to call on the National League for the Protection of Children. But child welfare work was not up to its mark during the war, a sensitive boy entering puberty did not so easily accept humiliation. Young Attila soon left Monor, a village near Budapest where he had been placed, and returned home.

A further miserable event was a holiday in the summer of 1918. Various social and child welfare institutions organized holidays for children on the Adriatic seacoast, and this programme was named after the last Habsburg Emperor, King Charles. The local population received the Hungarian children in a hostile manner, and the competent authorities did not satisfactorily deal with board and lodgings. "From Holidays into Deportation" was the title of an article in a contemporary newspaper reporting on the conditions of the children "on holiday."

The crisis of the József family soon culminated. The loss of the war dealt the country new blows. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy fell apart, the troops of the victorious allies occupied much of Hungary, a bourgeois and a socialist revolution followed in quick succession, then the conservative rule of landowners and the big bourgeoisie was restored by force of arms in the white counter-revolution of 1919. Budapest was occupied by the Rumanian army which in effect helped counterrevolutionary Hungarian terrorists. Owing to the loss of a considerable part of the raw material sources, to the economic blockade imposed by the Entente powers, and to the state of exhaustion due to the war, there was an even greater shortage of food and fuel. The shock

suffered by Hungary shook the financial system.

Mrs. József died at Christmas 1919. From that time on, the two younger children depended on the situation and intentions of the elder sister, Jolán. Thanks to her second marriage—to the lawyer Ödön Makai—Jolán broke with her proletarian background and rose a few rungs on the social ladder above her sister and brother, but at a price. She had to keep her social origin secret from her husband's relatives and friends, and consequently she could not own to her sister and brother. But she could not bring herself to desert the orphans. They had to have a place to live and eat. This is how Eta and Attila—as maid and an errand-boy—went to live with their sister and brother-in-law. In the presence of strangers they had to address their elder sister as "Madam" and their brother-in-law as "Doctor" and had to attend upon them. Thus, with the consent of her husband, Jolán managed somehow to provide for her younger brother, but in such a way as to offend the adolescent boy's self-respect.

Attila had completed the first form of primary school at Öcsöd, and continued school in Ferencváros. Roaming the streets, illness, earning money, long school holidays for lack of fuel, short war-time school-terms which began later and finished earlier than usual, the episode at Monor, the 1918/19 school-year including two revolutions—none of this was the right groundwork for later studies. This is why he first "went to sea." But his poor physique did not stand up to the strain of service on Danube tug-boats.

His brother-in-law, Ödön Makai, made use of his connections, among them a Christian Socialist politician mentioned in *Curriculum vitae*, Sándor Giesswein, who had already helped the family to place the children in Monor and with the Adriatic holiday. The boy was sent to the Salesian monks in a village near the Danube in Western Hungary. But Attila had been baptized Greek Orthodox, his father's faith, and what religious education he had was Calvinist, so the stay with the Salesians did not last.

A new attempt to continue his studies in a *gimnázium* (grammar school) was made. After primary school the boy had finished the four forms of *polgári iskola* (an inferior sort of secondary school); having passed a supplementary examination with success, he was admitted to the 5th form of the *gimnázium*. This was to the satisfaction of everybody, including Attila József, who later referred to his ardent desire for knowledge: "every bit of me wanted to know and therefore to learn." He had the talent. The afore-mentioned Sándor Giesswein found him to be "a sharp-witted, clever child." The solution pleased both his sister and his brother-in-law who had been appointed his guardian; at some expense they had him enrolled in a *gimnázium* of the remote South Hungarian market town of Makó famous for onion growing.

"... in the days before the examination acting on the spur of a decadent moment, I 'ate' sixty aspirins... At 10 a.m. my stomach was washed out... God knows how many days I lay in bed, then came the school report with top marks right through. Classic, isn't it?... I do not want to go back to boarding school. If I can get some coaching, well and good, if not, I will look for a job and become a private student." Recalling the events after the closing of the school-year 1921/22, this excerpt from a letter to his younger sister refers to almost all the important moments of the three years he spent at Makó. First of all, to the fact that he did make use of the opportunity to study. An able boy, he spared no effort to make up all his arrears, and he finished the 6th form with top marks. (The *gimnázium* had eight forms, for children from 10 to 18 years of age.)

The suicide attempt, coupled with his success at school, draws attention to his serious instability. His troubles can largely be traced back to the permanent tensions in

his relationships with his family, to recurring conflicts with his guardian, and to the lack of kindness that his relatives showed him.

What contributed to the preservation of his mental equilibrium, to the easing of his desolation, was the material assistance, humane encouragement and patronage of a number of benefactors at Makó. In order to spend his summer holidays in this small town, or in villages in the surroundings, paying for board and lodging by coaching and farm work, he needed to win the favour of local people, striking roots.

Because of his suicide attempt he could not go back to boarding school, and—perhaps in order not to be dependent on his sister's family—he decided to finish school as a private student. But, as against his account in *Curriculum vitae*, he finished the first term of the 7th form still as a regular student, and left school only early in 1923, passing his examinations in the subjects of two forms as a private student in June 1923. He stayed in Makó for some months and only returned to Budapest and his family in early 1924, with the intention—since he had passed the secondary school leaving examination—of getting a clerical job.

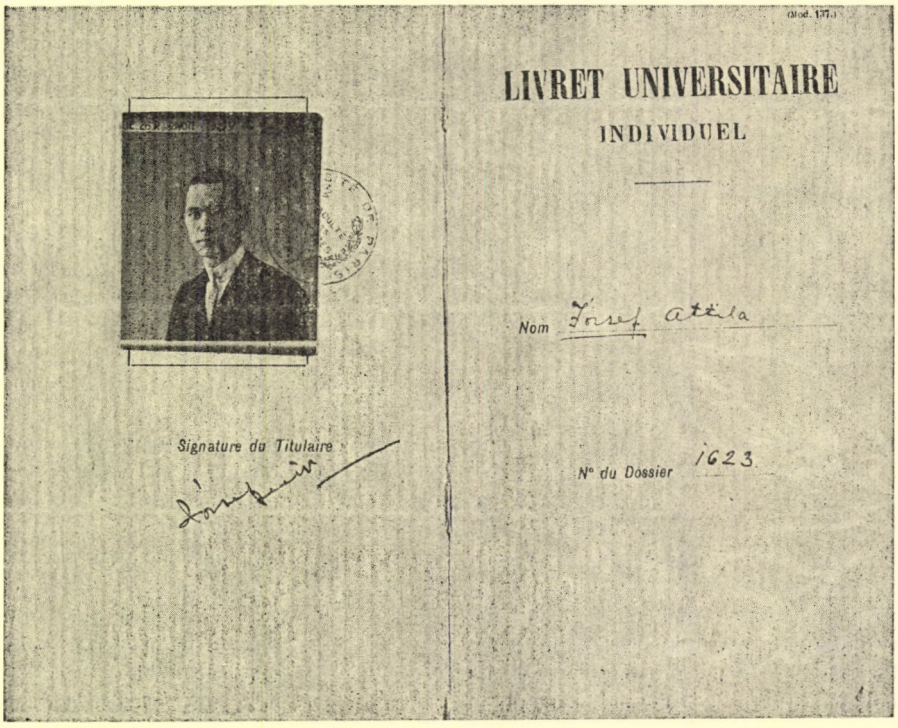
Until midsummer 1924 he tried two kinds of job. His book salesmanship is barely dealt with in *Curriculum vitae*, but he mentions at length his three months' employment as a bank-clerk.

His attempt to make his own way turned out to be premature. Book salesmanship and office work were not for him. He decided to continue his studies and take a university degree. But there was a big price to pay. As a consequence of this decision, the uncertainty of his material situation and the ensuing mental tensions which aggravated his days in Makó weighed more and more heavily on him. He had to rely on his family for support even during his university years. But he could not always be provided for satisfactorily, and he himself wanted to lessen the degree of his dependence on his guardian. What remained for him was thus acceptance of the assistance of benefactors and, of course, privation. This formula accompanied him all along from Szeged through Vienna and Paris right back to Budapest, the only change being in the place and manner of his studies and privations, as well as in the person of benefactors.

At first, from the autumn of 1924 to the summer of 1925, he became a student in Szeged, at a university that had not much earlier been moved from Kolozsvár, a town which had been awarded to Rumania by the Trianon peace treaty. Attila set about his studies with gusto. An essay he wrote on a subject concerning old Hungarian literature attracted the attention of his teachers. He passed his examinations with success, although getting his daily bread continued to be a problem. "Oh, my dear friends, I have not eaten for seven days!"; "for the third day I have eaten neither much nor little," he complained in his poems. His friends in Szeged helped him: "He ate days," that is, he was given lunch now by one and then by another of his friends on different days of the week.

In the autumn of 1925 he travelled abroad. In Vienna, too, he became a university student, and a year later, in the autumn of 1926, he enrolled at the Sorbonne in Paris. As far as his studies were concerned, however, he devoted his time during his one year in each of the two cities not to regular university work but to the learning of German and then to the mastery of the French language and to reading. "I first have to learn French, only afterwards can I start on my studies as such..." he wrote from Paris. The story goes that gifted with a good memory he learned French words by memorizing the dictionary in alphabetical order.

In Paris he lived in cheap hotels on the Left Bank, a bohemian life full of privation. Of his mode of living abroad he speaks in greater detail by relating one or another story of the year he spent in Vienna, where

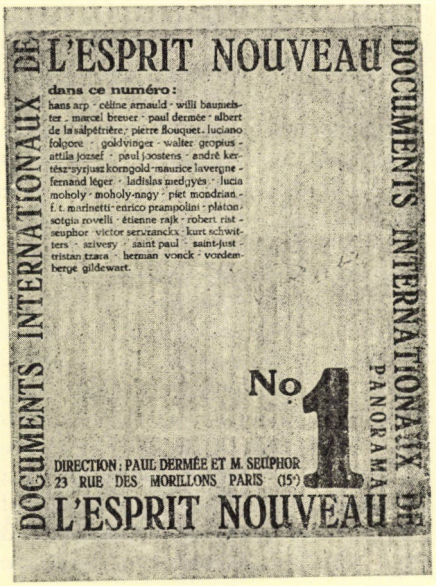


The poet's Sorbonne registration booklet

he was continuously confronted with lodging problems. "... for a month I have been living or, rather, sleeping—without bedclothes—in a *Studentenheim*," he wrote about the place which in *Curriculum vitae* he called "a dreadful slum." Starvation, of which he had his share already while in Szeged, continued there: "Selling newspapers at the entrance of the Rathauskeller, shivering with cold, I hoped someone would come and invite me to a meal down in the restaurant."

He did a variety of jobs. He sold newspapers, cleaned houses, coached pupils. New benefactors made their appearance. Antal Lábán, the well-meaning director of the Hungarian Institute in Vienna, a lover of literature; Zoltán Hajdú, general manager of the Anglo-Austrian Bank; and finally a genuine patron, Lajos Hatvany. The wealthy Baron Hatvany had already been a patron of Endre Ady, the great poet who died in 1919; he was a writer and critic himself, who had been forced into exile because of the role he had played in the bourgeois revolution of 1918. He entertained Attila József in his home during the last stage of the poet's stay in Vienna.

It was at his recommendation that Attila, after returning home, moved to the Hatvany house in Hatvan and enjoyed the hospitality of Hatvany's sister. At the end of the summer of 1926 spent in Hatvan the poet went to Paris—and the travel expenses were paid by her. As the year in Vienna ended with the bright summer holiday in Hatvan, so his year in Paris concluded with a carefree summer holiday in Cagnes-sur-Mer, near Nice. The atmosphere of this holiday is well reflected by a picture postcard: "Paris–



The cover of the firts issue of L'Esprit Nouveau, January 1927

Marseilles–Nice–Kiss–Hug–Unparalleled–Happiness–Attila–Genius–Pantheon."

The last paragraph of *Curriculum vitae* is a short summary of the two years which elapsed between his return from Paris in 1927 and his falling sick.

The greatest love of his life, Márta Vágó, in her book entitled *Attila József*, described the poet's situation in the spring of 1928 as follows: "He told me that Anna Lesznai* to whom he had written in Vienna, asking her to make it possible for him to study at the university, had sent him only half the money he needed. She had written that she could not give more, that others should give him the rest. This was a great disappointment to him. Why she had not written more kindly, in warmer terms, such as I am sorry, I still like you, with love from your Aunt Máli, at least this much... I listened to him with anxiety, with pity. I was afraid we could not help him either. He ended his complaints by showing me his application to the Student Relief Fund. I was shocked to read it and stared at him in a puzzle. I could not invite him to come and live with us... Mother would not have allowed him to sleep there... she could not have made room for him in our life."

Márta Vágó mentions Attila's application to the Student Relief Fund. One of the questions put in the printed form read: "Illnesses?" The poet described himself in these words: "Privations have made me a little nervous and a little weak." Then: "What income is available to you in the current year?" His answer was: "None. Whatever I can get from typing, shorthand-writing and other odd jobs." Further on: „What circumstances have prompted you to apply for this loan?" Attila József's answer to this was the following: "All I own is 14 fillérs. I am working for an examination, and I have to pay for 'my lodging'; moreover, I have to live as well..." It was against this financial background that he finished two semesters at Budapest University.

Márta Vágó must have been responsible also for the following sentence of *Curriculum vitae:* "... such unexpected blows hit me that, though life had toughened me, I still could not endure them." The blows came from Márta Vágó and her family. "I loved a well-to-do girl / Her class tore her away from me," he wrote in a poem ("In the end"). Márta Vágó was the daughter of a well-to-do financial journalist. Her family often treated the poet to lunch, took him with them on trips and supported him otherwise as well. But when it became clear that the two young people had fallen in love with each other and intended to marry, the family shrewdly set them a trial period and sent the girl to London for a year. In the meantime, through the father's connections, they helped the poet find a job as French correspondent. The agreement they made was: if the poet held down an ordinary job or, as her father put it, if "he managed to stay on top of a horse that had been

*A poet and painter (1885–1966), Oszkár Jászi's first wife.

saddled for him," and if after a year they should still wish to marry, her parents would not obstruct their plans. In the meantime, however, her parents, relatives, and friends used all their powers of persuasion to talk the girl out of the marriage. And the young man was given to understand that "support does not mean family ties."

Márta Vágó was more and more inclined to heed the family's advice and ultimately she broke with Attila József. The fact that she had been told that he was often seen in the company of a beautiful young girl in Budapest coffee-houses largely influenced her. Meanwhile, at the beginning of 1929, the poet started to work in an office. The letter breaking off their relationship on top of the increasing quarrels was at the back of the *neurasthenia gravis* mentioned in *Curriculum vitae*. Attila's illness, together with the offence he received from the Vágó family, resulted in his abandoning his job shortly after. He tried to recover from the shock by taking refuge in a sanatorium in the autumn of 1929. In 1929, therefore, when his great poetry took wing, his university studies were interrupted, he was without gainful employment and he had not managed to marry.

Curriculum vitae breaks off at this point in 1929, at the age of twenty-four. The eight years that passed from 1929 to the drafting of the manuscript are disposed of in a short sentence: "I have earned my living by my pen since then."

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Towards the end of his life, at the time of writing *Curriculum vitae*, when already schizophrenic, Attila József found his poetry to be useless, meaningless. He found pleasure only in ordinary middle class accomplishments.

In his poetic beginnings, in 1920, the 15-year-old Attila József used the decadent tone of symbolism then still in vogue. The most important literary review of the period, *Nyugat* (1908–1941), published his poems. His first volume of poetry appeared when he was seventeen. It was primarily due to his early start that he grew out of the schoolbench prematurely and broke off his studies in the 7th form of the *gimnázium*, in the second last year. His family wanted to keep him at his studies so that he might become "somebody," but he gave preference to poetry over everything else. There came the first great conflict with the family over the poet's calling, followed by a compromise: the poet passed his end-of-year examinations and then the secondary school leaving examination, but he did that just in order to be able to go his own way in the future.

Meanwhile, however, his poetry again brought trouble on his head. Because of his poem "Rebelling Christ," he came into conflict with the powers that be. In 1924 he was charged with blasphemy because of the provokingly profane Christ image of his poem. He was acquitted on appeal, but the event was indicative of the poet's developing in the direction of left-wing oppositionism. Flaring behind the mannerism and traditional forms of the turn of the century was a growing social discontent combined with anarchistic agitation. This was one of the motives which induced him, ultimately for ideological reasons, and for fear of his calling, to abandon banking that is so alien to poetry: "I now began to be desperate, racking my brains about ways of being rid of the bank for good. My ideological convictions deter me from any capitalist enterprise of major calibre, not to mention that a poet is apprehensive and dreadfully afraid of anything that is to his disadvantage," he wrote in a letter.

Thereafter he decided to prepare for the teaching profession that was more becoming to poetry than clerical work. Already during his years in Makó he often went to the nearby city of Szeged, and contacted local writers the younger of which had leanings towards the avant-garde. Enrolling at Szeged university was a sort of homecoming, he was surrounded there by old friends and colleagues. While among them, he put together his second volume, *It Is not Me*

Crying, published in January 1925. At the start of the academic year he could feel that, having succeeded—even though at the price of privations—in coordinating his calling and his occupation, he had at last found the ideal solution. This is why it was such an unexpected and heavy blow to be told by Professor Antal Horger, indignant at Attila's poem „With a Pure Heart," that a person who wrote such poems was not fit to become a teacher, or to be entrusted with the care of future generations.

Curriculum vitae might make one think that the poet went to Vienna in order to continue his university studies. What attracted him, however, was not so much the University of Vienna as the possibility of establishing contact with Hungarian exiles there.

The first two decades of the century brought with them the flourishing of cultural life, of the arts and sciences in Hungary, and this process continued throughout the 1918 and 1919 revolutions following the war. The intellectual élite participated enthusiastically in the bourgeois revolution of 1918, and then some of them sided with the Republic of Councils established in the wake of the 1919 revolution. The Republic of Councils was overthrown a few months later, the coming of the White Terror jeopardized the life and living of leftist artists, scientists and public figures. A huge number of intellectuals left the country resulting in a serious blood-letting for Hungary's cultural life. Many chose neighbouring Vienna as a temporary residence, since it was akin to Budapest in several respects. The two writers whom Attila József mentions in his *Curriculum vitae*, and who spoke so highly of his poem "With a Pure Heart," were also exiles in Vienna. A poet sympathizing with the Left, and coming ever closer to socialism, found the company of Hungarian exiles in the Austrian capital an animating intellectual environment. He was attracted also by the fact that Lajos Kassák and his circle, the "general staff" of the Hungarian avant-garde he held in high esteem, at that time lived in Vienna, and there published their journal, *MA*. The same impulse took him on to Paris. In that place of pilgrimage of the Hungarian artists of the early years of the century he sought the company of Hungarian exiles; inclined towards surrealism, he contacted the editors of *Esprit Nouveau*, and it was that, contrary to his suggestion in *Curriculum vitae*, and not the Sorbonne, that attracted him in the first place.

The time of experimentation ended with his return to Hungary. The results of his earlier years and the experience of his grand tour were summarized and synthesized in great verse in the late twenties, at the time of his love for Márta Vágó. These few years were the first great period of his poetry, the overture to his mature art, the harvest of which was gathered in his third volume, *I Have neither Father nor Mother*, published early in 1929.

The last chapter of his life beginning with the publication of this volume and ending with his death, the biographical background of the sentence "I have earned my living by my pen since then," is clarified by his letter to Mihály Babits in January 1933. Mihály Babits (1883–1941) was one of the most eminent poets and an authority on literary criticism, editor of *Nyugat* and curator of the Baumgarten Literary Foundation. Attila József wrote in this letter: "My circumstances force me to ask you, as curator of the Baumgarten Literary Foundation, to come to my aid using the financial resources of the Foundation. The reasons for my application may be made clear—without poetic modesty—by the following. For a long time now my wife and I have been starving in the literal sense of the term. Almost all of our belongings, including even the bedclothes, are in pawn. I am anxious about rent arrears, and I have to fear for the bleak room-and-kitchen flat we still live in. We have no heat. I have no shoes... being left with no evening meal and no cigarettes last

night... I chewed morsels of stale bread... What moved me to do so was not hunger but want of cigarettes. I have become accustomed to hunger. For a week I lay in bed running a temperature of nearly 40 degrees Centigrade. We have a single ordinary narrow sofa, the two of us sleep on it. There is not much love in sleeping under the same cover at the side of a feverish sick man. My wife has bedded down on the floor... By the time my temperature fell below 38, my wife had got a fever of 39 degrees. She lay down on the sofa and I on the floor. Now, day in day out, the one who is worse lies on the sofa. I am very sorry that I have to ask for money from you, whom I have offended."

The letter is a shocking situation report in itself. After he had given up his post as French correspondent in 1929, the poet turned his back on the liberal-reformist circles to which his one-time love, Márta Vágó, had belonged. Turning away from his former friends' ambiguous, compromising oppositionism against the conservative-historical ruling classes, he sought to contact those forces (first of all the peasant Radicals, then the Marxist working-class movement) which intended to employ radical means and methods to improve the lot of workers and peasants afflicted many times over by the Great Depression, the aftermath of the war, and Hungary's socio-economic backwardness. This was a change in principle, which summed up his earlier anarchist sympathies, avant-garde ideas, and Marxist reading.

The change in principle was motivated, over and above the failure of his relationship with Márta Vágó, also by other personal grievances. The most serious of them was the slighting criticism which, in what was still the most authoritative literary review of the middle-class opposition, *Nyugat*, László Németh gave the poet's volume *I Have neither Father nor Mother*, a book of verse which Attila József had expected—not without reason—to be a resounding success. The target of the mortally offended poet's anger was not the critic but the editor and intellectual chief of the magazine, Mihály Babits, the addressee of the afore-cited letter. To the offence causing him aching pain he replied with biting insult in verse and prose. His unfortunate provocative attack harmed himself most of all. He excluded himself from *Nyugat* and disqualified himself from the Baumgarten Prize, an award which, every year, depended on the insulted Mihály Babits in the first place, and which—in addition to being a considerable sum—was decisive in matters of literary standing, especially among younger writers. What makes the letter quoted above a shocking document is precisely the fact that Attila József, in his deep distress, saw no other way out than to humble himself before the great senior and high literary authority who rightly felt deeply offended, soliciting the Literary Foundation administered by him for financial assistance.

In 1930, however, still waiting for a radical political change, and being confident in the coming outbreak of a socialist revolution, he found it easier to endure privations. He then went to live with Judit Szántó (he called her "my wife" in his letter) who was a member of the illegal Hungarian Communist Party. Attila József also joined the Party and enthusiastically did his share in the hard and perilous underground work of Party members. It was to them and about them that he wrote his poems imbued with the spirit of class struggle and full of revolutionary ardour, which he collected in a volume published in 1931 and confiscated by the police. He wrote articles for the illegal and semi-legal publications of the Party and conducted political seminars. He started a review called *Valóság* which ceased publication, for financial reasons, after the first and only number. He was tried and fined for a leaflet written in protest against the execution of two leaders of the illegal Communist Party, Imre Sallai and Sándor Fürst.

The sectarian functionaries of the Party

Attila József, approx. 1932 (photograph taken by Judit Szántó)

With his sister Etelka and maternal grandfather at Szabadszállás for the grape picking, late September 1928
(photograph by Ödön Makai)

With his mother and sister Etelka at 11 Ferenc tér, Budapest; summer 1919
(photograph by József Weidinger)

The yard of the house where the poet was born (3 Gát utca, Budapest — the József family lived on the ground floor, far right)

Attila József, aged fourteen
(Budapest, December 1919)

Attila József as a schoolboy
in Makó, January 1924

Signed passport photograph, 1929

Signed portrait, Budapest 1935

An excursion in the Buda hills, April 12th 1931. Above: Gyula Illyés (left) and Attila József; below, from the left: Ferenc Pákozdi, László Gereblyés, Gyula Illyés, Imre Szántó, Attila József, Béla Székely (photograph by Tibor Arató)

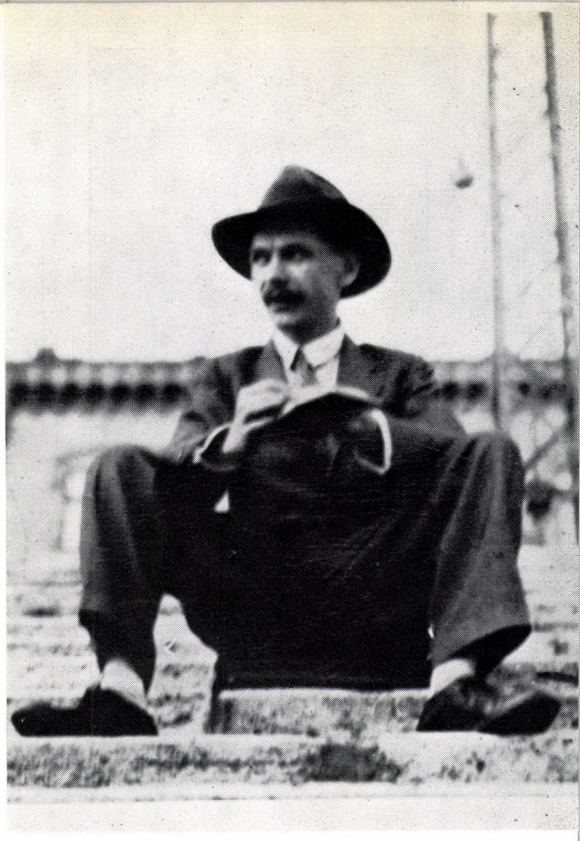
With his sister Etelka in Makó, July 1923 (photo by Nándor Hommonai)

Jolán (Mrs. Ödön Makai), the poet's elder sister (some time in the twenties)

Márta Vágó in 1926 (photograph by Olga Máté)

Judit Szántó, the poet's common-law wife (a picture from the late twenties)

In the village of Földeák on the Great Plain, Spring 1930



On the Danube bank in Budapest, approx. 1935

A Baumgarten Ferenc irodalmi alapítványból most oszt[illegible] az 1935. é díjakat és jutalmakat. Képünk az 1000—3000 pengővel jutalmazott írókat tudósokat ábrázolja. Balról jobbra: Barta János, Halász Gábor dr, József Attil Nagy Lajos, Telekes Béla, Szerb Antal dr, Weöres Sándor, Füst Milán Karinthy Frigyes.

At the presentation of the 1935 Baumgarten Literary Prize and Awards. Attila József is third from the left.

Budapest, approx. 1932

January 13, 1937: with Thomas Mann at the Magyar Theatre, Budapest
(photograph by Károly Escher)

Oil by Vince Korda, 1927.
78 × 59 cm. Petőfi Museum

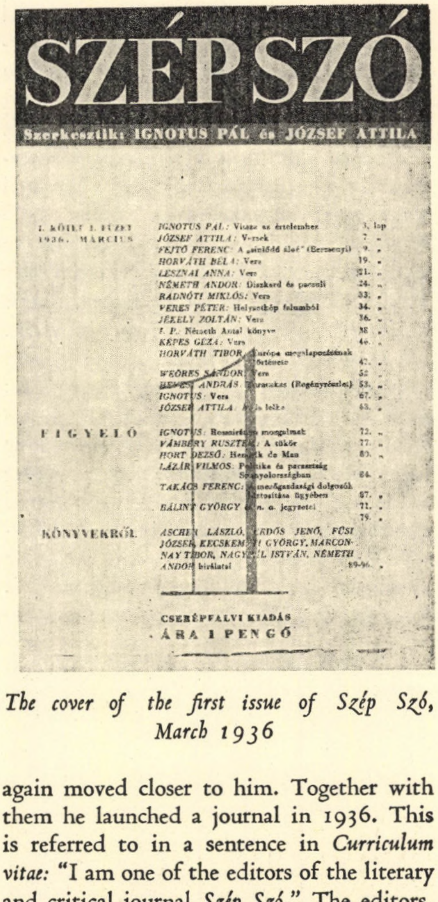
Charcoal drawing
by István Dési Huber, 1937.
48 × 33 cm. Petőfi Museum

Bronze by Miklós
Melocco. 50 cm.
Petőfi Museum

looked with growing suspicion on a young man with an inclination for ideological speculation and debating. They were less and less tolerant of his extravagance. A Moscow group of Hungarian writers, prompted by ignorance and irresponsibility as well as by personal hostility, branded him outright as a social-fascist. The illegal Party press, with insulting incomprehension and complete insensibility to all the artistic values, harshly criticized his volume *Night in the Suburbs*, published in 1932. He was not sent as a delegate to the Soviet writers' congress held at Kharkov, and ultimately, as an unreliable element, he was left out of the Communist Party.

The financial distress described in his letter was thus only the pecuniary aspect of the intellectual vacuum in which the poet found himself by 1933–34 in consequence of his having broken with middle-class literature and of his comrades' having drawn back from him. He wrote his most important poems in the absence of genuine recognition. In his state of complete isolation he compiled one of the finest volumes of twentieth-century Hungarian poetry, *Bear Dance*, which was published in 1934 and modestly successful. His private life was again at an impasse. His relationship with Judit Szántó, which was full of conflicts anyway, did not stand the test of privation and intellectual vacuity. To seek financial relief and for the sake of his peace of mind, he left their home more and more frequently and went to see the family of his sisters who had moved to Hódmezővásárhely, a town not far from Makó in the Great Plain. Then he definitively broke with Judit Szántó.

Indifference around him began to be overcome around 1935, at the start of the "People's Front period." The cementing of unity within the working-class movement, the weakening of nervousness in relations between Social Democrats and Communists, created a more favourable intellectual atmosphere for him. His friends, dissatisfied with the artistic and ideological line of *Nyugat*, again moved closer to him. Together with them he launched a journal in 1936. This is referred to in a sentence in *Curriculum vitae:* "I am one of the editors of the literary and critical journal *Szép Szó*." The editors, the reading public, and supporters of the anti-fascist and Leftist periodical, recognizing the artistic greatness of the poet, considered it one of their most important duties to ensure him a permanent platform.


SZÉP SZÓ

Szerkesztik: IGNOTUS PÁL és JÓZSEF ATTILA

I. KÖTET I. FÜZET
1936. MÁRCIUS

IGNOTUS PÁL: Vissza az értelemhez 3. lap
JÓZSEF ATTILA: Versek 7. „
FEJTŐ FERENC: A „sínlődő élet" (Berzsenyi) 9. „
HORVÁTH BÉLA: Vers 19. „
LESZNAI ANNA: Vers 21. „
NÉMETH ANDOR: Díszkard és pacsuli 24. „
RADNÓTI MIKLÓS: Vers 33. „
VERES PÉTER: Helyzetkép falumból 34. „
JÉKELY ZOLTÁN: Vers 36. „
I. P.: Németh Antal könyve 38. „
KÉPES GÉZA: Vers 46. „
HORVÁTH TIBOR: Európa megalapozásának története 47. „
WEÖRES SÁNDOR: Vers 52. „
[illegible] ANDRÁS: [illegible] (Regényrészlet) 53. „
IGNOTUS: Vers 67. „
JÓZSEF ATTILA: [illegible] lelke 63. „

FIGYELŐ

IGNOTUS: [illegible] mongolmak 72. „
VÁMBÉRY RUSZTEM: A tükör 77. „
HORT DEZSŐ: [illegible] de Man 80. „
LÁZÁR VILMOS: [illegible] és parasztság Spanyolországban 84. „
TAKÁCS FERENC: [illegible] mezőgazdasági dolgozók [illegible] ügyében 87. „
BÁLINT GYÖRGY [illegible] n. o. jegyzetei 71. „
79. „

KÖNYVEKRŐL

ASCHER LÁSZLÓ, ERDŐS JENŐ, FÜSI JÓZSEF, KECSKEMÉTI GYÖRGY, MARCONNAY TIBOR, NAGY [illegible] ISTVÁN, NÉMETH ANDOR bírálatai 89-96. „

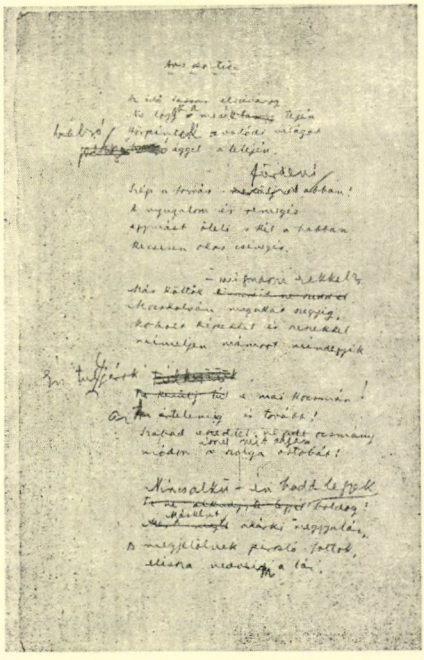
CSERÉPFALVI KIADÁS
ÁRA 1 PENGŐ

The cover of the first issue of Szép Szó, March 1936

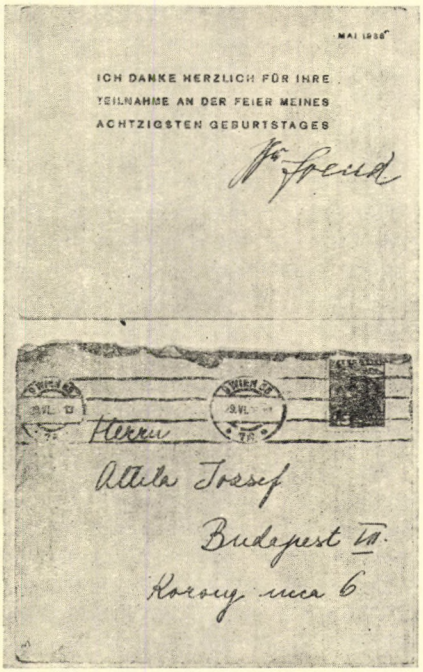
But he did not enjoy public success in the last few years of his life either. His friends could not conceal from him that his last volume, *It Hurts a Lot*, publication of which had been turned to coincide with the Book Day in 1936, did not sell. His income as an editor mitigated financial problems but he could not live without the support of patrons. He was again in need of a steady income, all the more so since he still hoped to marry. The girl was Flóra, often men-

tioned in his poems. This design prompted him in 1937 to apply for clerical employment, hence *Curriculum vitae*. He failed to obtain the job.

In the nine months after he had written *Curriculum vitae* he was progressively overcome by weariness of life and with fatal resignation; schizophrenia took hold of him, but he had lucid periods to the very last. In the 1930s he extensively studied Freud. He wrote a greeting in verse for Freud's 80th birthday and sent it to him. On several occasions he submitted himself to psychoanalysis, but with no great success: once he fell hopelessly in love with his attractive young doctor. In his shortening lucid periods he wrote his last poems, bearing evidence of crystal-clear intellect, and viewed the decaying of his personality with incorruptible objectivity. Owing to his worsening health he could no longer carry out his functions as editor, but since he put in an



The first page of the MS of Ars Poetica. February 1937



Freud's thank you card for the poem "What you conceal in your heart" (Amit szívedbe rejtesz) sent to him by Attila József to mark his eightieth birthday

appearance in company only when he felt strong, when his bearing was composed and his speech sober, when his judgement of things was definite and convincing, outsiders did not suspect that he was ill. In the spring of 1937 only one or two of his closest friends surmised the full reality. "I often suspected that there was 'something wrong' with him when he abruptly began sobbing but soon he stopped and started to talk and argue just as reasonably as earlier," is the way Andor Németh, one of his biographers and great friends, described his condition.

The change, the collapse, the reversal of the ratio between his normal and confused periods, took place early in the summer of 1937. His friends then persuaded him to withdraw to a sanatorium and seek treatment. The few visitors who were allowed

to enter the expensive sanatorium in order to see the poet who, at the expense of the Hatvany family, received good nursing and careful medical treatment, reported on his condition with profound emotions. The novelist Tibor Déry, for example, recalls: "When I went to see him in the sanatorium, he was sitting on the sofa, in tears. He smoked, made a phone call, ate half a tangerine, talked about ordinary things and even smiled now and then, but whatever he did, tears incessantly flowed from his eyes. He lit a cigarette, wept and counted how much money his friends were spending on cigarettes for him. He no longer looked on his poems as a compensation; he became convinced that they were worth nothing. He no longer relied on his own reason even in his lucid periods. If he sometimes uttered a hopeful word, his smile showed that he did not believe in it either."

By the end of September 1937 his doctors became convinced that Attila József was past help. His friends shrank back from the idea of having him committed to a lunatic asylum. They were hoping that he would perhaps recover his health. Early in November 1937, they took him to Balatonszárszó, a small lakeside village, to which the József sisters had moved after the death of Ödön Makai, the elder's husband. The last days of the poet are described by Andor Németh as follows: "It is cold. A fire is lit in Attila's room. And now the whole family crowds in Attila's small room. The children are noisy... Etus clatters with the dishes and rumbles with the sewing machine, the noise is ear-splitting, infernal. But Attila does not hear and does not see. He only weeps and weeps, or looks on with an apathetic and blank gaze. He smokes a lot, but does not wish to eat. Who does not work should not eat, he answers to offers of food."

Early in December he finally resolved to take his own life. He said goodbye to his friends in letters: "Dear Doctor, I send you my affectionate greetings. You attempted the impossible but it was no use," he wrote to one of his doctors. In the evening of December 3, 1937, he went for a walk. He turned his steps towards the railway station, "not really with the intention of throwing himself under a train, however firm he may have been in the decision to kill himself," writes Andor Németh. At that time no train was due but a goods train had halted at the station. He suddenly made up his mind. "All of a sudden," three young eyewitnesses related, "he broke into a run, slipped under the barrier; first he laid both hands on the rails, bending down deep under the wheels; the train got moving, and a protruding iron cramp or a step or the connecting chain of a truck broke his backbone. His neck twisted, the wheel cut off his right arm. The train dragged him over a distance of fifteen metres."

CAN ONE TRANSLATE ATTILA JÓZSEF?

by

LÁSZLÓ LATOR

Only he who has tried it himself can possibly be aware of all the intricacies and difficulties of literary translation, especially the translation of poetry. Nowadays once again the cry is raised in many quarters (notably by followers of new schools in linguistics) that translation is not worth this effort or that it is not possible at all, that a work of art transplanted into the medium of another language will yield to the structure, signalling system and different formal constraints of the recipient language and will necessarily metamorphosize or become distorted beyond recognition. And if the translator himself does not raise his voice in protest, there will always be others ready to argue ad nauseam about the insoluble dilemma between fidelity to the original and artistic integrity in the new text. Of course it might be objected that the practitioners of this or that principle or method are still churning out literary translations all over the world, but I should like to come forward with a bolder and more positive statement: I believe that the translation of poems, and literary translation in general, is not the necessary evil that some would want us to believe, that it is unambiguously desirable and we should do all we can to encourage it. I say this because for as long as homo sapiens has lived on this earth intellectual exchange between peoples has been one of the most reliable pledges of our spiritual integrity and health. Do I need to remind anyone that Latin literature was born essentially of literary translations, (to put it bluntly, through the importation of the spiritual wealth of Ancient Greece)? Horatius may have felt on occasion that the barbarous Latin tongue was a rough and poorish tool compared to the sophistication of Greek, but who would deny his ultimate triumphs in that tongue? Let us recall too the fruitful spread of thematic material during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Hungarian literature is further eloquent proof of what foreign models may generate over and above their direct impact, via the constraints

which they impose (limitations which stimulate ingenuity) and the changes of form required by the new medium. Hungarian lyrical poetry began in the 13th century with a brilliant translation, or rather adaptation, the *Ómagyar Mária siralom* (Lament of Mary). The utility of literary translation is inestimable, not only as far as content is concerned but also as regards form. It can be claimed without exaggeration that the present unrivalled formal richness of Hungarian poetry emerged through the on-going struggle between alien and Hungarian forms, between the foreign models and the possibilities latent in the recipient language. I could cite many examples of how foreign works implanted through the medium of translations have fertilized Hungarian literature, but allow me to make a more personal remark: all my own early glimpses of world literature (including world poetry) came via Hungarian translations. In the course of time I acquainted myself with a few of those languages, but it is perhaps only natural that my basic poetic grounding took place in Hungarian. I got to know Apollinaire in this way and although later I read much of his work in the original French, the image I had formed of him did not greatly change. Perhaps my reading of the Hungarian Apollinaire differed from a Frenchman's reading of the French—but this would be no less true if I had read him in the original, because my interpretation of the French words is bound to emphasize the semantic level, whereas for a native French reader they are connected up to so many intricate circuits of association. I also believe firmly that the more faithful and accurate the translation (the less visible the joints when set alongside the original) the greater the accomplishment is: it can be managed only by a poet, for only a poet is capable of transplanting that inexplicable tension without which no true poetry is possible in any language.

Yet not every poem lends itself to translation, and all sorts of impediments may frustrate the would-be translator. To give a Hungarian example, it is almost impossible to translate Endre Ady. The magical feeling for language and historical evocation characteristic of his poetry usually wither and fade in the translations. Only theatrical gestures remain, the noisy, glaring colours of the beginning of the century. Attila József is another story altogether—I think his lyrical poems *can* be translated and I can support my statement with the evidence of excellent translations already accomplished in French, Italian, Spanish, German, Russian, Czech, Slovene, and English.

Some of the volumes of József translations have enjoyed remarkable success; for example Umberto Albini's Italian Attila József has already been through several editions and sold a remarkable number of copies. To be

successful, of course, a volume of verse translation must satisfy a number of criteria, the first of which concerns the selection. My own suggestion in the case of Attila József would be not to include too many early poems. His first collection, *Szépség koldusa* (Beggar of Beauty) was published in 1922 when he was only 17. It is an unbelievably mature work, the creation of an adolescent genius. The surety of his touch and the perfection of both form and content intrigue and fascinate the reader—but this is not yet the individual voice of the poet. Those who know Hungarian lyrical poetry well will have no difficulty in recognizing the influence of his early masters: Ady, Gyula Juhász, Kosztolányi, and Babits. Tuning in to the familiar tones of European symbolism came naturally and easily to the young poet, and the translator too is reassured to hear the familiar tones of his own lyrical poetry come through in these foreign-sounding verses. The Russian edition of 1962 was spectacular proof that the translators could identify easily and accurately with the content, form and style of this material, and this probably had much to do with the fact that at the beginning of the century Russian poets had spoken in more or less the same language. The translations of those early poems are excellently done in this Russian edition. Yet I am uncomfortable when I see them, for they are not yet the true, mature Attila József.

For similar reasons, I would not include too much avantgarde free verse in my Attila József selection. His free verse dates from the early twenties and was published in the volume *Nem én kiáltok* (1924) (It is not Me Crying). Of course there are not many translation problems here either, for European lyrical poetry almost everywhere is now past the acute feverish phase of new "isms," and although at first sight the amazing associations, bizarre harmonies and anarchic passions of this poetry may seem all terribly complicated I think it is easily assimilable nonetheless. It has its relatives everywhere; and moreover the translator is spared the struggle with form in the narrow sense of the word. This may explain why so many of these poems have been translated into so many languages. John Batki's slim English volume* contains several works from this period. However, as with many other European poets of the age, the avantgarde experience was later transmuted. It survived in the deeper layers of the poetry of the mature Attila József, where it functioned to supply the hidden driving force behind a purified, disciplined and more deliberate manner of writing. It has also

* The English translations I know have been published in the following two volumes: *Attila József: Poems*. Ed. Thomas Kabdebo. Tr. Michael Beevor, Michael Hamburger, Thomas Kabdebo, John Székely, Vernon Watkins. The Danube Book Co. London, 1966; *Attila József's Selected Poems and Texts*. Tr. John Batki, Ed. George Gömöri and James Atlas. Carcanet Press, 1973.

to be borne in mind that there are some types of verse which cannot be organically transplanted into the poetry of certain other cultures: I cannot imagine that Attila József's miniature ballads, those little songs with their light melodies which render the plight of the poor man with such dramatic weight, exerting much of an impact in French (where folk poetry has such different traditions) or in English (where poetry has become increasingly abstract and conceptual). But—though I have no convincing example at hand—it may well be that a Spanish poet raised on the Andalusian songs of García Lorca could create their Spanish homologues, and it seems that they have been easily assimilated by other Eastern European literatures, where modern poetry still maintains many direct links with folk poems. In Russian the translators even managed to re-create the typical rhythmical forms of the Hungarian original.

It is no simple matter to translate József's songs into any other language. The first difficulty is the fixed verse form itself, which one can scarcely imagine being loosened to any form of free verse. But it is more or less general practice in the neo-Latin languages and in English to render even fixed rhyming verses in a free or at least relatively flexible form. We have to face the fact that when free verse has become practically universal, rigid adherence to fixed forms and rhyme creates an impression of old-fashionedness and harks inevitably back to the last century. This is not to deny that traditional techniques may be making a comeback. In the recent past poets in many different parts of the world have used such techniques to write very modern poetry: Jouve, Supervielle, Roubaud (a contemporary), García Lorca, Cocteau, Montale, Neruda, and Alberti would all be good examples. Deep inside I have the feeling that it is better to drop poems like *Harmatocska* (Little dew-drop) or *Bánat* (Sorrow): in capricious poetic prose translation, (no matter how painstakingly exact or ingenuous) they are bound to end up very remote from the original. Germans, Russians and Slovenians tend to follow their long-standing practice and render the fixed forms faithfully. English translators also feel, at least in the case of songs, that they should at least approximate to the form chosen by the author. Perhaps they imagine how slovenly and formless the songs of Burns, Blake or Yeats might appear in the hands of a bad translator. Songs constitute a very characteristic part of Attila József's lyrical output. Their translation is difficult because they are both simple and complex, ethereally light and the bearers of weighty contents. They turn on hidden diamond axles and if the translator is unable to imitate everything these small gems become insipid, they lose their sparkle and mysterious glitter. These miniature polyphonies cleverly blend ancient incantations, spells, old psalms, motifs of Hungarian and Finno-Ugrian folklore,

and the *Kalevala's* familiar strangeness with the lively imagery, playful tenderness and concise seriousness of the poet himself. True, often everything depends on the nuances, but the basic question is essentially formal: nothing to do with rhythm, but a problem of imagery, language and syntactic forming.

It is obviously easier to assimilate more voluminous poems, richer in emotion and passion. Michael Hamburger's serious and sombre version of *Külvárosi éj* (Night on the Outskirts) and the sustained hard tension of Vernon Watkins' *A Dunánál* (By the Danube) seem to prove this, although neither poem is particularly easy to translate. I could also give German, Russian and Slovene examples: in my opinion the Slovenian Kajetan Kovic's translation of the *Ode* approaches perfection.

The song-like poems are much more vulnerable. The above-mentioned *Bánat* (Sorrow) has a folksy and archaic flavour, words such as *futtam* and *varázs-üttön* gaining a special impact and radiance by virtue of their rare grammatical form. Let us see how it loosens and spreads in translation (probably owing to formal constraints); its original, concise, ballad-like verse becomes two stanzas:

Agancsom rég elhagyám,
törötten ing az ágon,
szarvas voltam hajdanán,
farkas leszek, azt bánom.

In Vernon Watkins' English:

I left my antlers
A long time ago;
Broken from my temples,
They swing on a bough.

Such I was myself:
A deer I used to be.
I shall be a wolf:
That is what troubles me.

There are two errors of interpretation *(törött* means simply broken and not *broken from the temples;* and *azt bánom* does not mean *troubles me* but *grieves me);* but what is worse and what really spoils the effect is the (perhaps inevitable) formal vacillation of these two stanzas.

The transplantation of images is a decisive problem in the translation of the entire oeuvre of Attila József. Either the translator has recourse to compatible linguistic-poetic material of his own, the methods and authenticity of which have already been established in poetry written in his mother tongue, or he must have a sure touch for hitting upon the right image and considerable linguistic talent. This must be especially difficult in English because modern English poetry has had a tendency to distance itself increasingly from expressive imagery. The tracks of Eliot have proved more influential than those of Dylan Thomas. This means not only that it is more difficult for the translator to tune in to that particular wavelength; it also means that the reader, used to something very different, is not likely to be *a priori* receptive to such imagery. Attila József's images are extremely concrete, they have the impact of gaze, their details evoke an image in the reader which is almost incredibly precise. The "baggy, greasy paper" slumbering "on the warm arm of the bush," the "stalk of straw posting itself on the boneless road," the "grass rustling with the tiny grey toad," the "log snoring on its belly" with the "mushroom at the end," such imagery is enough to convince the reader that it was not merely dreamed up by the poet; one feels that this is exactly how he saw them, that phenomena were transfixed in his memory with just this richness. The magic begins when the images in the poem achieve the effect of recognition. The reader feels that he has seen things the very same way, and what is more, with József images expressing the most abstract contents are just as elementary, as material and real: "the sea is a spittle, productive gluttony—the yellow mouth of gaping capital breathes on small, hiding countries." His images are not only unmistakably individual, they seem to occupy a natural place in the mainstream of each poem; in themselves and in their interrelations they function to put the poet's message across. Behind the most unexpected associations the almost mathematical precision of an ordering mind can be perceived. And another thing: in the world of Attila József objects take on almost human identity. The poet stoops with tender affection over tiny things which seem to radiate human warmth. Yet this lyrical poetry full of sentiment is never sentimental. This sometimes deceives the translator, for Attila József has such an intimate relationship with the world and the things in it that in his poems similes are often upstaged by outright personification: the scrub brush is not "as if it could stand up and walk," it really *walks*, it is not "like" a centipede, but it *is* a "centipede scrub brush." I think translations can only be successful if they avoid circumscription and boldly accept what is shockingly unusual in images like *a semmi ágán ül szívem* ("my heart sits on the branch of nothingness") as an expression

of inhuman loneliness and forlornness. The same goes for the mysterious and suggestive images of the "-isms" in *Medáliák* (Medals), or the imagery of *Külvárosi éj* (Night on the Outskirts), or of *Eszmélet* (Consciousness), in which the tangible is combined with highly abstract conceptualization.

There is much more to transplant if the translations are to be really good: sentences which have the conciseness of elementary truisms, the passion and emotion capable of raising philosophical or economic theses to poetic source material of the first grade, the characteristic key-words of the poet and the always faultlessly pure and tense linguistic formation. Having said such a lot about the difficulties of translation, allow me finally to quote the closing stanza of Vernon Watkins' translation of *A Dunánál* (By the Danube), convincing proof that it *is* possible and worthwhile to translate Attila József into English:

I want to work. Enough of conflict goes
Into that need which must confess the past.
The Danube's tender ripples which compose
Past, present, future, hold each other fast.

The battle which our ancestors once fought
Through recollection is resolved in peace,
And settling at long last the price of thought,
This is our task, and none too short its lease.

BEATRICE'S PAGES

From a novel

by

GYULA ILLYÉS

This is the first part of the opening chapter of Illyés's most recent work, Beatrice apródjai, *("Beatrice's Pages.") Published in 1979 and designated as a novel in Hungarian, it is in fact an autobiography which describes in detail a single year of Illyés's life. It was the dramatic year of 1919 when, as a schoolboy of seventeen and fresh from his rural background (so admirably described in his classic of 1934,* People of the Puszta*), he came to Budapest and became involved with the working class and the revolution, the short-lived Republic of Councils.*

The narrative picks him up as an enthusiastic conspirator in the aftermath of the collapse of the Republic, busily engaged in relief work coordinated by an illegal organization later to be called Red Relief, which distributed funds among the families of communists and other supporters of the Republic imprisoned by the newly established regime of Admiral Horthy. Red Relief also provided legal assistance to the imprisoned and helped those in hiding to escape from the country. "Beatrice's Pages" was reviewed by Miklós Györffy in NHQ *78.* — The Editor.

"Have you got any money?"

I always had money. Without some money on me I found myself unable to go out of the house in Budapest, just as I used to be unable to leave without a handkerchief—because my mother brought me up that way (my nose might start bleeding as it often did)—and without a penknife (there may always be a twig or a bit of wood to cut and trim, food to slice). I paid my respects to and wondered at the large windows of the trams. What if I broke one and could not pay for the damage? At home every broken window used to be a tragedy. It became a haunting obsession with me in a minor way, to make certain, however short I was of money, that I had at least the price of a tram-window in my pocket. Likewise it was a family rule with us to know, down to the last penny, of how much money we had in our pockets. I used to walk many blocks to save the fare. But even when I was at the depths of deprivation it was rare for me not to possess at least

the tramfare home. The coins to cover that were always there wrapped in a separate piece of newspaper, in a corner of my rather emaciated-looking purse. It was part of things that big city pavements were still treacherous ground for me. (In addition, I always had on me something to read that would fit into a pocket—most often a volume of the Cheap Library—for there might always be a few unoccupied moments for reading the world's literature that I had plunged into.)

So I nodded affirmation with the superiority of the well-to-do, and my answer included the exact sum.

"You see I am about to trust to your care money from which you must never, under any circumstances, take a penny, not even as a loan and not even for a second."

I stiffened; but his next sentence was:

"We would trust it to you uncounted."

"We would trust"—that seemed to mean something concrete, although it certainly did not mean individual persons, even less friends or people I knew.

The conversation took place at Ede Hébelt's law office. I knew the man who had summoned me there only by sight. Although I had heard his name, I now called him in my head as "Mr. That'snotwhatmatters" because, after the rapidly spoken name that had accompanied the handshake, he had added, "But that's not what matters."

He evidently knew more about me. He even knew that I was learning Greek, getting ready for my transfer exam to matriculate. He knew about the food I had taken to Markó utca prison and had even heard that I had been trying to find the Varjases at the Central Police Station.

There in that often crowded solicitor's waiting room, through which Mrs. Ágoston sometimes hurried, began a period of my life that, though it had its unexpected lights, was unfortunately not happy for long.

The Red Relief, which was later to become institutionalized, did not yet exist. To be sure, it was already spoken of by that name, but then only in lower-case letters, the more effective, of course, for that.

I was handed enough banknotes to fill a brief-case but the money seemed a lot only on account of its volume—the inflation was on. And there was a long list of addresses to go with it. My job was to learn by heart five or six names and addresses in advance and then conceal the list itself at some safe place, but not where I lived, and finally always to tear off and destroy the part which I no longer needed.

There were no figures to designate the amount after any of the names, only Roman numerals—I, II, III, IV, or V. I had to decide on the spot,

according to the degree of destitution, how much to leave at each place. Always about the cost of ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty kilos of flour (or potatoes?). It had to be done quickly and inconspicuously.

This was not a particularly difficult job for me. I had been in a sufficient number of working-class homes in my time to look around and establish the degree of poverty as soon as I stepped into a kitchen from the open inside gallery that served as a corridor. (The glass kitchen-door was the front door in those homes.) A sniff or two followed, the smell of whatever had been in the pot hovered half a day later, that's if there had been anything. No questions though; perhaps one was not welcome.

And then, count out their money right there in front of them?

What I finally did was to put different sums of money in each pocket. I handed over either one wad or the other, sometimes more than one.

It was a job that suited my seventeen-eighteen-year-old mind. I established which way the land lay in mysterious and self-importantly clever cross-examination, and then, at the peak of tears and complaints, I quickly stood up in keeping with instructions, and placed the money, or rather the mysterious-looking packet or packets, on the table, and off I went, not able, however, to resist turning back from the door to say a few solemn words—something to the effect that the working class would not forget its fighting sons; the international solidarity of the proletariat was alive; or that the cause would revive.

After my first few visits I could see that the job had its risks. There were some who had expected more money and yelled after me from the gallery and even on the staircase. On one occasion I found myself at the wrong place and literally had to make my escape after my clumsy questions, skipping down the stairs three at a time, but more anxious about the money commended to me than for my own safety.

*

It was in the course of these visits, which I made always after dark in keeping with instructions, that I came to know a pubescent girl, beautiful like a Botticelli angel, with open features, yet locked, in her look, in the virginity of her innocence.

She was the kind of apparition whom one might ask to marry one at first sight; at least a young man who was only longing for the sexual satisfaction derived from relations with another person.

Why can risk or danger appear as pleasure? And not only in gambling. Is it that every bit of our body hungers—even at the cost of trouble—to challenge

fortune, though such a challenge may easily turn into fatal misfortune? What does the body, chiefly the young body—and even more the young soul—mean by this bold provocation of fate? The most memorable knocks on the head (our own local variant of the slap on the face, and generally dealt on the back of the nape) I used to get from my godfather because, although not in the least naughty by nature, I was in the habit of climbing into the bull paddock, to draw arrows of reed from the rush-wall, running like lightning from the dreadful famous stud bulls, ruminating on the straw, with the chain unhooked from the ring on their noses.

Were the arrows that much of an attraction? Presumably not. From the thousand-and-one instances I might have recalled, my memory turns up another flashback—perhaps by way of an association triggered off by the arrow—another example of taking risks, of tempting fate. I was thinking of the glimmering pocket-mirror, a gift from the fair (which I had so badly wanted not only because it could make the sunrays dance like so many dazzling fairy girls, but also because the other side was a puzzle, with a tiny white ball that could be manoeuvred into the open mouth of a monster-woman). On the first happy day of possession I hung it on the stable door behind the house, and started to sling stones at it with the rubber catapult which I had received (after a long spell of begging for it) that same day, shooting out the stones all around my fragile target without touching it, as knife-throwers do at the circus. Moving further and further, from this strange target, I toyed with my luck until a pebble finally broke the mirror. Fear and relief—this post-coital transformation of tension. Into weeping? I cannot recall that. Youth seeking adventure? Only as much as the Vikings had chased adventure, or the Hungarians, once having found their homeland, looked for a more distant continent.

What can intensify this kind of gambling with danger practically to the point of sensual pleasure-seeking? We know from fairy-tales and schoolbooks the kind of knightly deeds which romanticism suggests are manly, that is if there is anyone to see it. That crazy knight whom Schiller's damsel persuaded to risk his life for a glove—although he knew damn well that he would never do anything else for the hysterical bitch—boldly faced the danger of death: he was being watched.

There was likewise danger in the episode in the course of which I met the little fairy princess whose name I no longer recall but for whom, as soon as I was within her view and knew that her paradisical glance was on me, I would have gladly faced all the torments of hell. Yes, I would have. Death? Would we really be any the wiser if we could translate into human sensations what the male insect knows about his head going to be bitten off by

the female at the moment of ejaculation? Would it be deterred from love? Would it not carry out what the instinct of the species commands just the same?

A zealous pupil of the times and of the circle of friends I frequented in Budapest, I had thought I was above all the physical and mental problems with which love-life, or rather (as we, too, already called it) sexuality, faced mankind. Neither futurism, nor cubism, but not even activism (that is none of the Hungarian hosts of the modern isms listed on the cover of *MA*) had anything to do with love poetry. Until then (and for long decades afterwards) Kassák had not written anything like it—that would have been regarded as Ady or Petőfi epigonism, as a symbolistic or folk-national relic—like rhyme or rhythm. But none will fall into as many traps as those who walk superior and unafraid among the traps. To girls whose hands I dared not touch, I spoke casually about Freud's libido theory, which was by then widely discussed in intellectual circles here (I accepted it), or about Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai's alleged argument (which I only partly rejected) that an embrace was a need like a glass of water.

*

As dusk fell that day, I walked towards one of the ugliest districts of Budapest. I trotted along the full length of the dirty-brown stone wall of the Kerepesi Cemetery, which was disgustingly pasted with a profusion of posters vilifying the revolution. Slushy muck on the pavements, oily soot in the air; and on the other side of the wall, in earth periodically shaken by clanging trams, here racing wildly to make up for the bottlenecks of the city, lay the bones and skull of Vörösmarty, at whose tomb I had just paid a personal tribute—just as I had visited Ady. Then followed the streets edged with the rickety sheds and stands of the Teleki tér market, Gypsy, that is Negro, encampments in African disorder—but in sleet.

A railwaymen's housing estate—standard homes of some sort—were yet to come, I told myself. Bad lighting, gaps of muddy soil, metres-wide in the pavement. I moved a sum larger than that for Category IV, to the right-hand pocket of my jacket.

Inside, the house was not so disheartening. Here again the kitchen with its glass door served as the entrance to the flat.

A strong odour of cooking, but pleasant. Instead of the usual rank dish-rags and dish-cloths there was fresh linen, instead of a mess of unwashed pots and pans, the fragrance of clean-rinsed dishes.

The girl was sitting by the wax-cloth-covered kitchen-table and was

performing, by the light of a naked bulb hanging from the ceiling, the extraordinary feat of sewing and reading at the same time.

No adult, neither man, nor woman, but her father would soon get home.

"May I wait for him here?"

"Do sit down."

A pot of some slow-boiling vegetable was steaming on the stove, occasionally raising the lid. The girl kept her eyes on that, too, cooling the froth with water when it was about to boil over. And there was still another job: on a smaller flame she was stirring some kind of baby food, now and then raising the wooden spoon to her lips. All this done sitting, turning to the kitchen-stove.

But her main concern was that incredible simultaneous sewing and reading. She must have been keenly interested in both. A stitch, and, as she pulled up the thread, her eyes darted back to her book.

Was I at the right place, that was really the only question for me to ask her. What was she reading? The textbook lesson for her technical night school. Was she learning a trade? Some sort of fancy leatherwork, but just what I could not understand since just then the sound of a child's solitary babbling came from the room. She hurried in with the stirred milk-pap. She closed the door, and when, after a while, she returned, she sat down at the table to continue her sewing and cramming as if she wanted to make up for the lost minutes.

According to instructions I should not have spent so much time at any one place. I should not really have sat down at all. But as soon as I started to look more attentively at the girl, with the idea that this would be the last glance because I had to go, the instructions, and the danger, grew dim. I even began to cherish the sweet challenge of this danger. Still, there was a marked feeling of tension. All of a sudden I could not bear the tap in the sink behind me, dripping at irregular intervals.

"May I turn it off?"

"But then I can't turn it on; only father."

"I will turn it on for you when you ask me to."

Then the rotund alarm clock turned unbearably noisy. As if it measured time irregularly. My first crazy impulse was to get up and tighten the tap. Then—as the clock went on ticking—I tightened it more, so hard, that at first I feared I could not turn it on again.

A railwayman's cap in good condition hung from a peg. Farther, against the wall, a well-scrubbed pastry-board. Shouldn't I take back some of the money from my right-hand pocket? Elsewhere there would be better use

for it. But then Category IV was for the families of those condemned to death or life imprisonment.

I took out my thick, cheap paperback edition of *Paradise Lost*, and set the fangs of my mind at the barely understandable translation.

We read like that for a while, about three-quarters of an hour, hardly glancing at each other. Of course, I still managed to take a more exacting look at her. She must have been thirteen or fourteen. Once or twice she went back to the room to attend to the baby. As she came back, she, too, looked at me on her way from the door to the table.

I just remembered, or rather it rose to my olfactory consciousness, that beet-root was cooking in the pot that kept raising its lid. Given a mug of water, the smell became more penetrating.

How lovely, how lovely—my eyes kept telling me. And it was no longer only her face I saw, but also her bearing as she sat down on the kitchen-chair, turning to the range, putting something else to simmer on the small flame, cooling the water that wanted to escape from the pot with a splash from a mug.

This was all that really happened, and out of it crystallized an ideal that fitted the theory of Stendhal, whom I happened to have been reading about that time. It metamorphosed into an experience that would haunt me for years, the way a seed is formed. We exchanged a few more sentences, but there is no particle of these crumbs I can taste again. To bring to life what had happened there, even approximately, one would have to analyse to the full youth's ability to create ideals and then to keep them within reach to toy with. I read on, most attentively, so that what I remember from the scene most clearly is what my mind took in then and there of that difficult passage. I had reached a place where a sheet was missing from my worn volume of *Paradise Lost*, but only in print, for the missing text was there, copied out in a tiny handwriting, to make it fit the rest of the pages. It was this part in ink which challenged me to make out the intricate text, to understand the sentences which were even more complex in Hungarian, for the handwritten pages had been copied out and fitted in by György Bloch, a close friend, the original owner of the volume, student president of our literary club. Although he was not in my class but in the parallel A, Bloch was a good conversation partner in the school corridors—especially as I was vice-president, thanks to Lustig's efforts on my behalf.

As I glanced up to rest my mind, I noticed a box of dominoes on the kitchen cupboard. The set was not in its original container, but in a cigar-box, and therefore not in order, but just thrown in. It made me mentally redistribute the money in my pockets and playfully tip the balance again. But suddenly I found myself saying:

"What about a game of dominoes?"

She picked up the cardboard box, and, without speaking or looking at me, placed it on the table.

"You can still go on with your sewing," I said smiling.

She understood my feeble wit (or admiration?), for although she still did not look at me, she too smiled. In the meantime she continued her sewing.

How beautiful she is, my eyes repeated.

I had just set up my blocks when the glass-door opened without anyone having knocked.

There he was at last. The head of the family. Railwaymen's fur hat, heavy railwaymen's boots. My immediate association was again the sum in my right-hand pocket. My mind raced to the balancing act I had to perform, that is how much I was to leave here to the disadvantage of those whom I still had to visit that day.

There was mistrust in the way he received me. As soon as I said that my call was connected with his condemned son, he sent his daughter inside. Thinking that I would not see her again (the general practice was to take off in a hurry after handing over the money), I silently said goodbye to the girl who was already standing on the threshold. I bowed more deeply than usual, and probably glanced at her in a manner which hoped for something of the same kind in return. She did look back, but without acknowledging the message in my eyes. If there was emotion in her features, that obviously was not meant for me personally. It was just the unconscious perception of a current of sexuality by a nubile girl. The circumstance that she did let her eyes rest on me just a little longer and that her eyes radiated a question (as I later thought and recalled) was in all probability addressed to the situation: it was obviously of importance to her what news there was of her brother. But then she obediently left, that is went into the dark room, directing a glance at her father, too, one which conveyed both question and request.

My experience suggested that here, as elsewhere, I ought to be brief. But I barely reached the point of explaining that I had come on behalf of some people who would like to help his son, or those on whom caring for his son devolved, when he cracked the whip: "There is no need for that." By the time I started the next sentence, that the fate of his son was not only the concern of his kin, and that those who were anxious about him would like to know whether he was getting food parcels, and whether he had a good lawyer, he had got into a visible rage and shouted at me: "And what business is that of yours? Why are you so interested in a gaol-bird? Who are you anyway?" I must have replied something to the effect that I was someone

who did not think of his son as guilty, in spite of his being in prison. By that time he had lost all patience, and sent me off with a "Scram!"

"Is your son well provided for then?"

"What son?"

"Comrade X."

Writing memoirs is a tricky thing. Sometimes—for instance, here—one finds oneself writing dialogue fit for fiction. In other words, as one is unable to recall reality with the microscopic accuracy required, one inevitably fictionalizes and impersonates. For what can bring back to memory, even at a distance of ten years, an argument of ten minutes? To be sure, Comrade X means that I no longer remember even his name, though I could probably dig it out in the documents of the time.

"I got him a job in the main workshop, I got him leave from the army, but then he picked up that slut, for I know damn well it was she who led him under the gallows, if anyone knows it is me!"

He must have said something of that kind, screaming by then.

Could be that he sensed danger and that he was pretending (with the instinct that is an everyday occurrence even in the animal kingdom) to save himself, perhaps the family, or the situation?

Suddenly I saw things more clearly in my head. Why was it the young girl who was feeding the baby and keeping house for this harsh old man (old compared to my age then)? Where was his wife? and what about the son's wife? Was she also in prison?

I asked.

He was screaming again. I should get the hell out of there because he would do something that would be a real reason for the police to come! On account of me, my broken mug.

The girl came out of the room. It was clear that he would spew out his rage at her, but apparently so much of it tightened his throat that he finally asked her, only after a short delay and in a manner that was now frightening because of the very quitness of the tone:

"What is it?"

I expected her to make herself small and pass her father sideways edging her way to the table. But she went there straight, almost brushing against him, and picked up her sewing and book, indicating that she had come for them. In the meantime, of course, she took a longer look at me, and almost returned my glance. True, now there was a silent question in her eyes that was probably really close to her heart, whose impact, though certainly not sexual, made her heart beat faster. Probably because of the love that bound her to her brother, and perhaps to the child's mother.

And she took her sewing and reading through the open door into the dark room.

Involuntarily tamed, I could say made innocent, by her appearance and then by that strangely warm glance, I came out with something to the effect that it was not nice to leave those in trouble.

I thought that the well-built man was going to assault me physically (I cannot recall his face, for it was distorted by the lightning jolts of his rage).

I stood up. That seemed to put him into a still madder rage.

I too was wearing knee boots, and now also a countrified sheepskin jacket.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," he said.

"That goes for you more than for me."

He looked me over with the contempt one keeps for the hounds of the mighty. He must have realized that he was faced with cheeks young enough to be kept smooth by one shave a month.

This did not lessen his instinctual identification of me as a police spy (as he must have); a most appropriate instinct. Youth desires power, desires chiefly police power, and, once having won a role in power, youth is more dangerous in operation than adults. It operates with greater zeal because it is less restrained and less experienced. Nothing was as terrifying as the striplings of the slums, the apprentices who turned on those who would have taught them socialism, the urchins who used sub-machine guns, or the rich young big-mouths who left ten-room flats to take to the streets to shout the slogans of their spokesmen and their fathers' newspapers.

"You crook! Scoundrel!" I was called to my face by a man whose rage I had provoked and I still do not know how.

I knew that at one more word from me he would strike me. And I also knew that I would hit back and might start something that could really fetch the police. And then... there was the money in my pockets... Let me stress that we were never slapped in our family, neither by our mother nor by our father. So, proud as I was of myself as a brawler, I repressed the Ozora stabber in me; to hit back like mad was a mark of nobility and an obligation not only in Ozora but in our entire neighbourhood. I left.

*

This time I did not race down the staircase. I found (or find now) that a change was starting in me. I had experienced something very important. I was just starting to sense the full effect of thespell I had been under—as one tastes the finer and more lasting fire of the noblest brandies. It was a magnetic radiation that had not come so much from the young girl but

rather from beauty itself. Moment by moment, and filthy stair by filthy stair, I was trying to calm the anger, the rage, and the shock I had had to swallow. So much so that, as I was approaching street level, I actually stopped. I found myself smiling, virtually licking happiness off my lips. I was certain that I would see the girl again (I still did not know her name and had only guessed at her position in the family); after all there were so many things pulling us towards each other.

I walked back through the filthy slums around Teleki tér, but I was bathing in sheer joy that, after so much fumbling, I had found her for a lifetime. I trudged along the wall of Kerepesi Cemetery amidst the madly rattling trams a yard from the bones of Vörösmarty, and then plodded on the pavement amidst the city's slummiest prostitutes. They were not so much hunting now as chasing each other, the workers bound for home from the factories were getting scarce. In that mud, I was walking toward a future on roses, so much so that only the wads of money in my pockets scared me back to reality: how would I explain (to my faith) if I were to be mugged here? But not even this made me notice a reality different from what was then the real event of my life.

Unless they conserve their lies, men usually think back on the loss of their virginity with a sense of shame. It happens but rarely that body and soul can quench their thirst at once and from the same source. Therefore, when the soul too gets full satisfaction, it deletes, or repaints in false colours, the animal greed of the body which raced ahead to dampen its claim.

A few days later I reported to Mr. That'snotwhatmatters on this case. I had decided that for the time being I would not allocate to anyone else the money I had meant to leave at the girl's house, but would ask for advice how that abused mother could be found and how, through her, assistance could be given the condemned man. Because if that was the way he was regarded, he rally needed it. Deep down I was probably considering the case in the light of how I could get back into that kitchen of the gleaming dishes and clean-smelling linen.

I personally must certainly not go there again, was the answer I was given. What could have made the railwayman so inordinately angry, who the young mother was and how she had vanished without her baby, were questions best left to be looked into by others. It was certainly in my best interests (and that of the cause) not to be seen in that vicinity at all.

I found myself unable to comply with the second part of the sentence. I trotted along the bleak stone fence of Kerepesi Cemetery twice. I ambled for hours around the standard buildings, gradually reducing the circles I made around her house. I was waiting for chance. It was no fiery passion

that was driving me; I dare say I was bent on the tempting and really pleasant walk, on spending my leisure as I wanted to in that wet winter whose grimy slush creeped even into my boots.

At that time I must have been able to recall her face and figure still fairly accurately. Then weeks later I wandered that way for a couple of hours again, by then debating in myself whether I would recognize her. None of this reduced the attraction of experiencing in that vicinity the kind of tension that would bring me cathartic satisfaction.

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What exists is not First Love—see Dante's great flame—but First Loves. It is emotional gallantry to give the name of a single person to the first embodiment of the lifelong passion of love. Dante was just fortunate—or perhaps a parsimonius-penned Freudian. Or, even more likely, he was a biographer and a good editor as well as a writer (in the sense that every poet lives a novel, living his life). He was all these as he portrayed only a single Beatrice (for a story is rounder in artistic appearance if it has but one heroine) at the expense of all the other women that life gave him.

"One life, one woman"—Péter Veres's and László Németh's slogan (it can even sound as a battlecry)—bespeaks sexual saturation as well as a very fortunate life. Dante created a memorable type, but who knows how many Lombardian beauties (beautiful in body and in soul) he had pushed aside for sheer artistic convenience until he met the woman, obviously just as much of a heroine, who allegedly gave him sensual bliss to last through the conceiving of thirteen children (how can one otherwise explain the frequent repetitions?), and whose name it is consequently absurdly comical to put down as Mrs. Dante.

Do I idealize the figures I mention in my writings? I still regard as realistic the sweet working girl whose being I meant to safeguard against the impact of time as painters spray their pencil-drawings with fixative. József Révai caused me no small delight when he said about the sketches I made of Anna Orosz that she was the most authentic working-girl character in Hungarian literature.

To my mind neither the figure of Anna Orosz, nor of that young harvester girl who was not given a name, was idealized. Nor do I consider idealized the girl whose figure (beauty in mind and beauty in body) has been moulded for forty years in several genres in my literary workshop, and whom, for the very reason that she has a name that has been immortal for a long time, I have always cast nameless.

It is easy enough to filter out what is shared in all these reaction responses, each so far removed in time and space from the others, reducing them to that certain common denominator—which will, incidentally, soon be mentioned more often and become more meaningful in human relations than in arithmetics. It is easy enough to name the result of the operation: apparently the ideal type for whom I have a special affinity is the working woman. But what is the type really like for whom I fell again and again? And what does this falling for lock me up in and what does it exempt me from? Like Dante, who, wrapping himself in Beatrice, probably lived quite freely, that is without restraint, but who was in some way led by Beatrice just the same—the most reliably led above the abysses as the saints of holy images are guided by the angel hovering above the plank.

IN MEMORIAM C. P. SNOW

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

Losing a friend means not only mourning and sorrow, it is also always an occasion for self-recrimination. We should have met more often, I should have thought of him more often. I did not look up C. P. Snow when I was last in London, in the autumn of seventy-nine. Next time, I said to myself, and that though for these nineteen years past every London trip meant calling on him first. When, in 1961, with only three issues of this journal behind us, I got to London, anxious about the way our paper might be received, I rang Snow the very first day. I can still see myself at Camden Town station, searching for those cartwheel pennies, and not managing to work the public telephone. Everything is interesting the first day in a new town, as with a new love, and one remembers every little thing. That call is doubly engraved in my memory since I also remember telling him, a couple of days later, in his house, that a quarter of an hour passed before I managed to get through, and then he laughed again, as Falstaff might have laughed.

Again, the first time had been when I had managed to get the pennies in, and pressed the button, and had begun to spell my name by way of introduction. Then he had interrupted laughing, saying my name as accurately a physicist might give you a formula.

Writer and physicist. That describes the man and his work. A physicist who became a writer, and a writer who remained a physicist. A physicist and writer who became a public face and a political factor to be reckoned with. The only writer in the age of the new physics who understood what the new physics was about. Perhaps others understand it too, but he was the only one to make a public issue of it. His brief *Two Cultures* is one of the most frequently referred to works published this century. He there said what everyone knew, or thought he knew, when trying to establish the place of intellectuals in the world, but Snow first said it out loud:

the humanities and the natural sciences had parted company. To put it starkly: it is no longer enough to be familiar with Shakespeare and D. H. Lawrence, Bach and Bartók, one also has to know the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Or was it the third? Perhaps the first? Here I go, referring to *Two Cultures*, and I still do not know.

During the War, Snow, in his thirties, did scientific work for Churchill's War Cabinet, and later, in the immediate post-war years, helped to organize nuclear research in Britain, but he already wrote fiction at the time. He did not support Churchill's party, being a member of the Labour Party, as such he served as Minister for Science in one of the Wilson governments and, in recognition of his work, he was first knighted and then awarded a life peerage, becoming Lord Snow. In his letters to me though he still remained C. P., lately he signed them Charles. When in Budapest early in the seventies, in the company of Pamela Hansford Johnson, his wife, and a novelist of equal distinction, and their son Philip, he rang me and introduced himself as *Hó úr*. His step-daughter, Lindsay, who had spent a year working for Corvina Press in Budapest, had taught him to say Mr. Snow in Hungarian.

I had rung Snow first in London since he was the first English writer who had contributed an article to this journal at my request, as it were by return mail. His "The moral un-neutrality of science" already appeared in *NHQ* 2, in the spring of 1961. The article bears witness to his double life and work. He wrote on the doubts and certainties of scientists bringing to bear a writer's complete armory: every expression is to the point, and shows all the beauty of fine writing. There, almost twenty years ago, he drew attention to facts which, at this time when the Cold War tide is rising once again, and the nuclear quiver holds more and deadlier arrows, is much closer to the centre of attention of scientists, not to mention the whole of humanity. The subject was formulated in terms that recall Hamlet's great soliloquy by the 1978 Unesco Round Table of Scientists: Suicide or Survival? This confrontation was not as obvious in 1961, both scientists and the public at large preferred to ignore it.

Snow was one of the first to declare that scientists cannot stand aside, that is what the moral un-neutrality of the scientist means. The section of his paper in which he discussed the aesthetic aspects of science is particularly appealing. He evoked G. H. Hardy's *A Mathematician's Apology* and Darwin's and Rutherford's joy at the moment of recognition or invention. To my own surprise and delight he mentioned a Hungarian as well: "One meets the same thing all over the history of science: Bolyai's great yell of

triumph when he saw he could construct a self-consistent non-Euclidean geometry..."

The reason why I first turned to Snow after *NHQ 1* appeared, and why he first sent an article at my request was that he was the first British writer to show an interest in the literature of the socialist countries. While the frosts of the Cold War still held he edited, year after year, an anthology of stories from the Eastern half of Europe, published to catch the Christmas market, under the title, evocative of Shakespeare's magic, *Winter Tales*. He stayed true to himself and, not long before his death, already in ill health, he wrote a scholarly introduction for *44 Hungarian Short Stories*, published as a volume by Corvina Press.

I mentioned self-recrimination. I feel that way in the name of Hungarian literature and Hungarian publishing as well. We frequently mention Snow's name, we refer to his *Two Cultures* time out of number, but we published very few of his novels. And yet his *Strangers and Brothers* series is one of the major enterprises of modern fiction. Snow's friend and biographer, William Cooper, more of whose books are known to Hungarian readers than C. P. Snow's, describes the series as a twentieth century *Comédie humaine*. Not that he wished to imply that Snow was the Balzac of our age, but the ten volumes of *Strangers and Brothers* allow one to understand the England of our time much as Balzac gives us a picture of France a century ago. Snow's volumes link up, yet they stand on their own as well, and only Lewis Eliot, the principal character, is a permanent fixture, though there are volumes where he plays second fiddle to his brother. Those interested in that sort of thing have worked out that there are three thousand characters in Balzac. Snow's performance is much more modest in that respect as well, but in his case too every character can be distinguished from every other, as Marcell Benedek said about those of the *Comédie humaine*. It is certain that, if it had depended on Marcell Benedek, that Hungarian apostle of world literature, Snow's series would have been published in Hungary.

I was always on the verge of blushing when talking about literature, English or Hungarian, in the Snows' house, you could throw a stone from there to the Hungarian embassy in Eaton Place, and we mentioned the receptivity of the latter, of original and translated works. Both Charles and Pamela displayed a familiarity with Hungarian aspects that was worthy of respect. The question was in the air, though never made explicit: what of Charles' novels then, not to mention Pamela's? Back home I made suggestions again and again, I asked and cajoled, but only three of the series appeared. What could be the reason? Not the value, quality or substance of the novels. Perhaps an odd sort of mixture of things. The curiosity that

followed the isolation of the fifties, then a feeling that Snow cannot be a really good writer if he is a public figure in his own country, and, oddest of all, the fact that Snow is a realist writer. The last thing we expected from the West at the time, as a sort of backlash of the period Hungary had just escaped from, was realist writing.

What we neglected in Hungary was that though Snow is certainly not the stylistic heir of Proust or Joyce, he nevertheless did not escape their influence, nor would he have wanted to. As Snow himself put it, what he wanted to examine was "how much of what we are is due to accidents of our class and time, and how much is due to something innate and unalterable within ourselves."

The success of *Two Cultures* is still valid, its effect has become part of the shared intellectual trasury of mankind. One good reason for publishing Strangers and Brothers in Hungarian translation is that Lewis Eliot—like his creator—embodied both cultures in one person, in his thinking and actions, his hesitations and recognitions, failures and come-backs, and long-term indecision.

Lewis Eliot would also be seventy-five this year, if his story had not been closed. Snow went on writing, *In Their Wisdom* appeared three years ago. Many say it is his chef d'oeuvre. How can I forgive myself for not being able to speak to Snow about this book? The volume lies next to my bed, but I keep on putting off reading it. As an excuse I might mention that it took me two days to read his last novel which he had wanted to hand over personally at a reception given at the Hungarian Embassy in London last autumn, on the occasion of the publication of our seventy-fifth issue. But the state of his health would not allow him to attend.

The last book is called *A Coat of Varnish*. It is a thriller, on the surface. In fact it removes that coat of varnish with which the civilized world covers its horror, and the cruelty of body and soul. It would, I am sure, please Snow's sense of self-irony if the book were to appear in Hungarian as part of the Albatros series, that is, as a genuine crime novel.

INTERVIEW

ARNOLD HAUSER ON HIS LIFE AND TIMES

PART I.

Kristóf Nyíri: You completed The Social History of Art and Literature *in 1950. Since then it has been translated into 17 languages and published in more than one million copies... Your latest work was published under the title Soziologie der Kunst—The Sociology of Art.*

Arnold Hauser: I am a late harvester. I wrote my first important book between the age of 47 and 57, in other words, at an age when many people have already passed their zenith. These were the ten years in which the *Social History of Art and Literature* was written.

Q. This book was, of course, the fruit of an evolution which goes back to the 1910s, to the start of that certain great generation...

A. I'll try to explain how that so-called "great generation" came about. It began approximately when György Lukács returned from Heidelberg at the time of the outbreak of the First World War. And when perhaps a dozen young, ambitious, but unprepared young men formed a group around him, with which I got in touch through my friend Károly (Karl) Mannheim who was a fellow-student at the university. A circle was formed, which met, once a week, on Sunday afternoons at the flat of the poet Béla Balázs. The group consisted almost from the beginning of about fifteen people and was a literary circle, later given the name Sunday Circle. Lukács was its centre from the beginning. By its nature the circle was a very loosely organized intellectual group; anybody could become a member, no certificate was needed, no publications expected, neither a confession of faith, nor the acceptance of a doctrine, nor the acceptance of Lukács's writings on the whole. And what was discussed? That was also independent of any kind of programme, not like the literary salons of the eighteenth century, nor like the "cénacles" in France during the period of Romanticism, where, there was a central person, whose doctrine, creed, or work was considered the kernel of the meeting. We met regularly and did not even know at the beginning what would be discussed. It was not that somebody read an essay or a short story, or something, and then we would debate it—far from it. We began to talk about everyday things, some artistic event, perhaps an exhibition, perhaps the appearance of a new book, perhaps a new issue of the literary review *Nyugat*.

Incidentally, the circle was not politically committed, because although it had a liberal

A team from Hungarian Television visited the late Arnold Hauser, the sociologist and philosopher in his London home in 1975. The interview by Kristóf Nyíri was broadcast on March 3 1976. The following year Arnold Hauser returned to his native country, and died in Budapest some months later. We publish the interview in two parts.

character and retained this liberal character, and this was self-evident, we did not refer to ourselves as Socialists, let alone Communists, and as far as I know there was never any talk about communism or any general political programme. Perhaps incidentally, about some important principles or matters of ideology, yes. But its starting-point was entirely different from what it became later. The starting-point was purely intellectual. The truly great of the world of ideas towards which we tended were people like Meister Eckehart, the medieval German mystic, or Kierkegaard, or Dostoevsky, of whom we knew that he was a through and through conservative; these were the persons who formed the centre of our intellectual world, which was in opposition to the then fashionable and still prevailing positivism, of which Mach and Moleschott were the centres. Our world of ideas was removed even from the positivist, materialist views going back to the eighteenth century. The word intellect or spirit could have been the motto of this first process expressed in a variety of forms. Not only because the periodical which Lukács began to publish with Lajos Fülep, even before he returned to Hungary, was called *Szellem* (Spirit), but it was also expressed in the free evening school which developed out of the Sunday Circle and which was called the School of Spiritual Sciences, and which everybody was entitled to enter straight from the street, if he wished, and which became very popular. At times it was attended by 100–150 persons.

It was also an expression of the ambition of György Lukács that at that time—in addition to his project for a work on aesthetics in Florence—partly under the influence of a very intimate friend of his youth, Ernst Bloch, he returned to Hungary with the plan to write a monograph on Dostoevsky. The little book titled the *Theorie des Romans*, the theory of the novel, was meant as an introduction to a monograph on Dostoevsky, but he did not get any further, his interest led him in another direction. The original spiritual orientation somehow lost ist actuality, it became less stimulating than it had been, but it stayed on in the sense of an *Aufhebung*, the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, that we suspend certain theories and doctrines, but they remain and continue to exert an influence. In this sense the essence of the Dostoevsky legacy was not lost, but it was no longer at the centre of the movement. The *Theorie des Romans* is one of the most successful works of Lukács, even stylistically, and if I may make a modest comment, I am its god-father, because its original title would have been *Philosophie des Romans*, but Dessoir, then the editor of the *Zeitschrift der Aesthetik*, and who had a strange bias about the application of the term philosophy, considered it unsuitable in this context. Then I suggested to Lukács that it would perhaps be more correct and even *de facto* better in this case to call it *Theorie des Romans*, and he then immediately accepted it (in such things Lukács was very receptive, but in essential things he was not so receptive).

Q. And Zalai's influence?

A. Yes, there is another historical legacy which we received free, and this is the person and work of Béla Zalai,* who died young, who was killed or mortally wounded in the War. Béla Zalai was the first truly gifted, young, modern Hungarian philosopher. He was an extremely inventive, original thinker, whose problem area was mainly systematization. My own doctoral work, my

* 1882–1915. A copy of his still unpublished *Allgemeine Theorie der Systeme* was found in the famous suitcase Lukács had deposited in a branch of the Deutsche Bank of Heidelberg, in 1917. The suitcase which also contained Lukács's early "Heidelberg Aesthetics" and other unpublished works and correspondence was identified and opened eighteen months after the death of Lukács in 1971. — Zalai died of thypus in a POW camp in Omsk, Siberia *(The Ed.)*

dissertation dealt with Zalai's systematization, published in the periodical *Athenaeum*.

The significance of Zalai's philosophy ot us was mainly that the elements had no importance in themselves, but received their due importance through their function, which came about by their being related to each other. The system is nothing but the interconnection of the elements. In various spheres, in various areas of knowledge or of mental creation, or of spiritual existence, the same elements may have different functions, and these functions usually form different systems, and it is out of these systems that the individual disciplines and the individual sciences are formed. This was a great stimulation and a great anticipation of the later theory of function, which is the fundamental problem of the entire modern philosophy. This is partly why we attributed so much significance to Zalai.

Q. As far as I know, the first meeting of the Sunday Circle took place in 1915. What was the intellectual atmosphere that prompted this circle and gave it a special orientation?

A. As new as this Sunday Circle may have appeared and may still appear, as a gathering it was not so new, it had antecedents, it did not fall from heaven. There was the Galilei Circle,* which was a liberal, from a bourgeois point of view very progressive, formation. There was Ervin Szabó,** who was a great spiritual force and stimulus, and in a sense was the ideal of all of us. A strong man, a man with a strong will! And mainly there was all that György Lukács had brought home from Germany. He had friends in Germany from whom he had adopted many things. Among his friends there was Ernst Bloch, whom I have already mentioned, and who was an extremely gifted young philosopher, and who already then worked on the *Geist der Utopie*, his first famous book. There was Emil Lask, the young scientist, who was killed in the First World War. Perhaps most important of all there was Georg Simmel; Lukács was a favourite disciple of his and a member of his "privatissimum," of the seminar which met in Simmel's home. He was the elect of the elect. Lukács brought his influence with him, he brought along the entire intellectual atmosphere which characterized sociology in the Germany of the day, and which had come about as a result of the influence of Max Weber and Werner Sombart.

Q. And was there something that was explicitly discussed?

A. — Dostoevsky was explicitly discussed, and Meister Eckehart, Hegel was discussed, Marx more rarely, and communism and socialism even less at the beginning. But sociology existed already, whether it was discussed or not, there was a lively sociological atmosphere in which we moved about.

Q. What personal contacts brought you into this circle?

A. Well, the most direct personal link was my friend Mannheim,* whom I met during my university years (with whom I developed a friendship that was to last a lifetime—even if it underwent some fluctuations in time, which are not worth discussing in this context), through whom I got acquainted with Lukács, and through them with the Sunday Circle.

György Lukács was no doubt not only the starting-point and centre of the Circle, but its unconditionally recognized leader.

* 1908–1918, and again, briefly, in 1919. (The Ed.)

** 1877–1918. Marxist political scientist, journalist, editor, and librarian. (The Ed.)

* In No. 57 of NHQ we published some of Karl Mannheim's letters to Lukács written in 1911–12. Éva Gábor who edited, introduced, and annotated the letters for NHQ, explains the Sunday Circle in detail in her footnotes and provides a full list of permanent and occasional participants at the meetings of the Circle. (The Ed.)

Not a dictator, but the *de facto* centre of the movement. And besides Lukács the two most important personalities in the Circle were Mannheim and Béla Balázs. In addition, to mention more names, who also made more or less important contributions: Edit Hajós, Béla Balázs's first wife, Anna Lesznai, the art historian Frigyes (Frederick) Antal, and a few more people who contributed to the discussion, or did not contribute.

Well, Károly (Karl) Mannheim was undoubtedly, in my view, next to Lukács, or if you wish in addition to Lukács, the most important member of the Circle, who had original thoughts, although he was definitely under Lukács's influence, as were all of us, but with considerable independence, a mainly political but not dogmatic brain, this was his distinguishing characteristic. All of us, particularly Lukács, were more or less dogmatic. Lukács was the most dogmatic, who believed unconditionally and was unconditionally rooted in certain doctrines at certain times, on the basis of the slogan that the one who is a Catholic should be a papist. He stood by many of his old friends, with many people from whom he became separated later—in the beginning Bloch was one of them—then the German poet Paul Ernst, Richard Beer-Hofmann, and a good many others, not to mention his teachers, like Max Weber, with whom he had a very close relationship. He had a life-long friendship with Thomas Mann. We know that if Lukács stayed alive and died a natural death that was partly the merit of Thomas Mann, who protested sharply, when the Horthy regime demanded Lukács's extradition from Austria, and his prestige in the Europe of those days contributed to saving him from a terrible fate.

Q. And Mannheim?

A. He was conscious of being the offspring of a middle-class Jewish family, belonging to a minority and considered himself an intellectual and responsible for what was happening in the world, taking part in it. He felt that an intellectual had a certain influence, and he went so far as to borrow from the brother of Max Weber, from Alfred Weber, a doctrine according to which the intellectual floated between the classes.

Well, no such thing exists, everybody is rooted in an origin, a sociological origin and consequently in an ideology as well. The intellectual too has an ideology, and he is tied to that ideology however earnestly he should protest against it. By ideology we mean that every person is determined by the position in which he finds himself, and which he attains partly through economic and partly through general social influences, and according to which he lives, acts, feels, creates, and exists.

Q. What was Béla Balázs's particular contribution to the Circle?

A. In the public mind Béla Balázs* lives on as a Hungarian poet, but it was not as a poet that he was important, more important to some, particularly to Lukács, who was so biased in the matter, and less important to others. Between Lukács and Balázs an intimate friendship had existed since their youth. It should be known that within the Sunday Circle two kinds of ties existed, an objective link between certain people and a personal link, on the basis of youthful friendship, such as the one that existed between Lukács and Balázs and which implied a certain loyalty. Lukács wrote a book, an otherwise very interesting book, *Béla Balázs and Those Who Do Not Want Him...*** —and those who did not like him included

* Béla Balázs (1884–1949), poet, playwright, novelist, film aesthetician, is also the author of *Bluebeard's Castle* and *The Wooden Prince*, set to music by Bartók. His voluminous diaries are still unpublished. His first important book on the film appeared in 1928. (The Ed.)

** 1918.

mainly Mihály Babits and the entire *Nyugat*, Circle, which differed essentially from the Sunday Circle. What was the importance of Balázs within the Circle, and in the period following the Circle? In what we call sensitivity, the sensitivity of the artist, or the feeling for quality of the connoisseur; these existed in him more so than in any one else, primarily more so than in Lukács, who lacked this quality. Lukács had no such feeling, and, being a very self-conscious person, he knew best that he lacked it. The way he expressed it: "I am not an art critic, I am an art philosopher." This meant that when he considered somebody an important artist or poet, his judgement was almost always wrong. He considered Paul Ernst a great poet, Richard Beer-Hofmann, the author of the *Graf von Charolais*, a great writer, and a whole lot of people right down to Walter Scott. When he expounded his theory of the historical novel in his later years, he always hit on the wrong judgement, because no English literary historian or art critic would attribute to Walter Scott the importance that György Lukács attributed to him as a result of his lack of sense for the quality of art. And here Béla Balázs filled a gap within the Sunday Circle.

Q. Well, was it then Lukács's feeling for quality . . ., or was it that he had certain principles of philosophy of art for which he sought illustrations?

A. Right. Lukács has a tremendous significance as an art philosopher, as an aesthetician. He discovered two things, which perhaps nobody outside him understood or grasped in Europa as he did, the importance of the tragedy and of the modern novel. He discovered the key to these two phenomens and started a flood of literature on the subject, the innumerable books which were published along these lines down to Lucien Goldmann, who in his works did mostly nothing but pinch statements concerning the tragedy from the essay "The Metaphysics of the Tragedy." [From Lukács's work titled *The Soul and the Forms*, published in German in 1911.]

The great significance of Béla Balázs was the conscious discovery of poetic sensibility. Those evening courses are unforgettable for me. Particularly his lecture titled "The history of lyric sensibility," in which he rediscovered the sensibility of the medieval troubadour, which first manifested itself in the lyric poets of the Middle Ages after the loss of the classical heritage.

Correctly, he had still another epoch-making activity, he wrote the first two good books abut the film and discovered that the film was a manifestation of the period, the beginning of an era, and no comparable book to compare with it has ever been written about the film by anybody. This was not known within the Sunday Circle, particularly since the books did not yet exist, but he already had the feeling that a new kind of sensibility, a new world was being opened up which he referred to as visuality.

Q. Did the success of Mannheim begin with his studies written in the mid-twenties?

A. Mannheim had his great success with his book titled *Ideologie und Utopie*—Ideology and Utopia—which appeared in 1929. It was then that Oppenheimer died and Mannheim was given the Frankfurt chair which had different repercussions, sometimes enthusiastic, sometimes jealous. Mannheim had his golden age. Mannheim was the great modern sociologist for years, then he failed and remained essentially silent.

Q. Let me now ask about Mannheim, whether this theory about "the freely floating intellectual" which received such emphasis in "Ideology and Utopia"—well, he himself was such a freely floating intellectual—here there is a certain link between the life and the work? The problem of the intellectual not being tied to a social class had not arisen in him earlier with such emphasis.

A. No. But this was connected to the fact that the intellectual once again wanted to be a high priest, and this floating between the classes meant being above the classes... Of course Lukács was a man of a greater calibre than Mannheim, but...

Q. Can it be said that Mannheim was to some extent career-minded?

A. You might say so, but I do not claim that he did it to receive a higher salary, but for the sake of influence, intellectual influence.

Q. What really was the human relationship between Mannheim and Lukács later on?

A. It was a changing relationship, which had been very intimate at the beginning. In Mannheim a great new talent was discovered, and he was held in terribly high esteem, in other words he was overestimated.

Q. Was that then at the beginning of the Sunday Circle?

A. Yes, but it became weaker in the course of time and especially during his London stay in and after his stay in Germany. I cannot say what part was played by the fact that Mannheim had considerable success and Lukács may have felt that Mannheim was too prominent in the sociological movement, I do not mean this, and I cannot mean it. But it is a fact that the relationship between them became cold to the extent that towards the end it almost became an animosity, that Lukács had the feeling that Mannheim had appropriated a lot from him. Mannheim was under the influence of Lukács, to a particular extent this is beyond doubt, but they were thinkers of an entirely different character. Lukács was undoubtedly of greater calibre.

Q. Incidentally, in a Hungarian periodical a document was recently published according to which you had participated in the elaboration of the cultural policies of the Republic of Councils.

A. Not only in that, but particularly in the function of art education, which the government of those days wished to reform, and the leadership of this reform council was entrusted to me.

Q. But how did it happen that you engaged in such political activity?

A. This was not a political activity, but purely cultural.

Q. Did the role you played, in the cultural policies of the Republic of Councils force you to emigrate after the collapse of the regime?

A. Not only that. The Sunday Circle was very much leftist oriented, and they did not distinguish who was a Communist and since when, and whether he really became a Communist or only sympathized with this liberal, progressive trend, and I too was among them.

I was a member of this Circle, I strongly identified with it, and this was an internal link, even if it was not of a very emotional nature, it was a strong sense of belonging together. The basic mood of this belonging together was Lukács's well-known coldness. Lukács was not inclined to sentimentality —although he had very strong personal ties, especially to the friends of his youth, male and female, but in the case of those with whom he had an objective relationship, these emotional ties played no role. He felt no emotional ties to me either.

But I did not come out of the Circle empty-handed: not rich in material goods, nor with a doctrine or an ideology, but with a lesson, a moral determination. With the knowledge that belonging to such a circle meant a moral commitment, that this was the measure of what one wanted to do, whatever the degree of success achieved. But I came away empty-handed in the sense

that I had lost my orientation. I came out and I did not know where I stood. I had no immediate goals, I had no accomplishment behind me—I am a slow worker anyway, and I have a peculiar, very problematic relationship to the language, I torment myself and fight with the language, not as with an enemy, but a friend, and I share Paul Valéry's belief in the "saint langage," that the language is a sacrament and a commitment, a difficult task. As a result, normally whatever I write, I write it in three or four versions. This means slowness, and my financial position also compelled me to slow down. I was the child of poor parents who spent part of his university years earning a living, but I had done this at an even earlier age as well.

All this slowed down my work, and this explains why it started so slowly, and the worst thing was that this disorientation, this lack of a goal, this empty-handedness was made worse by a false doctrine. Since I belonged to the Sunday Circle, or since the time I fell in love with art—because this may be called a love relationship, even if unrequited—I have been more interested in art than in sociology. And if I looked at art from a sociological point of view this in fact has always been but a pretext, and it remains so to this day: to look at art from an angle from which it is not usually seen or only incidentally. To find an angle, a perspective, from which something may be discovered about art that is not generally known, or which is generally not made conscious. Anyway I believe that the approach to all sort of phenomena like art is not a straight approach, but a spiral movement around a centre, a movement the level of which may rise but which can never reach the centre, yet can open up different perspectives of the centre. Art was given as the object of love, of interest, but my impotence and lameness manifested itself in connection with a doctrine called formalism or aestheticism, and which sets out from the assumption that the essence of art is the form. It is in fact true that form is the starting-point inasmuch as there is no art without form, and form is the door through which we enter into art, but it is not the roof under which we get. We arrive at the top on a much higher level than the door which opens towards art, and art becomes art through form, but does not become *great art* through the form. This doctrine, formalism, was the theory of Wölfflin, the great German art historian. I confessed to be a disciple of the doctrine which set out from the assumption that parallels and geometric relationships, order and system, categories, unity and harmony, were the essence of art.

And what we call an artistic structure, arises in fact from similar relationships, realism grew out of this formalism in the course of long years, slowly, very slowly and against serious opposition, and I realized that it was not internal logic that determined the path of artistic progress. In other words, it is not forms that fight each other and replace each other above the heads and behind the backs of people, but people take up interests due to their social position and social objectives, they set goals for themselves, directives, try to secure influence for themselves, join the service of ideologies, and out of this a new turn occurs, a new vision, a new kind of interest—and out of this new kind of interest something is born which determines change in art not inherently, not within the arts, but from the outside—in other words, the changes which cause the evolution of taste and form—and that this is not the process of a nameless entity, but behind every such activity, every such function there stands an individual, and the commitment of that individual obtains its direction by his political, economic, and social solidarity towards his fellow human beings.

Part II of the interviero will be published in No. 81

SURVEYS

GYÖRGY ANDOR–LÁSZLÓ ÁRVA–JUDIT GAIZLER

THE PRESTIGE OF PROFESSIONAL WORK

In recent decades many studies have been published in various parts of the world concerning the relative attractions of various trades and occupations and their prestige. The first empirical study of the problem appeared in the United States before the Second World War, and was soon followed by similar research in Britain, Germany, Japan, and other countries. Poland was the scene of a major occupational prestige study in 1960, and Czechoslovakia followed in 1970.

Our study, the first Hungarian survey to be on a scale comparable to this foreign research, was sponsored by the Pest County Careers Advisory Service in 1974. It was concerned primarily with the relative prestige of seventeen professions, that is, the relative evaluation by different groups of seventeen occupations which presuppose graduation from college or university.

Any examination of occupational prestige will present a composite of subjective images of the pattern of social stratification. It shows how people regard the social rank of various occupations, what occupations they regard as important, which they admire more and what they hold in lesser regard. Obviously the subjective image that develops concerning relative prestige values is in the final analysis based on the material conditions of the society with which the researcher is dealing. It depends on the financial remuneration, power, and influence which those engaged in different occupations can command, but these material relations are only the basis for an evaluation which is ultimately subjective. The latter will also depend on the value systems of individuals. In a value system that puts the accent on material values, the prestige of artists, teachers, and priests will be lower than under a social value system that emphasizes values to do with culture and the intellect, though their material remuneration may be the same. Hence, given that we know approximately how well different occupations reward their members, the testing of prestige hierarchies enables researchers to derive a picture of the value system dominant in the society in question.

Do value systems differ from country to country, and are differences reflected in the occupational prestige surveys which have been conducted hitherto? Before we deal with this problem in greater detail at the end of our study, let us note that it is easier to measure differences between the value systems held by various groups and strata of a single society by means of occupational prestige ratings than it is to probe national differences. We shall see furthermore that a number of internal tensions exist within the various strata. These tensions manifest themselves in the entire outlook and behaviour of these groups almost as clearly as

the ratings they give to different occupations, but they are much harder to measure.

Occupational prestige studies reveal more than a subjective image of social stratification, one which helps researchers chart dissimilarities between the value systems of the various strata; they can also be used for making prognoses of the movements of manpower and they will be found helpful by careers advisors. Surveys of this kind which concentrate on young people can generate predictions of the likely demand for certain jobs, and at the same time they can help guide young persons to occupations and careers which do not conflict with the value systems of the group to which they belong. This means, for instance, that if young people of working-class origin rate jobs working with materials considerably higher than work with people because the former provide for more concretely creative activity, this preference should be borne in mind when recommending occupations to youngsters.

Before we summarize some of the more interesting results of our survey, we should be frank and say that this study, embracing a single county of Hungary, was more successful in raising questions than in clarifying solutions; much supplementary work needs to be done in various directions before these questions will be resolved. Hence we wish to present not fully-fashioned answers but a method which in our opinion may be useful for studying problems connected with the phenomena of social stratification.

We conducted the study in spring 1974 in Pest County, and it extended to all the schoolchildren of the county who completed the seventh grade in that year; the majority was aged twelve years. Every pupil was given a questionnaire listing 90 occupations in alphabetical order and containing the following instruction:

"We have enumerated here a number of trades, jobs, and occupations, probably including some which you have never even thought of. Read each item in the list attentively and rate the occupations according to the respect and esteem in which people hold them.

Category 1 Occupations which you think are not respected at all.

Category 2 Occupations which command a certain low measure of respect.

Category 3 Occupations which are fairly well thought of.

Category 4 Occupations which are highly respected.

Category 5 Occupations which enjoy very great respect indeed."

Completed questionnaires were handed in by 9,621 pupils, and 9,548 (99.2 per cent) of them had been properly filled out. Girls submitted 4,686 (49.1 per cent) and boys 4,862 (50.9 per cent) of the questionnaires evaluated in the course of our study.

Apart from rating different occupations, each respondent was requested to state the occupation he or she intended to choose after leaving school. We had access to all the important sociological parameters we needed concerning these pupil respondents, including the occupations of their parents, the type of community in which they resided, school records and character description, and we made much use of this information in our analysis.

The final results of our survey cannot be regarded as nationally representative; they are probably not even representative of Pest County. There is reason to believe, however, that answers reflect the opinions of the children's families as well as their own; and therefore it is possible to deduce conclusions of the prestige ratings that would have been given by adults, and so to derive indirect knowledge of their value systems.[1]

[1] It is an interesting and regrettable fact that a significant proportion of the foreign studies of occupational prestige were—largely for material reasons, as in our case—unable to produce nationally representative samples for examination.

Compound Prestige of the Professions

Out of the 90 occupations on the list, 17 were professions requiring a college or university degree.

All these professions—librarianship being the only exception—were rated in the top half of the general sample. Moreover, the top fifteen occupations included only six which did not figure among the 17 professions which interested us the most; and even among these six, three (actor, film director, and writer) are "artistic" in character, and only one, paediatric nursing, is clearly not a "white-collar" profession. Three more of the top fifteen—pilot, factory manager, and interpreter—are in Hungary borderline cases; not being amongst the professions examined.[2]

The first conclusion to be reached in the present study concerning the prestige of various occupations is that in Hungary (as in all other surveys carried out to date) the general prestige of an occupation is closely related to the level of education required. Of course, income and level of education required are also directly related. The two constitute a composite factor from which we cannot separate the individual components, and Hungarian statistical records do not supply information on the mean incomes of individual occupational groups. But since librarianship, where income is modest compared with other intellectual occupation, came as low as 57th in prestige rating (out of 90), there is good reason to conclude that in some cases anticipated income may be a more important factor in determining prestige than the level of education the job requires. This is supported by the fact that the prestige list is headed by doctor, architect, and actor, which are generally regarded as the highest paid occupations.

Other factors apart from degrees and income levels are also manifestly effective in shaping prestige. The highly qualified agricultural occupations, for instance, are much farther down in the list than other occupations entailing similar training and offering similar incomes. While doctor was rated first, veterinary surgeon ranked only 11th and whereas the various occupations which qualify as graduate engineering (these include architecture in Hungary) were ranked 2nd, 6th, and 10th, the agricultural engineer or agronomist attained only a very modest 37th place; he was preceeded by various kinds of technician and skilled worker. Probably a similar problem is reflected in the very low rank (40th) conferred on the economist; as became obvious, many of the respondents did not know what an economist does and considered his job too to be an agricultural one.

Librarian, architect, secondary-school teacher, biologist, jurist (including all holders of law degrees, i.e. lawyer, judge, prosecutor and attorney) and language teacher are all listed below the more exact scientific or technological professions of doctor, architect, chemical engineer, pharmacist, or mechanical engineer. Thus the prestige of the natural science occupations is noticeably higher than the humanities, and here a delicate question arises. The studies of Vernon K. Dibble show a very definite relationship between the prestige of certain occupations and the ability of their practitioners to influence and mould public opinion. In our prestige list, however, white-collar professions whose representatives should be helping to form public opinion are rather low down. The relatively low prestige of secondary-school teaching (19th), not to mention the relegation of the librarian, raises the question to what extent people in professions with such a low prestige rating can be expected to educate public taste and opinion.

A surprisingly low prestige rating was earned by the army officer (57th place). This is interesting because a career officer was known to enjoy great prestige before the

[2] It will take further research and the processing of fresh data before we can go into some of the reasons for our findings.

Second World War. At present the prestige of an army officer is much higher in the United States than it is in Hungary.[3] An officer has an educational task and a role in the forming of opinion much like that of a teacher, but his low prestige would seem likely to circumscribe him in the performance of this role.

Perceptions of prestige according to sex

The results of the survey showed that girls, almost without exception, gave higher ratings to careers in the arts than did boys. The differences in the ratings of the two sexes is 25 places in the case of the librarian (boys rated him only 72nd, girls 47th), 17 places for the secondary-school teacher (32 in the opinion of boys and 15th in that of girls), 16 places for the language teacher (20th for boys and a prestigious 4th place for girls), and 6 places in the case of both the jurist and psychologist (boys rated the jurist 16th and the psychologist 24th; girls rated them 10th and 18th respectively). In the case of the archaeologist, a profession which is regarded as standing closer to the exact sciences, the rating given by girls differed only insignificantly from that awarded by boys. Pharmacy and economics were also more highly regarded by girls than boys; in the case of the former the girls' preference may be a result of the fact that this has become an occupation that is dominated by women—as is the case also with career fields in the arts. At the same time boys give higher ratings than girls to engineering occupations.

Of all the girls questioned, 18.6 per cent said they wanted to choose a profession for which graduation from university was a precondition of entry, whereas only 11.2 per cent of the boys had such ambitions. The preferences for skilled blue-collar work showed a reverse ratio: 62.8 per cent of boys stated that they wanted to become skilled workers, but amongst the girls this ratio was only 27.4 per cent. Hence differences appearing in the prestige ratings awarded by girls and boys are closely connected with differences in their own choices of a future career. On the basis of evident differences in prestige ratings, it can be regarded as highly probable that the already very high ratio of women to men in a significant proportion of the professions—and especially in the case of careers in the arts—will continue to increase. Furthermore, a shift in the present sex ratio may also be expected even in the case of occupations (e.g. that of economist) which were by no means regarded as predominantly female occupations in the past.

The differences in perceptions of prestige by girls and boys suggest, however, not only that certain occupations will continue to recruit largely amongst women (whereas others will be pursued in the main only by men) but also that there is a deeply rooted problem involved: outlook on life, conceptions of the external world, and the general system of values are all substantially differentiated according to sex.

It was significant to discover that the lower the educational level of the parents of the respondents, the greater were the differences in the ratings given to the same occupations by boys and by girls. In this way it is probable that the basic differences in value systems and general outlook on life, which make themselves felt both in the ratings given to various occupations and in their own occupational choices, will probably continue to decrease as further education becomes the norm for all.

The influence of the parents' status in society

We wished to consider whether the prestige image of certain occupations is influenced by the occupational profile of the

[3] According to a survey in the USA the prestige rating of army officer was 27th in a list of 90 occupations, coming above occupations such as teacher, painter, musician, writer, economist, etc. (*American Journal of Sociology*, Nov. 1964).

family of the young respondent. For this purpose we classified the occupations of the parents into the following main eight groups:

— white-collar workers with college or university degrees,

— white-collar workers with secondary-school education,

— white-collar workers with primary-school education,

— skilled workers in industry or commerce,

— semi-skilled workers in industry or commerce,

— unskilled workers in industry or commerce,

— skilled workers in agriculture,

— unskilled workers in agriculture.

Certain white-collar professions appear to be *universally* prestigious.[4]

For instance, the doctor and the architect were first and second respectively for all groups. Depending on the parental occupation groups there was greater fluctuation concerning other occupations; but a few careers could be distinguished where the differences in the ratings given by the different groups were very small. The latter was the case with the mechanical engineer, chemical engineer, language teacher, and pharmacist. The prestige of agronomists was less uniform, and it suffered a sharp drop in the eyes of children whose parents are non-manual workers. The children of graduates ranked the agronomist 27th, but the children of also employed in the white-collar sector but with only primary-school education rated this occupation only 41st. The children of skilled and unskilled agricultura-workers assessed the agronomist 35th and 36th respectively. The reason why the ratings given by the children of white-collar graduates were higher than those of the children of agricultural workers probably has something to do with the fact that the former group is more aware of the actual importance of this occupation in modern society.

Among the occupations surveyed the prestige of the lawyer, architect, psychologist, and librarian depended to a very large extent on the family origins of the respondents. The lawyer was 8th in the estimation of children of white-collar parents with education above primary-school level, but 13th in the estimation of industrial skilled workers' children, and only 19th in that of children of semi-skilled and unskilled parents; the children of agricultural unskilled workers rated this occupation only 28th. The decrease is just as clear and marked in the evaluation of the archaeologist and the psychologist. The prestige of the librarian is not exactly high even among children of white-collar graduates (55th place), but it falls even lower lower (to 77th place) when children of semi-skilled workers in industry and commerce are called upon to give their evaluation. The rating given the librarian by children of agricultural skilled workers was a little higher (61st place), but the children of unskilled workers in agriculture placed him several positions lower (69th place).

The prestige accorded to professions in the realm of the arts and humanities thus varies in a pronounced fashion according to the occupations of the parents of our respondents. The reasons probably lie deep in the value systems; they prompt the children of manual workers to hold non-scientific occupations which are not directly productive and which satisfy only secondary needs in less esteem; at the same time the children of intellectuals are encouraged to regard these same occupations (which can be considered non-productive but by no means useless in the sense of the Marxist definition of productive work) as important and worthy of respect.

There was, however, one non-scientific profession with a prestige image quite different from that of other occupations in the same field: secondary-school teaching. The

4 Only the answers given by boys are analysed here; the prestige ratings accorded by the girls were, in this breakdown, very similar.

ratings given this profession by children of white-collar workers (33rd, 29th, and 33rd places) were more or less the same for all three white-collar groups distinguished; the same ranking (33rd) was given by children whose parents were skilled workers in industry. In other categories, however, the prestige of the secondary-school teacher begins to climb: he ranks 24th in the evaluation of children whose parents are semi-skilled industrial workers, falls back to 34th in the eyes of the children of unskilled industrial workers, but recovers to 27th and 23rd places in the ratings of the children of skilled and unskilled agricultural workers.

Several factors may lie behind this contrasting pattern in the case of the teaching occupation. First of all, teaching is the most open profession in the whole range of the humanities, for almost anyone can opt to work as an unqualified primary-school teacher upon graduation from secondary school. The power inherent in the occupation may also be a relevant additional factor, even though it is not combined with genuine social and material power. These are probably the very same reasons why the children of white-collar parents find teaching a less attractive occupation than other professions falling within the humanities.

A comparable image was revealed in the prestige commanded by the sports coach, but the trend here reversed the typical pattern of the evaluations which the respondents accorded professions in the humanities. In this case the ratings given by children of manual workers greatly exceeded those of children whose parents were white-collar workers. This is probably linked to the fact that image of a sportsmen in the minds of young persons is that he makes a lot of easy money, an image which may now have spread from the sportsman to his coach. The general public does not think that it requires a high level of intellectual performance to be a coach, and this is evidently the reason why children from white-collar families give this occupation a lower rating. Examining other occupations, we reached the conclusion that this was the general trend in the prestige ratings given to trades and jobs which do not demand much intellectual effort but which do nonetheless offer above-average incomes (plumbing, gas, and electrical maintenance, and other trades where there is a lot of scope for "private" work).

The occupation of army officer did not win high ratings in general (39th, 40th, 43rd, 38th, etc.), but it leapt up to 26th place in the estimation of one group, the children of white-collar workers who had completed only primary school. Probably this group regards the army as a prestigious occupation because it is the only one which considers such employment to be social mobility upwards; other groups have their different reasons for not aspiring to commissions in the army. (Let us emphasize that this is no more than a hypothesis—the prestige image of the army officer needs to be more fully explained by further analysis.)

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In conclusion we can summarize this breakdown according to social group by saying that the prestige patterns of professions in the field of the humanities differ significantly from those of professions such as medicine and engineering which are regarded as "exact, scientific." Occupations in the natural sciences were almost uniformly prestigious, for every group, and uniformly high; parental occupation had little or any influence over the evaluations children gave to these occupations. In contrast, the lower prestige ratings given to non-scientific professional careers were strongly influenced by the occupational profile of the parents, such occupations gaining lower ratings amongst the children of manual workers. The children of manual workers show the same high estimation for professions in science and technology as other children in their age group, but they rate other, non-scientific professions significantly lower than do the children of white-collar parents.

HUNGARY AND POLAND IN 1939

I.

THE GERMAN–POLISH WAR AND HUNGARIAN POLICY

Poland was the first to resist German aggression by force of arms in September 1939. The strategically encircled country fighting on two fronts reached a crisis within two days. The Polish defense forces in the western half of the country collapsed. The German General Staff was nevertheless compelled to modify the plan of operations code-named *Fall Weiss*. The idea was to create a new outflanking movement to be extended still farther to the east. The southern flank of the German pincer movement would at the same time cut off the Polish army retreating towards what was called the Rumanian bridgehead where the Polish line of defence might possibly have been stabilized along the Dniester and Stryj rivers. The German armoured troops, however, pushed rapidly forward in the direction of Lwów, and this meant at the same time that there was a considerable area extending south of the pivotal line of the German attack down to the frontier Poland and Hungary shared at that time. Numerous units of the army routed on the southern front during the first half of September were in that area. The chronicle of events shows that as early as September 9, and even more so in the days that followed, there was no chance of holding a line on the upper reaches of the River San.

On September 9 Ribbentrop, asked István Csáky, the Hungarian Foreign Minister, for the consent of the Hungarian government, to be given by noon next day, to allow German troops to use the railway line running through Kassa. At noon on September 10 Csáky telephoned Ribbentrop to inform him that Hungary refused permission.

The use by German troops of that railway line on September 10 (or after) could have been of limited, purely tactical, importance only. The main direction of the attack by the German 14th Army on this important day turned northwards and eastwards, bypassing the border area. By going round the Polish troops in retreat, the Germans were able to close the frontier. The above-mentioned railway line (which from Kostolana station on Slovak territory through the Kassa railway junction to Slanec station again in Slovakia and on to Lupków on the Polish-Slovak border) allowed for the possibility of moving troops on a stretch of some 40 kilometres controlled by Hungarian authorities. It must be said in advance that, in view of the time given to the Hungarian government to consider the request, the Germans could have, without any significant time loss, taken troops on another section of the same railway line. It should also be said that the German forces in question could not have been large, most of the units of the 14th Army were already on Polish territory, the deployment of the 14th Army and the concentration of its forces having taken place in western Slovakia, in the sector of Trstena. Slovak units may also have been involved, two Slovak divisions being deployed against Poland.

What then was the political purpose of the German request, and how should one

Hungary's 1939 Polish policy has lately been a subject of lively discussion in the Hungarian press. The two articles printed here, written by a Polish and a Hungarian author, were first published by *História*, the quarterly review of the Hungarian Historical Association in No I, 1980. Gyula Juhász's contribution opened a discussion held in the Kossuth Club, Budapest.

judge the Hungarian government's refusal to comply with it? As far as Hungary was concerned the partial fulfilment of demands for frontier revisions meant increasing political dependence on the Third Reich. Soon after Munich it became clear that the next country threatened by aggression on the part of Hitler would be Poland. On October 24, 1938, Ribbentrop told Józef Lipski, the Polish ambassador in Berlin, that the Germans would agree to the Carpatho-Ukraine being annexed by Hungary, that is, to the establishment of a common Polish–Hungarian frontier, if the Poles gave up the corridor and their rights in Gdansk (Danzig) and accepted the hegemony of the German Reich.

In March 1939, Hungary joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, the common frontier really came into being, but changed circumstances crossed the Polish Foreign Minister's, Józef Beck's, illusory plans for a "third Europe," as well as Pál Teleki's tempting hope of counteracting Germany's influence by the help of Italy and Poland.

To get back to the motives for the attitudes exhibited by Hungarian politicians in the autumn of 1939. It was their intention to stay out of the war as long as they possibly could. This is indirectly demonstrated by the multiplying pledges of neutrality addressed to Warsaw and London; what is more, Teleki stated that he would retain his right to freedom of action in the spreading conflagration. A fact not so far mentioned in Hungarian writings is relevant here.

On August 28, 1939, Warsaw received a cable from London in which Edward Raczyński, the Polish ambassador, reported what his Hungarian colleague, György Barcza, had told him: "The highest authorities had confirmed to him a change in the country's position. In case of a conflict Hungary would issue a declaration of neutrality, but should the Germans attempt to force a passage, there would be resistance in practice. The decision, which should be kept secret up to the last moment, was made, in spite of the impossibility of effective defence in consideration of the future and of higher national interests." The Hungarian diplomat had also made enquiries whether the Polish–British treaty of alliance offered guarantees to Hungary. He was told that it did not, but the comment was added that "the treaty offered scope for interpretative extension in keeping with the shaping of the situation."

On August 31, the day before war broke out, Horthy vented his "indignation against German policy and the German treatment so far of the Hungarians" in a conversation with Leon Orlowski, the Polish minister in Budapest. He expressed his admiration for "the position taken by Poland." He mentioned also that in his letter to Hitler (this is probably a reference to Teleki's letter of July 24, 1939) he had let Hitler know that "the Hungarians will in no event fight the Poles," as a consequence of which "Germany doubts whether in the circumstances it can go to war against Poland." The Germans wanted "the Hungarians to come into conflict with the Rumanians." "Considering this fact, as well as the circumstance that Rumania is an ally of Poland," Horthy continued, "*rebus sic stantibus* Hungary will take no hostile action against Rumania."

Besides being aware of the danger of getting entangled in the world war the Hungarian leaders had another reason for their attitude: they were working towards a revision of the frontier with Rumania established at Trianon.

In September 1939 the Germans offered a correction of Hungary's northern frontier, in the area of Turka and Sambor, at the expense of Poland. Ribbentrop first mentioned this in a conversation with Döme Sztójay, the Hungarian minister in Berlin, on September 5. Two days later Csáky, when he met the Reich Foreign Minister at the latter's "field headquarters," rejected the offer. That area had never been under dispute but in those days the refusal was of special significance.

In exploring the motives for this attitude

let us dwell a while on an argument which, at that time, the Hungarian government employed not only in public, but also in diplomatic correspondence and even in confidential documents. Moral reasons recur. "It is a matter of national honour for Hungary not to participate in any military action against Poland," to quote the minutes of the Council of Ministers meeting of September 10, 1939.

Although it seems to me that the most important motive at the given moment was the fear of getting entangled in a world war, the said minutes also pointed out that consent to the passage of German troops would have led to a state of war with Britain, France, and Poland, possibly to a conflict with other neighbouring countries as well; nor can it be doubted that the government had to reckon with public opinion, too. It was impossible to leave out of account the significance of the fact that Hungarian–Polish relations were deeply rooted in the public thinking of both countries. The position of the Hungarian government facilitated the reorganization of the Polish army in Western Europe after the September defeat at home, and made it possible for tens of thousands of Poles to survive the war. (The refugees who came to Hungary numbered approximately 70,000.) Many chose the way of escape through Rumania where, however, they were interned. Polish–Hungarian relations during the Second World War certainly call for a further study of the sources and for renewed analyses.

MACIEJ KOZMIŃSKI

II.

THE POLISH POLICY OF THE TELEKI GOVERNMENT

I should like to concentrate my comments on the controversial issues.

One of the most highly debated questions might possibly be formulated as follows: Why did the Hungarian government admit, in September 1939, a great many Polish refugees, including a considerable number of Polish army units? The two poles of the related debate—not so much among professional historians as rather among other writers on the subject—are, first, that the Hungarian government was moved to admit the Polish refugees not by romantic ideas but by deliberate calculations composed of nationalism, cynicism, and lack of a sense of responsibility. The idea was to win the goodwill of the British. But there are others who taking the question of the admission of refugees out of context, consider the issue only from its moral aspect and, for fear of spoiling a pure and inspiring cause, deny any other connection.

The fact of the matter is that both views spring from the same root, a moralizing conception of history; I could also say from a romantic conception. In respect of the latter argument this is evident, but the first-mentioned view can also be described as a romantic view of history which automatically reckons political calculation among negative moral categories. It would, of course, be difficult to find a responsible government which would make, or would have made, political decisions not in a calculating way or, more precisely, not for the sake of its power interests. Whether the power interests in question are rightly or wrongly construed is one thing; and it is another thing that moral reasons may also have a share in power interest. Power interest and moral reasons may coincide, although it is hardly to be questioned which of the two will prevail when they come up against each other.

Yes, one can safely say that the Hungarian government's decision in September 1939 to reject the German request for passage and to admit the Polish refugees was a political decision made for reasons of power and accurately fitted in with the government's general foreign policy line. If, therefore, we want to get an answer to the problem of the Polish refugees, we first of all have to discuss this foreign policy line, and this will then answer the question concerning the real components of this calculation.

Interest, Morality, Foreign Policy

As early as the spring of 1939 the Teleki government decided not to take part in a likely German–Polish war, and to aim to maintain a neutral position in a general conflict although, in view of its general pro-Axis policy and its revisionist objectives, it would refrain from making a declaration of neutrality. On April 27, 1939, Csáky, the Foreign Minister, in a letter to Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, worded this as follows:

"...we are unwilling to participate, either directly or indirectly, in any armed action against Poland. By 'indirectly' I mean ... that any demand for German troops to be allowed to pass through Hungarian territory, with a view to attacking Poland, either marching, or using road vehicles or by rail, will be rejected... Perhaps... it will be possible to avoid a conflict or any resentment or enmity which, in case of declaring our strict neutrality, might be the response of the German Reich, and it will be possible to avoid a situation in which the German Reich, given the right of passage, would take over everything in this country as it did in Bohemia. ..."

So far Csáky's reasoning dictated mainly by power interests. And then he added:

"If... we implicitly allow the Germans, possibly following protests, to conduct military operations through this country against Poland, a revolution would break out here, and such a moral breakdown would ensue that, losing our self-confidence, we would find ourselves in the most disadvantageous position even *vis-à-vis* the Slovaks supported by the Germans." (*Hungarian Foreign Policy Documents 1936–1945*, Vol. IV, pp. 200–201.)

All this was also officially formulated in identical letters sent by Count Teleki, the Prime Minister, to Hitler and Mussolini on July 24, 1939, explaining that in the event of a general conflict Hungary would make its own policy conform to the policy of the Axis, but he added: "It cannot be doubted, however, that our accommodation to this policy must in no way impair the country's sovereignty as embodied in the constitution and must not raise obstacles in the way of the attainment of national objectives."

To avoid any misunderstandings, he added a few explanatory lines: "...in order to prevent any possible misinterpretation of my letter of July 24, I have the honour to repeat to Your Excellency that, inasmuch as no major change occurs in the circumstances, Hungary is not, on moral grounds, in a position to take armed action against Poland." (*Hungary and the Second World War*, doc. 99 and 100.)

The Request for Passage

The Teleki government held itself to this "no," though it was under tremendous diplomatic and propaganda pressure, especially in the days preceding the outbreak of war. The Germans objected to everything that occurred to them, even to the playing of the Hungary–Poland game of football on August 27.

The German request for passage was actually rejected on September 10, 1939. At the Cabinet meeting Teleki gave the motives for rejection as follows: "...We

have looked at the map and have found that compliance with the German request would mean a speed-up of one day and a half. If we were to comply with this request, it would mean a violation of neutrality, and we would right away receive three declarations of war: from Britain, France, and Poland. . . . After all, we do not wish to be entangled or involved in the world war against our will. We could not take part in any action especially now as the Poles are already defeated." (*Ibid.*, doc. 110.)

There are those who deny the significance of the rejection of the German request—for want of something better—just for this reason. Though the rejection was of great significance also from the point of view of Poland: the common Polish–Hungarian frontier section continued to be controlled by Hungary, it became "an open gate" which made it possible for the Polish refugee flood to reach Hungary.

The way the Hungarian population received the Polish refugees was described authentically in the related literature: with an expression of ostentatious sympathy. What did this sympathy spring from? It implied a certain anti-German feeling; a role was undeniably played by memories of a shared history; there was pity for the vanquished in it and a premonition of the possibility of a similar fate. There was nothing romantic about it, nor nationalism, it was a moral factor which the government had to take into account when making its decision, the more so since its power interests coincided with this moral demand. This is what those who wish to oversimplify things find difficult to understand.

The number of Polish refugees in Hungary is also a debated point. There are several estimates. Some put the number at well over 100,000 while others estimate it only at 30,000. I think precise figures cannot be established for the very reason that not only the Polish–Hungarian frontier but also the Yugoslav–Hungarian frontier were open at that time. Many did not even take up temporary residence in Hungary but continued on their journey. For conspiratorial reasons directed against the Germans, refugees who took the place of those who left after a shorter or longer stay were registered under the names of those who left. Thus a single name may have covered several persons. What matters, I think, is not even the exact figure but the fact that tens of thousands of Poles were able to evade the Germans. They either left Hungary and fought as part of the Allied Forces, mainly in Italy, or stayed here, where they found a living and were provided with rations, while their children were given educational opportunities. That is, they found here forms of survival worthy of man.

Today historians have established the organizational framework of all this, from the governmental level, down to the local authorities, but there is still much to be done in this respect, particularly as far as József Antall's activity is concerned. Hungarian historians have studied how the Hungarian government presented the case of the Polish refugees as part of German–Hungarian relation. Volume IV of *Hungarian Foreign Policy Documents* contains material between September 1939 and May 1940, and Volume V, now in preparation, will include further documents, those produced up to the closing of the Polish Legation. It is also interesting in itself that the Polish Legation in Budapest was functioning until December 1940, looking after the affairs of the refugees, although the Hungarian government did not officially recognize the Polish government in exile.

A Mediating Role

The history of the Polish military authorities in Hungary during the war has not been sufficiently surveyed so far. The part which the Polish government in exile and its diplomatic missions played in the 1943 Hungarian peace-feelers was most signi-

ficant. It is known that Polish exiles played an important mediating role in the secret negotiations between the British government and the Kállay government as well as the Hungarian opposition. This appears time and again in the Foreign Office papers. I wish to quote only one: a memorandum of Deputy Under-Secretary William Strang dated April 20, 1943. He describes that Count Raczyński, the Polish government in exile's ambassador in London, had talks with him, with the agreement of Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary. The ambassador told him that Hungarian peace-feelers had been put out to the Polish missions in Lisbon, Stockholm, and Constantinople. The Hungarian emissaries had in every case referred to the good conditions of the Polish refugees in Hungary, pointing out that they were free to publish a newspaper of their own, to maintain independent secondary schools, etc. "Up to the present the Hungarian approaches have not been responded to, but it is now thought that it might be necessary to take certain steps; in this way it may be possible to turn the thinking of the Hungarians in the right direction. The Polish government is of the opinion that something ought to be said in order to make the Hungarians realize that the moment will come when they may be of serious service; they have to demonstrate that they cooperate in some form or other with the Allied Nations, but in view of their weak position they should give expression to their willingness to consent to a rectification of the frontiers (in Transylvania) after victory." (*Hungarian–British Secret Negotiations in 1943*, doc. 34.)

There were some who drew "bold" conclusions from the mediating role of the Poles with respect to British policy, too. But the position of the Foreign Office on this issue boiled down to this: ". . . we ought to stop the Poles from starting negotiations of their own with the Hungarians."

A very important subject, maybe the most worked over by Polish and Hungarian historians, is the part played by the Polish refugees in the Hungarian resistance after March 19, 1944. I would nevertheless say: If we studied this subject not only as an aspect of Polish–Hungarian relations but in the context of the Hungarian resistance as a whole new results might be produced. The subject as such calls for new research and reconsideration, the more so since in the story of the Polish refugees as part of the history in the Second World War Hungary has nothing to be ashamed of.

GYULA JUHÁSZ

BÁLINT BALKAY

CLUB OF ROME ROUND TABLE IN BUDAPEST

On June 18, 1980 the main building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was the setting for a discussion forum attended by members of the prestigious Club of Rome and by some sixty Hungarian Academicians representing a broad spectrum of scholarship and science. The Club of Rome was represented by Dr. Aurelio Peccei, its founder and President, accompanied by the French historian Dr. Maurice Guernier and Dr. Adam Schaff of Poland, President of the Social Sciences Centre, Vienna. Professor János Szentágothai, President of the Hungarian Academy, was Moderator of the

round table discussion; he was seconded by Professor József Bognár.

Proceedings began when the Club of Rome representatives were introduced briefly by Professor Szentágothai, who then went on to emphasize the importance and urgency of the Club's concerns. The future of mankind itself was the main preoccupation, and on present reckoning the outlook was far from bright.

The opening statement for the Club of Rome was made by Dr. Peccei, who professed himself to be at once more optimistic than most of his fellow human beings in some senses, and yet more pessimistic in others. More pessimistic because of man's current inability to understand and, *a fortiori*, to control his destiny, but yet more optimistic because brilliant human achievements in technology and other fields were providing mankind with the means of understanding and of regaining control. Despite these brilliant successes, however, most of the global problems of humanity have yet to be attacked in a really constructive way—hence in Dr. Peccei's opinion if mankind proceeds on its present course it is clearly heading towards perdition. A new course needs to be charted, one which will transform the present immaturity of human society and lead it towards maturity. With respect to all the changes necessary the Club of Rome makes no claim to be an incontrovertible authority—in fact it is always glad to learn and to glean new information, from socialist societies as from other types of society; in the socialist societies many of the crucial problems facing mankind were posed in a somewhat different form.

Dr. Peccei went on to develop the proposition that over the last three decades the conditions of human life on this planet have worsened owing largely to four negative factors:

— the grotesque belief that security may be assured by investing more than $5000 million a year in nuclear armaments, establishing an arsenal sufficient even today to wipe out all life on earth several times over;

— the population bomb, a delayed-action device in contrast to the nuclear bomb, but no less dangerous in the long run, combined as it is with the fact that the duration of human life and also human consumption needs are continually increasing;

— the devastation, probably irreparable, wrought by mankind on the global ecosystem, rampant deforestation, and insidious desertification resulting in irreversible climatic deterioration; man's reckless exploitation of the resources of this planet, and his failure to adapt to the biosphere, which has already entailed the extinction of many animals and plants and, if things continue in this manner, will lead to the extinction of man himself;

— the disturbing immaturity of modern man and modern society.

Progress towards maturity implies that human society must learn to apply the tremendously powerful means at its disposal with more discrimination and circumspection. If this is to be attained the framework must be broader than the national one. The UN Conferences on the overriding problems of humankind were useful preliminary steps, but they tended to fall short of setting the problems in the proper global context. The current world situation, as typified by the anarchy which prevails in the international financial and monetary system, clearly shows that a breakdown of government is an imminent reality. The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that we have first to reform the world system to restore the potential of governability; secondly, we have to learn to govern it, a task we are inadequately equipped to carry out at the present time.

As regards the potential of governability, immense importance is to attributed to the build-up in East-West tensions, for these

are liable to render all issues unsolvable. The further polarization of world affairs can only lead towards an entirely unmanageable situation. Ways and means must be found to establish a *modus vivendi* and to press upon both sides the blunt truth that there are more important problems in the world than those generating East-West tension. The same comment applies to West-South relations, albeit on a different scale. The fragmentation of the South into some 120 sovereign states, many of them of mini or micro size, constitutes an obstacle to governability—the aggregation of the North into a few major blocks and units is more helpful in this respect, whatever other hazards it may generate.

The attainment of the second objective, learning to govern the world, seems to many to invoke a sort of forbidden terrain and something of a taboo issue. In fact the priorities and mechanisms of government today are much the same as they were 50 and more years ago. Yet the world has greatly changed in this period; mankind has been forced to recognize the limits to growth; his capacity to understand and improve his lot has also increased immeasurably (unfortunately so too has his capacity to wreak evil). In view of these facts a responsible human society has to find new solutions and, hopefully, to reverse the hazardous trends observable today. The future is no ineluctable abstraction; it will be shaped by man and to shape it well man must rid himself of his dangerous egotism and myopia—Dr. Peccei concluded.

Dr. Guernier, commenting on Dr. Peccei's statement, drew a picture of the Club of Rome as a body concerned with global problems of mankind whose members hail from all parts of the world. The philosophy of the Club rests on three firm pillars:

— the world, although divided at present into about 170 nations, is a complex-global system;
— the world system is a finite, limited one—the biosphere cannot be expanded, and the impact of mankind is presently disturbing this biosphere;
— the consequences and repercussions of current decisions must be explored as carefully and painstakingly as possible.

It is rational to broach all the problems of the world in the framework of a single problematic. The attempt to do so requires world-wide cooperation, the main obstacle to which at present seems to be the ongoing political conflict between East and West. Nine interrelated issues go to make up the world problematic, as conceived by Dr. Guernier:

— population growth. The Club of Rome assesses the world population ceiling at about 8000 million, though contrary opinions, inadequately justified, have set this ceiling as high as 100,000 million;
— world poverty, North-South disequilibrium, and the social problems by injustice and intolerance everywhere;
— ecological disequilibrium;
— the money and resources wasted on armaments;
— stagnation and inflation eroding the world economy;
— an anarchic scientific-technological progress;
— anachronistic and malfunctioning institutions, national and international;
— the absence of meaningful dialogue between North and South, and East and West;
— a lack of moral and political leadership worldwide.

These problems must be given the attention they deserve in all countries of the world, including Hungary, where certain initiatives in the right direction had already been taken. There is no time to waste; efforts must be made at once if they are to stand a realistic chance of success—Dr. Guernier concluded.

Genetic and Microelectronic Developments

Dr. Schaff opened his statement by striking a personal note. Professing himself to be a card-carrying communist, he was, he said, a living token of the universality of the Club of Rome's membership. In fact the Club now counted three Poles among its members, as well as one Rumanian and one Yugoslav; and there were high hopes that a Hungarian would soon join their ranks. The members of the Club of Rome share a basic awareness of some of the crucial problems facing mankind and a conviction that people must be shaken out of their apathy. They represent a diversity of creeds, and they include top managers, politicians, and scientists. The world is drifting into a crisis, a crisis of growth, and the first task facing us is to come to terms with this crisis and to bring home its reality to the general public, to put and end to dreams and illusions. It is the moral duty of all who understand this to work together to stir the public imagination.

More recently the Club of Rome has concerned itself primarily with the issues of genetic manipulation and the microelectronic revolution, both of which are bound to have enormous social impact. The full automation at relatively moderate outlay made possible by microelectronics is the cutting edge of the most profound industrial revolution yet. It may yet bring us to the promised land, but it also ushers in new problems with tremendous implications. They are already being experienced, for example in the watchmaking and printing trades of many advanced countries. As this process unfolds, 20 per cent of the employable population in the most developed countries is likely to become unemployed in the space of one or two decades. Most of the unemployed would be young people, for the older generation would cling tenaciously to the available jobs. This is a phenomenon gathering pace all the time, and we are entirely unprepared for it even now. The choice lies between a really democratic society and the Orwellian nightmare. Refusing to become bogged down in the problems is has consistently exposed in the past, the Club of Rome has embarked upon an assessment and analysis of these new problems and it has also come up with valuable proposals on how to cope with them—said Dr. Schaff.

Defusing the Population Bomb

The first to speak in the discussion was Mihály Simai, an economist and President of the World Federation of UN Associations. He congratulated the Club of Rome representatives on their interesting presentation of an array of formidable problems.

The work of the Club of Rome was greatly appreciated and had made very useful contributions in some of the most important problem areas; notably it has emphasized the interdependence of problems and their cumulative impact. In the socialist countries, the problems were indeed somewhat different, as had been pointed out, and not everyone accepted the findings of the Club of Rome in every detail. But we too have learnt a lot from them, and will certainly go on doing so. One of the criticisms levelled at the Club of Rome used to be its neglect of the arms race; but today's statements by the members of the Club had amply demonstrated their awareness of the issue. It was one all the more deserving of the Club's attention since it alone accounted for a wastage of some 10 per cent of the material resources of the world today, in a world that is much too poor to afford to squander so much. The agencies of the UN, such as UNEP, FAO etc., were also working on these problems, but they had tended to neglect problems of implementing changes, which may be vastly more formidable than just realizing that problems do exist. The mechanisms for implementing the required changes were not yet fully understood in the contemporary world, which is why so many

people speak of a crisis of political will as a major block to action; and this was why, in Dr. Simai's opinion, the attitude of "dixi et salvavi animam meam" would just no longer do.

Mihály Simai then turned to the most recent report of the Club of Rome, "No Limits to Learning." He thought that slightly more optimism was probably warranted in this respect. A relationship between rising educational standards and a less rapid rate of population growth was emerging, and hopefully it was not an accidental one. This was a first step towards understanding the nature of the population bomb and suggested the actions which must be forthcoming to defuse it. This was all the more important since the demographic situation was intrinsically without precedent: developing the appropriate processes of learning and education was clearly slated to become a crucial issue, albeit also a likely source of new conflicts. The visit to Budapest had certainly helped everyone at this end to understand what the Club of Rome was really all about—Dr. Simai concluded.

Kálmán Kulcsár, a sociologist, concentrated his remarks upon the governability issue, especially concerning adaptation to rapid changes. Traditions inherited from the past and vested interests in the present systems of government constituted serious handicaps, he said, and went on to ask the Club of Rome representatives to express their opinion as to how such handicaps might be overcome.

Automation, Energy Resources

Tibor Vámos, an automation specialist and a member of the International Federation of Automatic Control, stated that ever since its foundation twenty years ago the Federation had been paying due attention to the human aspect and the social impact of systems engineering and of automation. About three months previously the Federation had adopted a new modelling programme designed to illuminate the conflicts facing mankind worldwide. This might include the modelling of a complex world system to represent all the complex problems relevant to man's future. Such an approach would permit discussion of the issues to proceed at a much more advanced level, rather in the manner that operations research had been applied to military situation analysis and decision-making. This was one possible methodological contribution through which the Federation might assist the efforts of the Club of Rome, the only question being whether the Club of Rome was interested in such cooperation.

Ferenc Márta, a research physicochemist, expressed his appreciation of the Club of Rome's achievements and stated that by and large he was in agreement with its diagnosis of the situation. He felt, however, that the key issue was now the treatment that should logically follow the diagnosis. It would be foolish to recoil from efficacious treatment once in possession of a diagnosis. This, to Academician Márta's mind, was the real problem of the age.

Rudolf Czelnai, a meteorologist, took issue with the ways in which the terms "optimist" and "pessimist" are currently employed. A person who believes that the world economy and its present consumption patterns can be maintained in a "business-as-usual" fashion is called an "optimist," when this is in fact a profoundly pessimistic outlook guaranteed to lead to disaster. Those who recognize the limits to human growth and outline the ways and means by which man might progress towards a safer and more balanced future have a better claim to be hailed as optimists. He also ventured to suggest that it was probably unjustified to concentrate so much on the shortage of energy. Shortages of practically every other resource would develop sooner or later, and mitigating these shortages would require the consumption of more and more energy (whereas the shortage of energy cannot be

significantly mitigated by the enhanced exploitation of other resources). Technological development would hopefully give access to large quantities of relatively cheap energy, which might well enable mankind to face other shortages with greater confidence.

György Ádám, a biologist, stated that he had had the privilege of attending the Salzburg meeting of the Club's "Learning" project in June 1978. The session had dealt with basic problems facing humanity, with a number of brilliant participants discussing high-quality papers. One misgiving he had had at the time, he said, sharing as he does most Central European intellectuals' weariness of anything that smacks even remotely of dogmatism, concerned the very general nature of the statements. A more stringent selection of issues certainly seemed desirable. As to the new issues now being broached by the Club, including the educational process and microelectronics, these seemed to him to smack of overdiversification, with an element of improvisation. Was it not preferable to persist with the original blueprint of the Club? Even the four issues enumerated by Dr. Peccei seemed to be very general, and some of them seemed to knock on open doors.

Professor Valky, a specialist in international law, touching upon an issue already raised by Kálmán Kulcsár and Ferenc Márta and referring to the RIO Report prepared by Professor Tinbergen's team, remarked on the relatively poor record of international organizations in coping with the problems facing them in the contemporary world. The aid programs sponsored by these organizations certainly did not seem to strike deep enough, and moreover these were not genuine decision-making bodies at all. The inability of all concerned to solve any major political-strategic issues over the least thirty-five years boded ill for the future. Professor Valky referred specifically to Idi Amin's system in Uganda which had been very widely felt to be intolerable before its final collapse; yet nothing much had been done to change it. What international body could one look to for progress in this direction?

Ottó P. Geszti, an electrical engineer, expressed his conviction that it was unduly optimistic to suppose that mankind's current lurching towards disaster could be effectively countered. The plane was already out of control, he said. What has to be done to regain control? If the system is to work the most important task is to resolve the goals and the methods, and substantially greater regulation of human lives might well be the only way—he concluded.

Gábor Petri, a surgeon, also emphasized that, with the diagnosis in hand, the most important task of the moment was to specify the action to be taken. Helping the poor of the world and extending to them the benefits of technology should not be viewed merely as an act of charity; it should be accomplished in such a manner as to permit Third World countries to grow without losing their traditional identity.

A Joint East-West Situation Analysis

Replying to the discussants, Dr. Peccei said he would concentrate on the most salient issues raised. As a general introductory to his replies to several questions he stressed that the Club of Rome did not claim to be wiser than anyone else—at best it was perhaps somewhat more persistent in the pursuance of its goals. The role that it sought for itself was that of a very humble *agent provocateur*. As regards the Club's relations with the UN, and with international bureaucracy in general, he felt it was very important to prod and catalyse such bodies, encouraging official and non-official bodies to interact in order to deepen their understanding of crucial problems. The Hungarian Academy could, he said, provide valuable help by contributing to the process of stimulation and catalysis through all the means at its disposal.

The refusal to see global problems in a

global manner was a crucial failing. Talks were under way on disarmament but the arms race, symptom of a sick society, continued to escalate. Nor was hunger a matter to be discussed at the technical level alone, for all these overriding problems were in fact interconnected. The heterogeneity of the world was a grave obstacle to coping with them, but in his opinion the world was growing more integrated all the time—with an ever greater capacity for accomplishing both good and evil. Integration implies a convergence of destinies worldwide, a common future for all, and this is to come about within the next few years, not in some remote future. Mankind has to share this same small planet and isolation will be impossible—it is up to us all to realize that each of us has a compassionate vested interest in the future of all the others on moral grounds. Dr. Peccei admitted quite openly that the Club of Rome does tend to jump from one issue to another. Having realized that *la belle époque*, the age of unbroken economic growth which began after the Second World War, was now heading for a cul-de-sac and aware that technology alone could not save us from the disaster to come, the Club had relied consistently on expert support to emphasize that the world and its opportunities were finite. It had pricked the complacent ego of industrial society, succeeded in opening a breach for new ideas, and exercised a seminal influence in many fields. The Club had hitherto stressed the fact that there could be no economics without ecology, but in the decade ahead it intended to concentrate more on the human element, the most important of all man's recources for the future.

Is it possible to involve the young, better educated than their forbears and more generous, in the decisions which concern their future? It must be realized that many, indeed most, vested interests have at least a formal legitimacy of some sort, and the task is to persuade these interests that sacrificing some part of their long-standing advantage and rights is to their own long-term benefit. As an example Dr. Peccei cited the fact that East and West have yet to make a real attempt at a joint situation analysis. If all the countries of NATO and of the Warsaw Treaty could be persuaded to undertake a joint evaluation of the state of the planet, many of the problems facing us might be brought closer to a solution. In all of these fields, Dr. Peccei concluded, the Club of Rome intended to continue its provocative and catalytic role.

Dr. Schaff, in an amplification of Dr. Peccei's statement, argued that the original notion of the world system put forward by the Club of Rome had proven to be a well-chosen point of departure, but there were still too many people who tended to reject globality, mostly on ideological grounds. The Pestel-Mesarović study had taken a second major step by introducing a model, applicable to a great many countries, which would help them to recognize and face global problems as they affected each country individually. It was now high time to proceed to tackle the educational problem, which to some extent could be conceived as a meta-problem compared with the issues grasped earlier. It should be remembered that microprocessors and genetic manipulation were not even recognized to be vital problem areas ten years ago: the philosophy of the Club of Rome, as he had expounded it in his opening statement, continued to provide a common ground for an extremely wide field of endeavour.

Professor Szentágothai assessed the discussion to have been a fruitful and stimulating one, and expressed his thanks to all participants, the three members of the Club of Rome in particular, before declaring the meeting closed.

THE BUDAPEST AMERICAN STUDIES CONFERENCE

FERENC TAKÁCS

THE ORIGINS AND THE ORIGINALITY OF AMERICAN CULTURE

A report on a conference of this sort must start by noting that American Studies are, almost by definition, an international endeavour. They spring from a double recognition: that there is need for America to explain herself, and for the rest of the world to study and understand America. It cannot afford not to.

For some time this has been clear in Hungary as well. The university departments of English in Budapest and Szeged and some of the teacher training colleges as well have followed the lead of Professor László Országh, formerly of the University of Debrecen, who was the first to teach a comprehensive American Studies programme. To be sure, American Studies are still an organizational sideline; there is, as yet, no university chair exclusively devoted to this field. Still, a steadily growing number of articles, dissertations, and books by Hungarians on a wide range of American subjects bears witness to a lively and serious Hungarian interest. The impressive number of American books, prose and verse, fiction, plays and belles-lettres, not to mention scholarly works, which have been translated into Hungarian over the last twenty years, shows that this interest, far from being restricted to specialists, extends to a wider public in Hungary.

All this has an important concomitant: there exists now, in Hungary, a professional public sufficiently at home in various fields of American Studies to provide a stimulating context for a major exchange of views on a variety of issues, ready and able to contribute to it. The recognition of this was perhaps the most important motive on the part of the English Department of Budapest University, prompting the organization of an international conference in American Studies. There were a few promising beginnings in the same line, such as the 1977 Spring Conference in Budapest and the 1978 International Conference in Debrecen, but this was really the first time in Hungary that a large and internationally varied group of participants from the United States, Western Europe, and Eastern Europe discussed a broad spectrum of American culture.

Programme and Proceedings

The conference was held between April 8 and 13 this year, in the building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The conference was formally opened by Professor Miklós Szabolcsi, Chairman of Department 1 of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Professor Péter Egri, Head of the English Department, Eötvös University, Budapest, gave a short opening address. The papers read at the plenary session were supplemented by a selection of Hungarian and American wind music played by the Budapest Philharmonia Wing Quartet, and the session

ended with the performance of a piece by John Cage by the Budapest New Music Studio ensemble.

Work continued in the afternoon and went on in five full morning and afternoon sessions in two separate sections devoted to American literature, while a third section on linguistics and a fourth on history of culture and ideas held three and two sessions respectively. More informal functions and entertainments included a reception at the Fészek Club, a noted haunt of Budapest writers, artists, and painters, a concert, and sightseeing.

Origins and Originality

The title of the conference, "The Origins and Originality of American Culture," provided the right kind of focus for seventy-two papers: it was general enough to accommodate variety and specific enough to lend coherence to the work of the four sections. Coherence is always the most problematic aspect of a conference of this sort; this time too there was the odd paper which was only tenuously related to questions of origins and originality. But, on the whole, the majority of the contributors managed to find a balance between their particular line of enquiry and the inevitably *ad hoc* conference subject.

Something of a similar difficulty accompained the task of organizing a rich variety of papers into manageable sections and sessions. Plenary sessions are, as a rule, exempt from this necessity, their point being variety rather than a unity of theme and approach. Here, a good and sufficiently varied sample of what was to come was provided by papers by Péter Egri, Budapest, on European origins and American originality in twentieth-century American drama; John Rathbun, USA, currently Rumania, on the American national character; Yassen Zassursky, Soviet Union, on the historical components of American literature; Hans Bungert, Federal Republic of Germany, on the functions of character-names in American fiction, and Vyacheslav Shestakov, Soviet Union, on myth and reality in the American dream. Working sessions, however, presented a more difficult task, and the result varied between those where there was a unity of subject, a coherence of approach, and a sense of fruitfully concerted effort among the participants and, on the other hand, sessions where there was a somewhat bewildering variety of unrelated papers. A few more sections might have been a remedy, but, for technical reasons, this proved impractical.

The most successful example of a strongly unified series of papers was, undoubtedly, the fourth session of the first literature section (afternoon of April 11): here Kent Bales, USA, read a paper on the semiotics of Hawthorne's meditations on the origins of American culture, which was followed by Aladár Sarbu, Budapest, who discussed the image of the artist in Hawthorne's work. The next speaker, Bálint Rozsnyai, Hungary, more generally discussed romance in America, while Miklós Trócsányi, Hungary, widened the spectrum to include Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* as a twentieth-century version on the theme of Puritanism. A necessary extension was provided by Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, Hungary, who discussed the Americanism/Europeanism of Henry James, and, in the last paper, Darlane Unrue, USA, appropriately fitted in with a discussion of the complex Americanism of Henry James and Faulkner.

Other, somewhat less unified, sessions offered a variety of highly interesting papers on subjects as different as personality in recent American literature (Paul Levine, USA, currently Denmark), American literary culture in the 70s (Alexander Mulyarchik, Soviet Union), Victorian readings of American literature (David Skilton, Great Britain), the American captive in contemporary American fiction (Eberhard Brüning, German Democratic Republic), American Southern fiction and European readers (Eva Masnerova, Czechoslovakia), the Euro-

pean roots of happenings and new performance theories (Zoltán Szilassy, Hungary). A series of papers addressed themselves to origins and originality in the work of individual American authors, including Edgar Allan Poe (Daniel Hoffman, USA), Mark Twain (Dieter Meindl, Federal Republic of Germany), Walt Whitman (Clive Bush, Great Britain), Henry David Thoreau (Myron Simon, USA), Emerson (Mária Újházy, Hungary), Hart Crane (Richard P. Sugg, USA, currently Czechoslovakia), William Carlos Williams (Gyula Kodolányi, Hungary), Ernest Hemingway (John Unrue, USA), John Berryman (Győző Ferencz, Hungary), Robert Bly (William Davis, USA, currently Austria), Kurt Vonnegut, jr. (Zoltán Abádi Nagy, Hungary), Anne Sexton (Enikő Bollobás, Hungary), Malcolm Cowley (István Géher, Hungary), René Wellek (Péter Dávidházi, Hungary), and Harold Bloom (Éva Federmayer, Hungary).

The work of the three sessions or the linguistics section covered a series of issues in modern theoretical linguistics, including various aspects of the work of American linguists such as Li, Thompson, Bolinger, Hultzén, and Whitney. American English was discussed by Sándor Rot (Hungary), who proposed a linguistic "boiling pot" as a refinement on the social and ethnic "melting-pot" idea, while John Odmark (USA, currently Federal Republic of Germany) indicated more general lines of enquiry in his paper on the semiotics of culture and the American idiom.

The liveliest and the most stimulating work was done, undoubtedly, in Section Four, devoted to the history of culture and ideas in America. This seemed to be the field where the idea of American Studies proved most meaningful on this occasion: the difficult and sometimes slippery terrain of everyday myths and psycho-social obsessions, the questions of ethnicity, immigration, integration, and ethnic identity in American communities, etc., offered a unique opportunity for the exercise of a set of coordinated, interdisciplinary methods and approaches in an attempt to establish some of the origins and much of the originality of American culture. The general note of the work of this section was suggested by Eric Mottram (Great Britain), who, in his paper on "Fears of Invasion in American Culture" managed to isolate, and convincingly argue for, a strong thematic strain in various areas of American culture, including politics, history, literature, and popular beliefs. Discussions of ethnicity included a well-written, cogently argued, and effectively presented paper by Wilson J. Moses (USA, currently Great Britain) on Jewish assimilation and Black ethnicity as they appear in two potent literary myths, Israel Zangwill's play, *The Melting Pot*, and Sutton Griggs' novels, including *Imperium in Imperio*, an early manifesto carrying the seeds of much of later black isolationism. Concerning immigration and integration, Tibor Frank (Hungary) presented the "re-migration" and "misintegration" of turn-of-the-century Hungarian immigrants as a special case and attempted to establish some of the causes and factors which led to this failure of Hungarians to integrate and assimilate in America. His paper was hotly debated and challenged on quite a few points.

Result and Promises

In trying to draw up some sort of a final balance sheet of the conference, one is bound to be selective: no fair account can be given which could include seventy-odd papers in any coherent way unless by stating a few generalities about them.

Apart from the inevitable number, happily only a few this time, of derivative, badly organized, or insufficiently argued papers, there was one quite general difficulty accompanying many of the individual contributions. What I have in mind is the *focus* of a conference paper: the kind of balance through which a paper is able to reproduce

the focus of the conference itself. Some papers erred on the part of too much generality: twenty-odd minute general overviews and comprehensive surveys of trends, periods, and decades can be, clearly, interesting from an outsider's point of view while, equally clearly, they are quite useless for a specialized audience. Other contributions represented an imbalance at the other extreme; they were too specialized, straying into areas of interpretation and practical criticism of brief texts. This is, of course, welcome in the classroom or in specialized scholarly publications, but less conducive to the kind of work one wishes to associate with a conference of this sort.

There were, however, quite a few papers which managed to find and keep this focus and were able to combine the right degree of generality with the kind of approach suggested by the idea of American Studies. That is, they were not simply papers on American literature, or American history, or American religious life; instead, they attempted to isolate the kind of interface where all these things (or at least some of them) coalesce into something which is recognizably and distinctly American. To take a few examples: Eric Mottram's paper was one such contribution; also, Paul Levine's paper on the theme of personality in recent American fiction or Robert Daly (USA, currently Great Britain), speaking about "American visionary history" and marshalling an impressive variety of facts about, and approaches to, history, textual evidence, religion, politics, and literature. They represented what can be termed the conference ideal of focus and Americanism. From the outside, the paper by Péter Dávidházi (Hungary) came perhaps the closest to this ideal: his balanced and closely argued discussion of René Wellek and the originality of American criticism was a very successful combination of the right sort of focus with a stimulating outside, in this case distinctly European, perspective.

PÉTER DÁVIDHÁZI

RENÉ WELLEK AND THE ORIGINALITY OF AMERICAN CRITICISM

His *English Dictionary* revised and corrected, Dr. Johnson wrote a Latin poem complaining about the terrible emptiness he was to face instead of being able to enjoy, after so many productive years, "the rewards of a well-spent life" ("actae bene munera vitae").[1] Surveying the life and reading the books of René Wellek one is haunted by this notion of "a well-spent life"; the growth of his output, in spite of the vicissitudes and changing scenery of his career, has an air of the inevitable about it, not unlike the organic inevitability we feel in the growth of a magnificent tree. Born in 1903 in Vienna, he studied English and German at Charles University in Prague between 1922 and 1926, gaining his doctorate for a hesis on *Carlyle and Romanticism*. In 1927 he went to the United States, first becoming Procter Fellow of English in the graduate school of Princeton University, then began to teach at Smith College and later at Princeton. In 1930 he returned to

[1] Samuel Johnson: *The Complete English Poems*. Edited by J. D. Fleeman. Harmondsworth. 1971. pp. 147, 149.

Prague and taught English literature at Charles University. It was at this time that he joined the Prague Linguistic Circle and, in 1931, published his first book on *Immanuel Kant in England 1793–1838*. In 1935 he was appointed Lecturer in Czech Language and Literature in the School of Slavonic Studies of the University of London. After Munich he left England, taught at the University of Iowa until 1946 when he was called to Yale, first as Professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature, then, from 1952, as Sterling Professor of Comparative Literature. In the meantime he published books of remarkable sensitivity, relentless erudition, and sound judgement: *The Rise of English Literary History* (1941), *Theory of Literature* (with Austin Warren, 1949), the first four volumes of *A History of Modern Criticism 1750–1950* (1955 and 1965), *Concepts of Criticism* (1963), *Essays on Czech Literature* (1963), *Confrontations* (1965), *The Literary Theory and Aesthetics of the Prague School* (1969), *Discriminations; Further Concepts of Criticism* (1970), not to mention his contributions to books, uncollected articles in periodicals, and numerous reviews. Respect for the achievement, however, should go hand in hand with severe critical analysis: in my paper I shall first try to outline the genesis and development of his thought (I), then give a brief summary of his critical theory (II), and last but not least define and evaluate the nature and significance of his contribution to American criticism (III).

(I) Out of the first important formative period of his life, the years of study at Charles University in Prague, the influence of two minds seems to emerge as decisive, though, characteristically enough, he had been unwilling to embrace their tenets with the uncritical enthusiasm and self-surrender of youthful worship. Influence, if fertile, is always a blend of straight inheritance and elicited reaction. Those were the early years of Masaryk's presidency, and one of the two decisive factors in the moulding of René Wellek's thought seems to have been the work of Thomas Masaryk himself. In a later study on *Masaryk's Philosophy* (1945) Wellek examines him as a sociologist and a philosopher of history, and stresses Masaryk's reservations about the supposed omnipotence of historical and causal explanation, his demand for principles and convictions, his dismissal of naturalism as an attempt to annihilate human personality and invalidate moral norms. These views have much in common with those of Wellek himself, but their opinions about issues literary are different. Due to his "innate puritanism" Masaryk, as Wellek saw, "had no interest in the art of a work of literature but took it merely as a symptom of a moral or mental attitude."[2] This shortcoming must have been obvious to Wellek very early because of the teacher who exerted perhaps the greatest influence on his undergraduate years: P. X. Šalda, the founder of modern Czech criticism. Šalda, just as Wellek was to do later, "rejected scientific theories which seem to account for literature by external causes such as Taine's system of determinism, not because he does not see literature as part of society [...] but because he realized that finally all these theories are confronted with something they cannot cope with: individuality, creativity."[3] An enemy of provincial and untheoretical criticism, Šalda seems to have been a source of lifelong inspiration for Wellek, although again, the undergraduate saw his shortcomings as well.[4]

In the early thirties the young *Docent* of Charles University worked with the group of literary historians associated with the Prague Linguistic Circle which was organized in 1926 under the chairmanship of his former teacher, Vilém Mathesius. These years of membership in the Prague Circle

[2] *Twenty Years of Czech Literature, 1918–1938.* In: *Essays on Czech Literature.* The Hague. 1963. p. 37.; *Masaryk's Philosophy.* In: *Ibid.*, p. 69

[3] *Modern Czech Criticism and Literary Scholarship.* In: *Ibid.* p. 181.

[4] *Twenty Years of Czech Literature, 1918–1938.* In: *Ibid.* p. 37.

represent the second decisive step in the development of the young scholar. As he admitted later, *Theory of Literature* was partly a "deliberate attempt to bring together the insights I had acquired as a junior member of the Circle with my knowledge of American Criticism."[5] The doctrines of the Prague School, however, were not indiscriminately accepted by Wellek: he resents that Mukařovský in *Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value* (1936) abandoned the concept of aesthetic value by declaring the work of art to be nothing but an assembly of extra-aesthetic values. Though a defender of the autonomy of art, he is sceptical about Mukařovský's whole concept of "an internal history of art" or the "self-motion" of literature, and concludes that "the idea of a self-propelled evolution" seems "a mere heuristic device." He is also aware of the danger which has always been inherent in the doctrines of the Prague School: to "lead away from a humane and humanistic conception of literary study."[6]

The third decisive stage in the crystallization of his critical theory was his discovery, already in the United States, of New Criticism and its basic similarity with the Prague School. Of course he saw the differences as well, and the confrontation made him aware of the relative merits and deficiencies of both. He could agree with the New Critics that the work of art is "comparatively independent of its background in history, biography, and literary traditions," because this did not mean "a denial of the relevance of historical information for the business of poetic interpretation."[7] But by 1961 his list of objections against them had grown long: their selection of European writers is too narrow, their historical perspective is too short, they neglect literary history, their ignorance of linguistics makes their study of poetic devices often dilettantish, and their basic aesthetics often lacks a firm philosophical foundation. In 1961 he wrote that the New Criticism had been exhausted and ossified, and urged some change. Still, the central insights of those very diverse grouped together by the "blanket term" of New Criticism have always seemed to him "valid for poetic theory,"[8] and no account of his intellectual development, however sketchy, can afford to ignore their impact.

(II) Of course this brief outline of his development cannot do justice to the mature critical theory which eventually was to emerge out of the continuous confrontations and revaluations of the critical creeds and assumptions he met on his way. The summary of his theoretical position should start with an examination of his concept of criticism. In *A History of Modern Criticism* the term "criticism" means "not only judgements of individual books, and authors, [...] but mainly what has been thought about the principles and theory of literature." The twofold purpose of criticism is "the understanding and judgement of literature;" any attempt, like that of Frye, to separate theory and the value-judgements of taste is "surely doomed to failure." "Literary scholarship must become a systematic body of knowledge, an inquiry into structures, norms, and functions which contain and *are* values." Criticism is not an art, it aims at "intellectual cognition" and "conceptual knowledge." Literary scholarship is not natural science, but "a system of organized knowledge with its own methods and aims."[9]

[5] *The Literary Theory and Aesthetics of the Prague School*. In: *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*. New Haven and London. 1970. p. 276.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 291, 287–289, 301.

[7] *American Literary Scholarship*. In: *Concepts of Criticism*. New Have and London. 1963. p. 308.; *Literary Theory, Criticism, and History*. In: *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[8] *The Main Trends of Twentieth-Century Criticism*. In: *Ibid.*, p. 359.

[9] *A History of Modern Criticism I–IV*. New Haven and London. 1955, 1965. Vol. I. pp. V, 11, vol. III. p. V; *The Revolt against Positivism in Recent European Literary Scholarship*. In: *Concepts of Criticism*. p. 260; *The Concept of Evolution in Literary History*. In: *Ibid.*, p. 52; *Literary Theory, Criticism, and History* In: *Ibid.*, p. 4.

This ideal of criticism as "discrimination" and "judgement," which "applies and implies criteria, principles, concepts, and thus a theory and aesthetic and ultimately a philosophy, a view of the world" makes Wellek an uncompromising enemy of what he calls "the ingrained antitheoretical prejudice" of the bulk of twentieth-century English criticism. He rejects the false belief in the possibility of a type of criticism which does not take, or at least tacitly imply, a philosophical position. As early as 1937 in an article in *Scrutiny* he criticized F. R. Leavis's *Revolution* for not being conscious enough of its latent philosophical assumptions. In *A Map of Contemporary Criticism in Europe*, the last paper in *Discriminations* (1970), he displays the same dissatisfaction with Leavis's pupils, like John Holloway, who "dismisses all philosophical and aesthetic speculation as 'abracadabra' in the good antitheoretical manner of Leavis."[10]

Just like theory, for Wellek *evaluation* is also indispensable in the study of literature. A defender of the possibility of correct evaluation, he dislikes relativism and the anarchy of values. His guiding principle is neither relativism nor absolutism in the old sense, but "a 'perspectivism' that tries to see the object from all possible sides and is convinced that there *is* an object." Criticism, accordingly, is "interpretation and judgement of publicly verifiable objects;" we can speak of the "adequacy" of interpretation, which implies a "hierarchy of viewpoints" and leads to the possibility of "correct" evaluation. "Just as there is correct interpretation, at least as an ideal, so there is correct judgement, good judgement."[11] In a paper on *Immanuel Kant's Aesthetics and Criticism* Wellek is pleased to discover the predecessor of his own theory of *perspectivism* in Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. He agrees with the Kantian view that criticism is "personal but it aims to discover a structure of determination in the object itself," but he regrets that the Kantian solution nevertheless suffers from "his general emphasis on the subjective and phenomenological" and does not "launch out more boldly into a realm of objective structures, into the world of existing art objects." Kant, due to his epistemological position, "leaves us too much in the realm of the subjective," whilst Wellek's own perspectivism seems to be nearer to that "carefully defined and refined absolutism" he advocated.[12] The two positions have much in common but their emphases are put differently.

Another reason for the strong appeal of Kantian aesthetics for Wellek was Kant's recognition of the autonomy of art. Kant was the first to give a systematic defense of the aesthetic realm against sensualism, emotionalism, moralism, and intellectualism, all of which attempted to make art "a substitute of something else."[13] Wellek, too, tried to defend the autonomy of art against more recent attempts of this kind. He rejects, e.g., I. A. Richards's view of art as "a sort of emotional therapy" because it "denies any difference between aesthetic and ordinary experience." T. S. Eliot is reproached for "the mistaken introduction of a double standard in criticism: aesthetic and religious." The new methods which tried to replace the New Criticism are finally dismissed because myth criticism obliterates the boundaries between art and myth (or religion), whereas existentialism tends to identify art with philosophy. The

[10] *Philosophy and Postwar American Criticism*. In: *Concepts of Criticism*. p. 316; *A Map of Contemporary Criticism in Europe*. In: *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*. p. 347.

[11] *A History of Modern Criticism*. Vol. III. p. VI; *The Poet, the Critic, the Poet-Critic*. In: *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*. p. 256.; *Literary Theory, Criticism, and History*, In: *Concepts of Criticism*. p. 18.

[12] *Immanuel Kant's Aesthetics and Criticism*. In: *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*. p. 128; *Ibid.*, 129, 141; *Literary Theory, Criticism, and History*. In: *Concepts of Criticism*. p. 20.

[13] *Immanuel Kant's Aesthetics and Criticism*. In: *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*. pp. 124–125.

aesthetics of naturalism and realism "led to a confusion of life and art," ignoring the "ontological gap" between the two.[14] Here we have arrived at one of the most intricate points of Wellek's critical theory, his very cautious view on the value of causal explanation in the study of literature. "Causal explanation, in an ultimate sense, is impossible in matters of mind: cause and effect are incommensurable, the effect of specific causes unpredictable." He admits that the "social situation" determines whether certain aesthetic values and art forms are possible or not, but argues that it is impossible to predict that these will be actually realized or not. His scepticism, resembling at this point that of David Hume, goes as far as to deny that "anybody has yet succeeded in proving that because of certain events either in history or in literature there must have followed another specific event," and emphatically stresses that "the whole concept of causation is most elusive in the life of the mind."[15] Wellek, again, is pleased to see that Kant, hesitatingly, gives art the role of mediator between the realm of appearance, necessity, and physical causality on the one hand and that of moral freedom on the other, between nature and man. Similarly, he seems reassured by Kant's refusal to go "all the way in identifying art with organism" and by Kant's insistence on the difference: "creatures are subject to the laws of causality and physics, while works of art are not."[16] Wellek is sure that the underlying assumption of nineteenth-century positivism, to consider literature "the product of social forces," was wrong: something must be left to "the initiative of the individual," i.e. to personality as partly determined by but partly transcending its social context. He cannot accept "the view constituting any particular human activity the 'starter' of all the others".[17]

(III) But what, one might ask, is especially American in his theory and what is original in his contribution to mid-twentieth-century American criticism? To begin with the former question, he himself has never seen much sense in putting too much stress on the national character of criticism. "Many recent critics are concerned with defining the nature of the American, the Americanism of American literature, often only dimly aware of how much is common to man, modern man, and common to Europe and America." Nineteenth-century nationalism, though contributing significantly to the growth of criticism, had a dark side as well, "not only in the obvious exaggerations of national claims and the long and repetitious debates about the same questions of nationality in literature but also in the fragmentation of criticism" and "the astonishingly decreased sense of community [...] among the European nations in the later 19th century." The originality and "great feature" of American criticism between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, on the other hand, lay precisely in its universality, its being "something like a synthesis of European criticism, exempt, at least, from the particular limitations of the main national traditions."[18]

Wellek thought the nineteenth-century debate on American literary nationalism had local significance only and could be safely excluded from his book. However, his

[14] *Philosophy and Postwar American Criticism.* In: *Concepts of Criticism.* p. 324; *The Main Trends of Twentieth-Century Criticism.* In: *Ibid.* pp. 357, 360–361, 363; *A History of Modern Criticism.* Vol. III. p. XIII; *Recent Czech Literary History and Criticism.* In: *Essays on Czech Literature.* p. 204.

[15] *A History of Modern Criticism.* Vol. I, p. 8; *Theory of Literature* (with Austin Warren). p. 106; *Recent Czech Literary History and Criticism.* In: *Essays on Czech Literature* p. 203.

[16] *Immanuel Kant's Aesthetics and Criticism.* In: *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism.* pp. 130–132.

[17] *The Revolt against Positivism in Recent Literary Scholarship.* In: *Concepts of Criticism.* p. 267; *A History of Modern Criticism.* Vol. I, p. 8, vol. III, pp. XIV, XVI; *Theory of Literature* p. 105.

[18] *Philosophy and Postwar American Criticism.* In: *Concepts of Criticism.* p. 333; *A History of Modern Criticism.* Vol. III, pp. XV, 151.

remarks scattered in the chapters on nineteenth-century American critics unambiguously reveal his position. He finds Poe "very sensible about literary nationalism" and quotes from him a witty remark: "we daily found ourselves in the paradoxical dilemma of liking or pretending to like a stupid book the better because (sure enough), its stupidity was of our own growth." He can grant originality to Emerson's view of art although knowing that all its ideas may be traced to some, mostly European, antecedents. He gave a rather favourable account of the output of Margaret Fuller, who recognized "the novelty of the American synthesis of Europe." He praises Lowell's conception of literature and quotes, again, a remark similar to that of Poe in its judgement and sarcastic wit: "We were busy growing a literature. We watered so freely, and sheltered so carefully, as to make a soil too damp and shaded for anything but mushrooms; wondered a little why no oaks came up, and ended by voting the mushroom an oak, an American variety." Wellek is very critical about Lowell's practical criticism, but admires his theories which are learned from Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, Goethe, and August Wilhelm Schlegel and are "not any the worse for being derivative." The lifework of Henry James, whom Wellek considers to be "by far the best" nineteenth-century critic in America, remained faithful to the programme of his youth, expressed in an early letter, and the hope in "a vast intellectual fusion and synthesis of the various national tendencies of the world."[19] Thus, we may conclude, the international perspective and synthesis advocated and practised by Wellek has nothing un-American about it; in fact it is very well in line with a tradition of inclusiveness within American criticism. What is more, by accepting only those doctrines of American criticism which were compatible with his own theory, mainly European in origin, he succeeded in avoiding "the natural handicap with which every foreigner starts in studying a literature not his own," i.e. the uncritical adoption of the methods and standards of the country whose literature they are studying and thereby developing "a position of inferiority" towards its scholarship, which, in turn, prevents them from achieving a coherent outlook of their own.[20]

The second and last question, that of originality, leads us to the central task of my paper: an assessment of Wellek's contribution to American criticism. His own judgement on twentieth-century American criticism is that it is seriously damaged by its ignorance of the past and the continuity of critical tradition. This ignorance compels nearly every American critic to invent "his own 'homebrew' vocabulary, his own shifting set of terms differing from essay to essay," and to start thinking about age-old problems from scratch, completely unaware of the previous attempts at formulating and answering them. Moreover, the assumptions of American criticism are "rarely thought through in their philosophical implications and historical antecedents." The originality thus emerging, whether it is that of Kenneth Burke, J. C. Ransom, or R. P. Blackmur, is not without merits but the loss seems to be greater than the gain. Such "indulgence in idiosyncrasies damages the cumulative effect of criticism." This "random experimentation" with different private worlds of concepts is open to misunderstanding and may eventually reach "a fuzziness and blur so extreme that is seems impossible to keep up any interest" in the solutions offered.[21]

This severe critique of American criticism is basically sound and convincing; one always feels the freshness, mobility, ingenuity, and originality of twentieth-century American criticism, but also that it is an originality

[19] *A History of Modern Criticism.* Vol. III, pp. 153, 176, 179, vol. IV, pp. 202–203, 213, 215.

[20] *American Literary Scholarship.* In: *Concepts of Criticism.* pp. 302–303.

[21] *A History of Modern Criticism.* Vol. I, pp. 4–5; *American Literary Scholarship.* In: *Concepts of Criticism.* p. 311; *Philosophy and Post-War American Criticism.* In: *Concepts of Criticism.* pp. 326–327.

somewhat unearned and often rather immature. Therefore I conclude that the contribution of Wellek himself added elements most needed in mid-twentieth-century American criticism: a thorough knowledge of the past, clarification of philosophical assumptions, consistency of terminology, and a wider perspective. Though having a clear-cut and well-defined critical theory of his own, his originality seems less spectacular, though probably of more lasting value than that of his fellow-critics.

But it is also true that his somewhat oversceptical view on casuality, though philosophically impeccable, seems to exaggerate the consequences of causal unpredictability and thereby unnecessarily narrow the scope of his endeavours. What is more, I see a latent contradiction in his system where on the one hand he discards the Hegelian *Selbstbewegung* (self-motion) in the history of art and finds the notion of a self-propelled inner evolution of art unsatisfactory, whereas on the other he considers, in the history of criticism, the "inner logic" and "dialectic of concepts" the guiding principle of change, and is even willing to accept unpredictability, precisely the factor which made him exclude explanations by *external* causes. "Reaction against the preceding or prevailing critical system is the most common driving force of the history of ideas, though we cannot predict what direction a reaction will take or tell why it should come at a certain time," he wrote in the *Preface* to his *History*.[22] Just as he was wise enough to "launch out more boldly" than Kant "into a realm of objective structures," so as to avoid the paralysing effect of subjectivity and relativism on criticism, and wise to consider the historical relativity of critical judgement nothing but a useful *memento mori* not at all incompatible with a final claim to objectivity, he should not, I think, have given way to such an extent to his doubts and scruples about the inconclusiveness of causal explanation. By refusing to analyse the influence of external causes he surely reached his goal of preserving the purity of his method and the reliability of his results, but at the same time he impoverished the texture of his work to some extent. The exceptional richness of that work, fortunately, could easily afford this impoverishment. At the end of this survey the sheer stature of his contribution once more calls to mind the poem quoted at the beginning of my paper. After that poem of complaint, Dr. Johnson, then 63, was to live another 12 years, producing what many would consider today his crowning achievement, the *Lives of the Poets*. Let us hope that René Wellek, now 76, will have the strength to complete his great *History* by publishing the missing fifth volume, so as to give us a rare example of what Dr. Johnson would have justly considered "a well-spent life."

[22] *A History of Modern Criticism* Vol. I, p. 8.

ERIC MOTTRAM

FEARS OF INVASION IN AMERICAN CULTURE

From the founding of the Republic in 1776 until the present day, the American people have been singularly prone to invasion fears—fears of entry into the body-mind and into the body politic and economic from forces which might force change, and forces which enforce national unity and obedience. Considering that America has not been actually invaded by another nation since the British left in 1814, the case is neurotic and,

increasingly, dangerous not only to America itself but to the world in which it acts so overwhelmingly. The structures of this fear are partly religious, partly political, and they extend into America's predominantly interventionist foreign policy, into a massive series of cults and sects, and into an extraordinary development of internal and external surveillance systems and techniques.

To over-simplify the issue for the purposes of this necessarily brief paper, six categories may be identified, drawn from a much larger scheme of research.

First, fear that human beings are not alone intelligent in the multiverse.

Second, fear that some form of underground or overground power, semi-visible or invisible versions of the manichean vision of the world, are a battlefield of good and evil forces. This is the main region not only of the legacy of Puritanism but of the varieties of racism, the games of genetic engineering, and so on.

Third, fear of insurrection or invasion from within—from blacks, Indians, the Left, student dissent, and so on.

Four, fear of invasion from without—from Russia, Cuba, UFOs, rays, socialism, and so on.

Five, imaginary fears which blurr and weaken attention to actual threats to both the individual and the community freedoms, both public and secret, masked and obvious.

Six, fear of total surveillance by God or godlike authority or demonic rule, or from a total surveillance system, the society within the combined construct of the CIA, FBI, Army Intelligence, police, Inland Revenue, Mormon filing system, closed-circuit television, bugging, and so on. And here the complexity of the subject becomes immediately clear since for many people total surveillance fulfills a dream of freedom as dominated security, where for others freedom is release from authority.

The American is therefore a peculiar case of a condition endemic in societies which have to believe themselves terminal and invincible. As the sciences continue to disclose an infinity of life possibilities, so the political economy made possible by science needs to possess *the* clue, *the* key, *the* central energy, *the* wonder particle of power, *the* unhinderable means of manipulation and penetration of the mind and body —the justification, for example, of the American Army's unscrupulous experimentation with the effects of LSD on human subjects. So the explorations of science fiction and of speculative psychology become political and socio-economic reality, and the required leader becomes the dream agent and executor of these powers, an impossible or partly possible figure of necessity.

But underground energy has also to be used as a regenerative source. New energies are needed to prevent stagnation into too early a social entropy. So tensions form between fear of rigidity and fear of fluidity, two apprehensive kinds of chaos lurching toward destruction.

The innumerable plots of diabolic invasion catastrophe which dominate American fictions and films may be rapidly exemplified. Back in 1953, Arthur Miller's play, *The Crucible*, reassembled seventeenth-century witchcraft hunt materials for the period of a virulent House Un-American Activities Committee, and 1956 Don Siegel's film, *Invasion of the Body-Snatchers*, postulated invasion of a space culture dominating America through pods of replica human forms, an admitted analogue of the pressures from Senator McCarthy's committee of investigation. Siegel said that his highly popular film showed how "the aim of fascism is that people under its rule should be... like vegetables." When the film was remade in 1979, one of its characters rejected the idea of calling the FBI for help on the grounds that "they're all pods anyway." In 1964, John Frankenheimer's film, *The Manchurian Candidate*, proposed a top-rank political conspiracy to take over America, and his 1977 *Black Sunday* projected a Palestinian urban

guerilla attack on the Superbowl, a main sacred American sports finale.

These works represent a small part of a large field which also includes political spy films and novels, fictions of the gangster underworld, and horror fictions which feature alien life come to the Earth—the American Earth—and freak mutations either within the permutations of Nature or from tampering with Nature, the guilt of scientific permission to do *anything* within the galaxy in order to exploit it for the nation. Themes of conquest, control and resistance —the ways in which the environment and the self are maintained within law, technology and labour manipulation—are dramatized through fictions of monsters of force —vampires, microbes, spies, police chiefs, inquisitors, and the rest.

The original Frankenstein film—the first of many—was made, significantly enough, by the Edison Company in 1910. By 1966, Richard Fleischer's film, *Fantastic Voyage*, reduces scientists to a size that can be injected *into* a patient's body—the meddling medic's dreams at last come true, and reflecting the actual dominances of invasory medicine and psychiatry. But during the 1950s and 1960s especially, subversive challenge eached into American official society from the so-called underground movements themselves—and, as Parker Tyler observes in his book *Underground Film*, the police police the underground because this is the suspect region of change energies. The underground press and films challenged taboo areas of official so-called mainstream social life, the values of rulers, and this in itself became part of the democratic energizing conflict within the culture. During the recent period of the Civil Rights movement and the protest against South-East Asian wars, it was the underground which radically and properly challenged official programming—to assault, for instance, as the Abolitionists did in the mid-nineteenth century, the rooted moral mythology of the Christianized West that black is evil and white is good, and that the blackness of blacks is the sign of ineradicable danger. Black literature and propaganda had to begin with this decadence induced within black Americans themselves, as much as in the whites.

But of course, official control also works underground—in, for example, the networks of the CIA, FBI, the Pentagon and the methods of the Watergate men—and studies and fictions of these have proliferated during the past decade. But, once again, actually curative investigation, rather than sensationalist journalism, has come largely from radicals and subversives, to elucidate, for instance, Peter Clecak's observation in his book, *Radical Paradoxes* (1973): "Recently, in a national atmosphere of pessimism, many people have come to suspect that history is being made behind their backs."

Fear of incohesion is endemic in a culture so spacious and so conscious of states and property rights. Douglas T. Miller writes in his *The Birth of Modern America 1820–1850* (1971) "As American society changed, social cohesion was threatened. Industry, immigration, and expansion were creating a pluralistic society; yet many persons clung to a single-track vision of what the country should be. That the unfamiliar alarmed Americans is evidenced by the bitter attacks against such groups as Catholics, Masons, and Mormons." Gustavus Myers' *History of Bigotry in the United States* (1943) begins with Puritan anti-Quaker repression and concludes with the Lindbergh case, and Henry M. Christman's revision in 1960 includes McCarthyism and the Montgomery bus boycott. David Brion Davis' *The Fear of Conspiracy: Images of Un-American Subversion from the Revolution to the Present* (1971) includes Richard Hofstadter's celebrated essay "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," and documents "a long succession of dark conspiratorial powers... each subversive force as posing an unprecedented danger... an intersection of private and collective fantasies." Davis' evidence shows that, of course, belief in some kind of manichean world inevitably

promotes paranoias. The period of black-humour novelists and comedians in the 1950s and 1960s updated a long inheritance —for example, in the paranoid style of William S. Burroughs' novels, and the celebrated figure of Colonel Jack D. Ripper in Stanley Kubrick's film, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), with his obsession that American "precious bodily fluids" were being drained off by enemy forces.

Davis also shows how American colonists imaged Catholic Europe as a conspiracy against liberty in the New World. But by 1790, the Jesuits had been replaced by the atheists of French Revolution "illuminism." In 1802, Abraham Bishop published a Jeffersonian tirade against the Hamiltonian power elite entitled *Proofs of a Conspiracy Against Christianity, and the Government of the United States:* the work was both anti-Jewish and anti planned economy.

In the year of the founding of the republic, 1776, the Illuminati were founded in Bavaria as an anti-clerical organization to convert the human race to reason. The paranoid response in New York and Philadelphia was extraordinary. That Charles Brockden Brown was fascinated by forms of invasion is clear from his writings between 1798 and 1803—he uses the yellow fever epidemics of the 1790s, ventriloquial seduction, and Jedidiah Morse's crusade against the Illuminati's alleged invasion of America. Brown's Ormond is a member of an international organization to destroy existing social order. Ludloe is a similar figure. William Dunlap, America's first prolific playwright, noted in his diary that Brown "has taken up the scheme of the Illuminati." Not only did Brown discuss his obsession in magazine articles, but in *Jane Talbot* (1801), one character is enthralled by the Illuminati and, in a manuscript fragment, one character is a member of an organization dedicated to rational reform rather in the manner of B. F. Skinner's reforms in his behaviorist novel *Walden Two* in 1948, a work dedicated to educational dictatorship.

In Brown's *Arthur Mervyn*, the Philadelphia yellow fever epidemic of 1793 is fused into the procedures of Thomas Welbeck, forger, murderer, seducer, a man of sophisticated rationalism and diabolic skills—a plot system which tested humanitarian values and was to have a long life in American fiction, from the detective games of Poe and Twain and the twentieth-century masters, to the epic paranoid works of William Gaddis, Thomas Pynchon and Norman Mailer. The basis is there in Brown's *Edgar Huntly* of 1799: "Most men are haunted by some species of terror or antipathy, which they are for the most part able to trace to some incident which befell them in their early years." But for the rest, Huntly is drawn into a world of invisible threat.

Brown generally opted for strong leadership in a world of subterfuge and partial disclosure. In 1803, in an anonymous pamphlet, he alleged a French plot to control New Orleans, foster black slave revolts, and incite Indians against whites. His aim was to cause the expulsion of all foreigners —his contribution to Federalist propaganda against Jeffersonian internationalism. And in a further pamphlet, Brown declared: "Fate has manifestly decreed that America must belong to the English name and race."

America's need for cheap labour within white supremacy is infused with beliefs in the alleged inferiority of blacks or any people who had to be used by the system. It was required that useful inferiors be bad or impure or dark or dirty, and thereby associated with disease, sexuality, diabolic threat and the need for conversion and suppression: the puritan legacy, in fact. Negroes and Jews could be signs for the night side of life, a corruption of light and the natural authority of white, the godfather. One of Americas most popular fantasy writers, H. P. Lovecraft, generated some of his most insidious fictions and articles from fear of what he called "the organic things—Italo-Semitic-Mongoloid—inhabiting that awful cesspool (which) could

not by any stretch of imagination be called human." Lovecraft used a text later notoriously a fascist resource, Houston Chamberlain's 1899 *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, and persistently attacked all "orientals," predicting necessary wars against the Chinese and Japanese, "in the interests of European safety"—a theme Jack London took up in his *Revolution and Other Essays* in 1910.

Lovecraft's popularity lies in both his exploitation of fears of an underground racial history and his projection of another idea with a powerful future—an aristocratic super-intelligent Great Race, manipulating the space-time field with legitimate power for necessary ends. In the best-selling science fiction novel *Childhood's End*, Arthur C. Clarke invented in 1953 his "Overlords," a remedial dictatorship from outer space, taking temporary form as traditional Christian devils and voicing popular indifference to ideological conflicts, the bitter nonsense of a "value-free" society. And Kurt Vonnegut's best-selling *Slaughterhouse 5* of 1969 presents the Tralfamadorians as space beings embodying popular fatalistic determinism.

The sense of a dark under-energy of events also haunts Henry James. For him, the 1914 war was a de-historicized part of "a huge horror of blackness... the abyss of blood and darkness," which had once erupted in Lincoln's assassination and continued in international anarchism, "the more 'shady' world of militant socialism," "some sinister anarchic underworld, heaving in its pain, its power and its hate," to which the "Under-World" of the poor and their leaders belong. But the term "Under-World" appears in Ignatius Donnelly's 1891 *Caesar's Column*, a classic fantasy of subterranean insurrection, focussing on the International Brotherhood of Destruction, a "directing intelligence" of the barely controllable energy of dispossessed workers, the masses whose outbreak in chapter 33 is given in characteristic terms: "dark with dust and sweat, armed with the weapons of civilization, but possessing only the instincts of wild beasts ... all the devils are loose."

But Donnelly is as ambivalent about the necessity of revolt as Hawthorne in, for example, *My Kinsman Major Molineux* in 1832 and Melville in *Billy Budd* in 1888. In fact, the Senegalese head of Babo, glaring fixedly at the end of "Benito Cereno," haunts the fiction of invasion and insurrection.

In 1907, Jack London transformed his primitivist and labour revolt materials into *The Iron Heel*, in which a blond Nietzschean hero ambivalently relates to the people of the Chicago abyss—the old fears of Brown, Donnelly and James re-emerge. London's "lords of society" are given as a wolf-pack, Darwinianly dominating the masses. The society of the Iron Heel is presented as an extraordinary amalgam of secret service men, mercenary army, counter-revolutionaries and labour slaves—an organized chaos, later familiar in Joseph Heller's *Catch 22* (1961), in which the hero, Yossarian, finds himself in "a world boiling in chaos in which everything was in its proper order." In Thomas Pynchon's epic of paranoia, *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), Van Goll re-enacts Ormond and Ludloe, as the leader who hallucinates totalitarian powers: "We move through a cosmic design of darkness and light, and in all humility, I am one of the very few who can comprehend it *in toto*"—a classic manichean priestly formula, containing what is probably a palpable joke at the expense of Robert Frost's poem "Design" (1936).

Jack London's *The Assassination Bureau* offered another now familiar version of this self-righteous structure of tyranny: an oligarchy in the style of later gangster systems, Mafia godfatherism, the CIA, Murder Inc., and America's paramilitary private armies and police forces. The supposition here is that in a society on the edge of chaos, firm, secret organization is a para-governmental necessity: "learned lunatics who had made a fetish of ethics and who took the lives of

fellow human beings with the same coolness and directness of purpose with which they solved problems in mathematics, made translations of hieroglyphics, or carried through chemical analyses in the test-tubes of their laboratories."

As American political, military, economic and cultural power has increased since 1945, so has the number of texts—fiction, film, social studies—investigating and proposing dangers and securities from semi-visible systems. In fact, invasion fear is a main subject, a major source of media income, a dominant source of the state's use of national income called "defence." Within this fear is a main lingering belief, a complex postulation of some total meaning, concealed and revealed, which must be understood for survival—in the words of Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), "a hieroglyphic sense of concealed meaning, of an intent to communicate," "a network by which X number of Americans are truly communicating whilst reserving their lies, recitations of routine, arid betrayals of spiritual poverty, for the official government delivery system... a real alternative to the exitlessness, to the absence of surprise to life, that harrows the heart of everybody American you know." In *Gravity's Rainbow*, this becomes "the terrible politics of the Grail," as a response to panic "images of Uncertainty."

Then in 1975 appeared *Illuminatus!* by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, a three-volume parodistic summary of every conceivable version of this cultural history —and moving out from exactly that Bavarian organization which scared Americans two hundred years earlier at the beginning of their state. Shea and Wilson are ambivalently both exhilerated and appalled; their book is a witty and uneasy continuum of obsessed fascination and a sense of the ludicrousness of any belief in a totality of design. It was a matter of a short time before the work became a cult in itself, followed in 1977 by Wilson's *Cosmic Trigger: The Final Secret of the Illuminati*, with a believing preface by the old acid guru of the 1960s, Timothy Leary, for whom the trilogy and its secret are the sign that America is now moving "from its adolescence into the final stages of technological centralization preceding Space Migration."

WILSON J. MOSES

LITERARY MYTH AND ETHNIC ASSIMILATION

Israel Zangwill and Sutton Griggs

Israel Zangwill (1864–1926) was a man of two souls. As one biographer contends, "He was passionately devoted to the values of the Jewish past as enshrined in the ghetto, but at the same time, he sought to escape from what he felt to be the ghetto's restrictiveness." He was born in London of a poor Russian immigrant family, educated at the Jews' Free School in the East End of London, where he later became a teacher. He published prolifically, essays, stories, and plays, becoming known for his "Dickensian" portrayals of types of London Jewry. But the best known contribution that Israel Zangwill made to the thought of the modern world was a phrase that he donated to American culture. It is a phrase taken from the title of his now almost forgotten play,

The Melting Pot. It is with the theme of this play that I am concerned here. Stated succintly, and in its author's words the central idea is that "America is God's crucible, the great "melting pot," where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming." The plot is as follows:

It is 1908, and young David Quixano, a Russian Jewish violinist, has recently arrived in America to live with his Uncle Mendel, a piano teacher, and Mendel's aged mother, who finds it hard to give up her old country ways and speaks no English. They have a good hearted, though sporadically ethnocentric, servant girl named Kathleen. She is Irish, of course, and provides much amusement with her attempts to speak Yiddish and to remember the family's orthodox rituals and customs. At one point, Kathleen exclaims in exasperation that the Pope himself could not remember so many religious rules and dietary laws. One evening the family is visited by Vera Revendal, an idealistic young woman, who has recently emigrated from Russia. Her English is perfect because her parents, Czarist aristocrats (though of modest means) were able to provide her with an English governess. Vera asks David to play his violin at her settlement house, although, as she explains apologetically, she will not be able to offer a fee. But David responds with passion,

> A fee! I'd pay a fee to see all those happy immigrants you gather together —Dutchmen and Greeks, Poles and Norwegians, Welsh and Armenians. If you only had Jews, it would be as good as going to Ellis Island.

Ellis Island in New York is, of course, the symbolic gateway through which so many turn-of-the-century immigrants were herded before being officially admitted as residents. It was on Ellis Island that they often had their first contact with industrial bureaucracy, as they were issued their papers, and sometimes even, due to the carelessness or callousness of petty officialdom, new names. Once ashore, they usually found homes in immigrant neighbourhoods. There they came into contact with the settlement house movement. This was an urban reform idea, originating among the educated classes to alleviate the cultural and spiritual poverty of the communities in which the immigrants often resided. Settlement houses existed for the purposes of assisting the immigrants in finding health, education, and social welfare services. They also provided artistic, political, and intellectual activities for the neighbourhoods they served. As an idealistic, upperclass young woman, Vera Revendal would have been a typical settlement house type. As an immigrant from a Russian aristocratic family, she would have been extraordinary.

David, as we soon realize, is quite certain that she is the very "Spirit of the Settlement." He shares with her—because he is certain that she will understand—a rhapsody on the meaning of America as he sees it.

> "Here you stand, good folk," think I when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won't be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you've come to—these are the fires of God. A fig for your feuds and vendettas! Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American. . . . the real American has not yet arrived. He is only in the Crucible, I tell you—he will be the fusion of all races, perhaps the coming superman.

David and Vera begin to fall in love, despite the fact that he knows she is from his native town of Kishineff, and a member of that class who murdered his mother, his father, and his sister in a pogrom. Needless to say, his Uncle Mendel does not approve

of the romance, but, says David, "The ideals of the fathers shall not be foisted on the children. Each generation must live and die for its own dream." Just as the young lovers have vowed "to throw off the coils of the centuries" and harken to the voice of "the living present," Vera's father enters. He is Baron Revendal, a stubborn and narrow man, who carries a pistol to defend himself from the anarchists, whom he believes to lurk behind every lamp post. David recognizes the Baron as the commander of the soldiers who stood coldly looking on while a mob hacked his mother and sister to bits. David staggers out the door; Vera collapses in tears, but the drama is to have a happy ending.

Herr Pappelmeister, an intelligent and sympathetic German conductor, peruses the score of the symphony that David has been composing. He recognizes, naturally, that David's composition is a work of genius and performs it before an admiring audience, who respond with half an hour of frenzied applause. David is overcome by the ideals represented in his "New World Symphony," and his heart is softened towards Vera. The curtain falls as the lovers turn their backs on the European past and pledge themselves to the future symbolized by an America that is not so much a nation as a negation of all traditional nationalisms.

There were others who found it more difficult to harbour such optimistic hopes for the future of America. Sutton Elbert Griggs was a black American Baptist minister, who between 1899 and 1908 wrote and published five novels. In all of them he is concerned with the barriers between the races and pessimistic concerning any possibility of the black and white populations over successfully merging into a united and happy people. Thus in his first Novel, *Imperium in Imperio*, Griggs describes the black population as a nation within a nation. He sees the only hope for survival among blacks as the creation of an invisible government with war-making powers and a sense of steadfast unity in the face of white America. At the end of the story, all the main characters, save one, have been lynched, murdered, or driven to suicide. The sole survivor, now quite mad, stands beside the grave of a fallen compatriot, plotting revenge upon the United States with the aid of European allies, and delivers the following soliloquy:

> Float on, proud flag, while yet you may. Rejoice, oh ye Anglo-Saxons, yet a little while. Make my father ashamed to own me, his lawful son; call me a bastard child; look upon my pure mother as a harlot; laugh at Viola in the grave of a self-murderer; exhume Belton's body, if you like, and tear your flag from around him to keep him from polluting it! Yes, stuff your vile stomachs full of all these horrors. You shall be richer food for the buzzards to whom I have solemnly vowed to give your flesh.

In his second novel, *Overshadowed*, Griggs has his protagonist completely renounce all ties to the United States. As he boards a ship in New York harbour, his friends inquire of him where he is bound.

> "Are you returning to your fatherland?" anxious friends, gathered at the pier, inquired.
>
> Astral replied, "It, too, is overshadowed. Aliens possess it."

When the ship is in mid-ocean, Astral finally makes a declaration of his plans.

> "I, Astral Herndon, hereby and forever renounce all citizenship in all lands whatsoever, and constitute myself A CITIZEN OF THE OCEAN, and ordain that this title shall be entailed upon my progeny unto all generations, until such time as the shadows which now envelope the darker races in all lands shall have passed away, away, and away.

In Sutton Griggs' third novel, *Unfettered*, the hero is brought into an international plot, led by members of his long lost tribe in Africa. In his fourth novel, *The Hindered Hand*, Griggs' black hero is invited to join in a conspiracy of the Slavic world against the Anglo-Saxon. A cadaverous white man in a brown derby presents himself at his front door and announces that he is the incarnation of hostility to those who identify with the Anglo-Saxon race.

> "The world, you see, will soon contain but two colossal figures, the Anglo-Saxon and the Slav. The inevitable battle for world supremacy will be between these giants. Without going into the question as to why I am a Pro-Slav in this matter, I hereby declare unto you that it is the one dream of my life to so weaken the Anglo-Saxon that he will be easy prey for the Slav in the coming momentous world struggle."

The hero successfully resists the temptation to throw in with America's enemies, but nonetheless becomes increasingly alienated and spends the last several chapters of the book travelling to and from Africa. He finally decides to take his family to the Fatherland for good, in order "to provide a home for the American Negro."

In all of Sutton Griggs' novels the theme of permanent separation of the races finally wins out in the end. Only in death do the black and the white people ever meet, for, in several instances, Griggs mentions that a faithful Negro retainer is sometimes buried at the foot of his master's grave. This is indeed the final note of his last novel, *Pointing the Way*. The best that could be hoped for in Griggs' novelistic America was a spirit of mutual respectful avoidance between white and black.

The contrast between the two views, presented by Israel Zangwill and Sutton Griggs, will perhaps provide us with some insights into the theme of this conference, "Origins and Originality of American Culture;" for Israel Zangwill, American culture represented a break with the past, something completely new. It is clear that Zangwill identified deeply with the mass experience of the 1,500,000 Jews who left Eastern Europe between 1900 and 1914. Some 90 per cent of this group settled in the United States, where despite the many hardships they encountered, they nonetheless found conditions better than in Czarist Russia. But for the Afro-Americans of whom Sutton Griggs wrote, conditions in the United States were far different. For them, the American South was just as brutal as the tyranny of the Czars. The environment in which the vast majority of black American peasants lived closely resembled the environment known to Russia's Jews.

The biases of Zangwill's point of view did not allow him to see this. To be sure, he did have Baron Revendal defend the Jew-baiting of Russia by asking of an American, "Don't you lynch and roast your niggers?" And David Quixano, in one of his speeches throws both "black and Yellow" into the crucible along with his assortment of Europeans. Yet, if one examines the appendices to the 1913 edition of *The Melting Pot*, one finds that Zangwill gives his approval to such traditional Anglo-Saxon ideas as the following:

> ... the prognathous face is an ugly and undesirable type of countenance... it connotes a lower average of intellect and ethics... white and black are as yet too far apart for profitable fusion. Melanophobia, or fear of the black, may be pragmatically as valuable a racial defence for the white as the counter-instinct of philoeucosis, or love of the white, is a force of racial uplifting of the black.

The comments appended to *The Melting Pot* are clearly intended to disassociate its author from the charge that he advocates contamination of the white race. It is pos-

sible for Zangwill to advocate the cultural and genetic assimilation of Jews into the rest of America, so long as the Jews, like David Quixano, are willing to give up their memories of the Old World and abandon the faith of their fathers. But Zangwill knew full well that a play advocating interracial marriage could never have been produced in Washington, D.C., of 1908, where *The Melting Pot* had its very successful premier, and was dedicated, by permission, to President Theodore Roosevelt. This same President Roosevelt had once been severly criticized as an advocate of race mixing because he had eaten at the same table with Booker T. Washington.

From the perspective of the black American writer, America has never appeared so unique as Zangwill believed it to be. And even white American writers contemporary to Zangwill had some reservations concerning the myth of the Melting Pot. Upton Sinclair believed that assimilation into American life was a painful, even an unhealthy process. His novel, *The Jungle*, is said to have turned Theodore Roosevelt's stomach, with its description of the filthy conditions under which Eastern European immigrants worked in Chicago meat packing houses. Sinclair showed how the healthy, robust customs of Slavic peasants soon were obliterated in the dehumanizing industrial slums of Chicago. He showed how the family disintegrated under the stresses of poverty, hunger, and unfamiliarity with urban conditions. And the descriptions painted by Upton Sinclair and others of the type, who came to be known as "muckrakers," led to health, education, and welfare reforms that benefited all Americans.

Settlement house workers, far from encouraging the complete eradication of all European ethnic traits, realized the importance of encouraging the immigrants to retain the essence of their ethnic heritages. Jane Addams, the dean of settlement house organizers, told in her minor literary classic, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, of her efforts to assist the children of immigrants in learning to appreciate the skills, crafts, arts, and ways of life brought to America by their parents and grandparents. She also praised Jewish and German immigrants for their intellectual interests and felt that all Americans might learn from their habits of political and literary discussion. Rather than assuming that all European traits must be eradicated, the best of the settlement workers encouraged immigrants to preserve the nurturing elements of their European cultures.

In all fairness to the Melting Pot school, they too believed that America benefited from the cultural influx of various nations. Even the Negroes had contributed a "comic spirit" or a sort of "spiritual miscegenation" which had led to 'rag time' and the sex dances that go to it. But the essential importance of genetic mixing to the Melting Pot theory cannot be denied. Zangwill articulated a belief that many Americans found acceptable at the time, and that the majority of Americans still find acceptable. The American ideal is to forget the European past and become fully American. This implies intermarrying with other Americans. When an Irishman named John F. Kennedy marries a French woman named Jacqueline Bouvier, this is seen as the storybook wedding that logically fulfills the American dream. The Melting Pot ideal works as well for the Jews as for others, with the passing of years, as they become more and more removed from the ghettoes of New York's lower East Side. The increasing secularization of society aids the process. At present some thirty per cent of American Jews marry outside their faith. The proportion increases the farther we are from the East Coast. The minuscule occurrence of intermarriage between black Americans and other ethnic groups is not much affected by the passage of generations or internal migration. Intermixture between blacks and whites had diminished to almost nothing since the emancipation of the slaves. White men are no longer able to have their way with black women.

The statistics do not lie. Although it has become fashionable among some American sociologists and ethnologists to deny that the melting pot ideal still predominates in America, the fact is that among fourth generation Americans, religion and national origin seem to matter very little, if at all, in the selection of one's mate. But America, like every other culture, has its unassimilable ethnics. It is only when race is added to ethnicity that the melting process is considered undesirable. And even Israel Zangwill, during the heyday of his ideal, subscribed to the view that the black population would be better off founding its own separate state, or perhaps setting sail for Liberia, as did the hero of Sutton Griggs' novel, *The Hindered Hand.*

FROM THE PRESS

FROM GAGARIN TO FARKAS

Aren't we making too much of a song and dance about the flight of the first Hungarian cosmonaut? Isn't it time to realise that there is no longer anything extraordinary about voyages in space, even when for the first time the voyage is being made by a Hungarian, Bertalan Farkas? I believe the answer to both questions is an emphatic negative.

Of course the one orbit of Yury Gagarin was incomparably more sensational. When man broke away from earthly gravitation for the first time and took his first steps towards the stars, a whole new chapter in human history opened up. Gagarin's mission also had a universal political significance, for as a continuation of the series of experiments that had started with the first sputnik, it revealed the vast scientific and technical potential of the Soviet Union and her ability to attain outstanding achievements in a field where they were not anticipated.

Anyone remembering the changes in the international atmosphere which set in during these years will recall that this was a time when the West realized that the notion that the one world system could actually compete with the other was not an illusion, the product of fantasy on the socialist side, but a fact to be taken seriously. It was then that the western countries were obliged to reconsider critically their own position. One might say that in the one and a half hours Gagarin spent in orbit there was a radical turn about in many earthly minds. Those one and a half hours dashed the idea of absolute capitalist supremacy once and for all. Instead a great impetus was given to a new approach, in which a scornful attitude to the socialist world was replaced by a recognition that peaceful coexistence between the two world systems was inevitable and that therefore both sides should make the necessary adjustments for the long-term, based as a healthy blending of competition and cooperation.

Unless this is properly appreciated it is difficult if not impossible to explain the new trends that began to emerge in the sixties and the first half of the seventies, including the normalization of relations in Europe, the Helsinki agreement, Soviet–American rapprochement and the expansion of detente. The span from Gagarin's pioneering flight to the docking of the Sojuz and Apollo spaceships in the first Soviet–American joint space mission, together with Armstrong's historic steps on the surface of the Moon, had its impressive consequences here on earth too.

No doubt this most recent mission has no such implications and our own concern is primarily a national one. Yet the first sputnik and Gagarin's journey also had their significance for Hungary, especially in view of what happened here in the midfifties, for the momentum of progress in the Soviet Union as evidenced first and foremost in the

astounding progress made in space research had an invaluable influence on the consolidation of the socialist system in Hungary. While western propaganda missed no opportunity to perpetuate the confusion caused by the events of 1956, to raise new doubts and deepen existing uncertainties concerning the future of the socialist road (trying to brand Hungarian communists as forever dogmatic and inflexible), Soviet society offered irrefutable proof of its pioneering minds. Scientific potential dating back to pre-revolutionary Russia but successively stifled as resources were necessarily diverted into overcoming the inherited backwardness of the country and then hamstrung by the personality cult were now given full scope to develop and progress. Who could deny the positive role this played in shaping public thinking and helping people to regain their confidence in socialism? Hence in this sense public opinion in Hungary followed Soviet efforts to conquer space with keen interest, even though there was no Hungarian cosmonaut on board the first Vostok spaceship.

Nor is it an exaggeration to say that these early events were followed by a deeper political identification. In the imaginary interview of his poem on Gagarin (Three Hundred Thousand Meters High) written in 1961 Gyula Illyés has the cosmonaut explain how his greatest experience was the feeling of not being alone "for a minute". The poet replies:

Rather like a good strong family / maintains the son who is struggling far away, / like these in the trenches protect the soldier who crawls out into no-man's-land / so you were kept, assisted and accompanied / by the whole world below / —by mankind hoping / like one person, one father. / History setting things right / down here on Earth and up there in the sky!

People everywhere realized this "earthly" aspect of Gagarin's trip, and the role of "History setting things right" behind the scenes—nowhere more so than in Hungary.

Now we have reached the stage where we could participate "personally" in a space mission. The day when we saw on television the launching of the Soyuz-36 spacecraft with Bertalan Farkas and Valery Kubasov on board will certainly be remembered as an important date in the history of the Hungarian nation. This is not simply because Hungary is a small nation, for I am convinced that much larger countries, like for instance India or France which likewise have plans to send cosmonauts into space with Soviet assistance, will also commemorate the day when one of their sons travels for the first time in space.

Our experience, Hungarian public reaction to the first space flight in which they have been involved, is of course emotionally quite different from that of Gagarin, who rose completely alone to unknown heights. Despite all the incalculable dangers still involved the organizational and technical processes of a mission in space have by now stood the test of time and experience, a fact that almost inclines one to forget that Bertalan Farkas too "crawled out into no-man's-land". As one watched the television transmission of the press conference in space, during which the main concern of the Salyut-Six quartet, a group of happy young people, seemed to be how to dream up funny and witty replies to all the good and the mediocre questions flung at them from Earth, once again one was struck by the great advances made by technology in recent decades.

Something, however, has remained unchanged, or has intensified, and this is our feeling of identification, with our compatriot. In vision as a country, one people and one nation living, working and fighting beside the Soviet Union as a member of the socialist community. Just as previous flights with Polish, German, Czechoslovak, and Bulgarian participation had done, this mission too demonstrated the unity of mankind with the cosmonauts, of the socialist countries with one another and of each nation

with her own son or sons "struggling far away".

Our compassion involves both anxiety and a feeling of pride: it is good to know that one's son has carried out his duty. It is also satisfying to know that the instruments and equipment designed and produced by Hungarian scientists, engineers and workers functioned well in the spacecraft and testified to the creative and intellectual resources of our people. Anyone with any knowledge at all of the difficulties of our past and of the specific obstacles the country has had to surmount to achieve technical and scientific progress, of setbacks ranging from the struggles of Miklós Tótfalusi and the two Bolyais the mathematicians to the fact that almost all of Hungary's Nobel prize winners this century reside outside the country, will be especially overjoyed to see that cosmonauts on board Saljut-6 were using Hungarian-constructed equipment to carry out programmes devised in Hungarian research institutes. It would go beyond the scope of this article to attempt even to outline the advantages which Hungarian–Soviet scientific and technical cooperation has brought to both sides. The joint experiments on board the spacecraft are the fruit of this cooperation, but at the same time they symbolise a much wider scale of activity which over the past thirty-five years has decisively contributed to bringing about the current position in which Hungarian scientists are not forced into either "internal" or "external" emigration and in which Hungarian technology has established a name for itself in the most highly developed branches of industry, where it has proved itself capable of meeting all requirements.

No doubt there are still a few people who believe that the failures and defeats of the distant (and more recent) past continue to overshadow our national consciousness, surviving in the form of inferiority complexes and weighing heavily on the national spirit. I myself am convinced that a far-reaching transformation in this respect began a long time ago, and if remnants persist here and there of this feeling of a tragic national fate, then Bertalan Farkas' space journey may help to ease the lingering stress. We are only the seventh nation in the world who has sent one of her sons out into space—another reason to stop looking into the past and counting only the falling stars.

Obviously the experiments carried out by the Hungarian cosmonaut and the rest of the international crew yield concrete results in addition to their symbolic significance: this latest space journey, like all the others, is not just offering expensive symbols to the world; it has served a number of definite scientific and practical purposes.

I began by recalling the flight of Gagarin and the global political significance of the launching of the first manned spaceship in favouring the cause of peaceful coexistence. It is no accident that one thinks of this significance when one lives in a period in which a concerted attack has been launched against détente and against all that the world has managed to achieve in the interests of peace over the past two decades. The hopes of mankind remain as they were twenty years ago; in the words of the poet, "History setting things right down here on Earth and up there in the sky". That must be our source of strength and confidence, both for the cosmonauts of Saljut-6 up there and for the rest of us down here.

PÉTER RÉNYI

(*Népszabadság*, June 1., 1980.)

MIHÁLY SIMAI

THE CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN IN THE EIGHTIES

It was my privilege to be present for the first time at a meeting of the governing body of UNICEF as a newly-elected vice-president. The 30 members had come together for two weeks in New York, and the session was to be of special importance because the UN General Assembly had charged UNICEF with the implementation of the tasks formulated in the International Year of the Child; UNICEF was to accomplish this on an international footing and also to follow up and support the programs of particular countries.

UNICEF continues to direct its attention primarily towards the provision of fundamental services in the developing countries. These include assistance with health programmes, support to families and family planning, improvements in nutritional standards and supplies of drinking water, and allevation of the special problems of families and children living in urban slums. In recent years UNICEF has extended its work to giving aid and assistance to children and their mothers who live in areas controlled by liberation movements. Around 800 million people on our Earth at present live "in the bondage of absolute poverty", according to the director general of UNICEF and approximately 1000 million are starving. In other words almost one quarter of the world's population vegetates below the minimum standards of human existence. One of the characteristics of this alarming hunger problem is that more than 40 developing countries are unable to produce or to purchase the foodstuffs necessary to supply their populations.

In spite of the fact that in the '70s several developing countries have made rapid progress in speeding up industrial growth, the conditions in the majority of these countries deteriorated. The gap between the medium band of developing countries and the rest has increased. According to UN statistics, 40–50 countries are in a most grave position. Their per capita production has grown at an annual rate of only 1.7 per cent in the seventies. Living standards in these countries have stagnated or deteriorated, and these countries were also hit very severely by the rise in oil prices.

The most backward of the developing countries have come to depend increasingly on international assistance (in the form of food, loans and donations). Inflation is growing in leaps and bounds, and the rate for the developing countries as a whole was 32 per cent in 1979. Conditions have been particularly acute in Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zaire, but even in more highly developed Nigera and Brazil the material conditions of the masses have worsened in recent years.

Social conditions in our world are indeed paradoxical. In the poorer of the developing countries the level of income in the closing decades of the 20th century has approached the level reached by Western Europe in the 18th century, but infant and child mortality rates resemble those of the Western European countries and the USA after the First World War. The basic reasons for this discrepancy have been improvements in health conditions, and the eradication or suppression of diseases such as smallpox, cholera and bubonic plague. In the poorest countries of the world average life expectation at birth has risen dramatically, from 42 years in the 1960s to over 50 by the end of the '70s.

In the conditions which prevail in the developing countries the child's predicament is extremely serious. Of the 100 babies born each minute 15 die within one year, 75 receive no medical attention during their

childhood, and 25 can be classified as underfed whilst still in infancy.

There are many regions in the developing world where people have to stand in a line each day for 10–12 hours at a well in order to obtain pure drinking water. 80 per cent of the diseases from which they suffer are caused by contaminated water, and good drinking water alone would reduce current infant and child mortality rates by some 50 per cent. The '80s have been proclaimed the decade of pure drinking water, but this requires the organization of local water supply networks on a vast scale and the training of 500,000 experts in water economy. The search for stocks of water, its storage and its transportation, all require financing—to the tune of 5000 million dollars per year.

Child hygiene also leaves much to be desired: 400 million children have no access to health services. The institutions tend to be in the towns; but the more emergence of modern health services has in many places caused the traditions of folk medicine to atrophy (however primitive, those had been of some help in the past). The improvements in health facilities and nutritional conditions are closely interrelated: 100 million children under five are presently suffering from protein deficiency and 10 million of them will die of starvation.

This year the governing body of UNICEF, apart from its general assessment of what was achieved in 1979, the International Year of the Child, devoted its meeting to a discussion of three special topics of concern: primary education, the conditions of women, and the problems of handicapped children.

Public education in the developing countries has changed remarkably in recent dicades. Between 1960 and 1975 the number of children registered in primary schools has grown from 120 to 245 million; but schools will need to prepare for a further 400 million children in the period leading up to the year 2000.

Adult literacy too is showing healthy trends and is qualifying more and more people to work in modern sectors of economy. Whereas the proportion of illiterates is declining throughout the world, their absolute number is likely to increase from 742 million in 1970 to almost one thousand million by 2000. Women are in a particularly bad position: data from 1977 indicate that in the developing countries male illiteracy is 48 per cent but female illiteracy is as high as 68 per cent.

The mass education programmes sponsored by UNICEF have stimulated the introduction of school reforms and the transformation of curricula. In addition aid has been given to teacher training programs, equipment is schools has been augmented and the living conditions of pupils have improved. School education in rural districts is now demonstrating some concern with the propagation of fundamental agricultural and zootechnical skills. Adult education concentrates on young mothers, who are taught not only the skills of literacy but also how to feed their baby correctly, and the rudiments of hygiene and good housekeeping.

In July 1980 a major conference in Copenhagen examined how the conditions of women have changed over the past five years. UNICEF has studied and assessed changes affecting both women and children, for its analyses have long concentrated on the predicament of the mother. Although women's social activity may have increased and in several countries one can point to certain other improvements in their conditions, such changes are for the time being very superficial—in many cases of purely formal significance. The basic problems are still unsolved. No improvement in the conditions of children can be conceived without prior changes in the family environment, and especially in the social and living conditions of women. UNICEF has been devoting great attention to the education of women in the developing countries for a number of years; apart from the dissemina-

tion of basic skills and information to all, the training of welfare workers and midwives has been a main concern. The work is useful, but present efforts are nowhere near sufficient.

In Africa women make up 50 per cent of the population and they carry out 80 per cent of all tasks performed through manual labour, although, according to official statistics, only 28 per cent of them are registered as "workers." In the family economy some 70 per cent of all agricultural produce is produced, gathered and marketed by women. In many countries the wages of the majority of women in gainful employment are below the officially determined "poverty level." The number of measures discriminating against women in the developing countries is vast, for it is difficult to introduce changes in the value systems of backward, traditional societies, even when they are in the throes of revolutionary transformations.

The third topic for discussion at the New York session dealt with handicapped children. The importance of the theme was indicated by the fact that the UN had proclaimed 1981 the Year of the Handicapped. One child in every ten suffers from some form of disability, but according to UNICEF this is only the officially recognized minimum. Extensive analysis has shown that the ratio is much higher in the developing countries, where a total of some 120 million handicapped children have no rehabilitation facilities open to them. In most families even the most elementary forms of treatment are unknown or unavailable. Educational establishments and the health services are not prepared for the special tasks which such rehabilitation involves, and so the rehabilitation action initiated by UNICEF in conjunction with the World Health Organisation and Rehabilitation International are of extreme importance although once again very limited in their scope.

The governing body was impressed by the care bestowed on handicapped children in the socialist countries. The example shown by the Soviet Union was especially praised; practices established there deserve to be followed more widely. It was stressed that the care given to the handicapped and afflicted was also a valid measure not only of the level to which public welfare services had developed but also of the underlying solidarity of society.

In the years ahead UNICEF will have some major difficulties to cope with. The various emergency programs will make great demands on its financial resources and the costs of on-going relief work will also increase considerably. Inflation is hitting the UN Children's Fund severely and is reducing the real value of its income, whilst the generally bleak economic situation is not conducive to the voluntary donations which have supported the Fund in the past. Throughout the world tens of millions of persons will nevertheless continue to support the UN Children's Fund, and in present economic conditions it is important that UNICEF step up the assistance it offers and broaden its own social bases.

ECONOMIC LIFE

IVÁN LIPOVECZ

ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN HUNGARY AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

In the spring of 1980, between Easter and Pentecost, in a mere fifty days that is, the following events expressable in personal terms, and relevant to economic and trade relations between Hungary and the Federal Republic of Germany, occurred: Berthold Beitz, the Chairman of Directors of Krupp's, visited Hungary; the Siemens electrical engineering works opened an office in Budapest; a Hungarian delegation headed by the Secretary of State within the relevant Ministry attended the Hanover Industrial Fair; the ministers of trade of Bavaria and Hesse attended the Budapest International Fair; the joint commission of economic cooperation of the two countries held its fourth session in the Hungarian capital, then Count Otto von Lambsdorff, the Federal Minister of Economics, had talks in Budapest with members of the Hungarian government; thereafter Kálmán Ábrahám, the Hungarian Minister of Construction and Urban Development, spent several days in the Federal Republic. Although chance may have had a share in this frequency of events, the intensity of visits on both sides within a relatively short time is also indicative of the firm and extensive economic and trade relations between Hungary and West Germany.

The value of the exchange of goods in 1979 was a round DM 4,000 million, precisely four times as much as it had been in 1971. Hungarian-West German turnover in the seventies expanded more rapidly than the volume of Hungary's foreign trade as a whole; as a result the share of the Federal Republic in Hungary's exports and imports rose above 10 per cent: since 1977 the Federal Republic has moved up to a distinguished place, second to the Soviet Union, among Hungary's foreign trade partners.

Habits and preferences that have their roots in the past, as well as similarities observable in the technology-mindedness of the two nations, were certainly instrumental in promoting this dynamic expansion. But it would be a one-sided interpretation to look for causes solely in the past or in geography. Surely such criteria would allot at least as great a weight to Austria or Italy in Hungarian foreign trade. Other reasons must have been at play as well.

Like other countries relatively poor in raw materials and small in area and population, Hungary is doubly dependent on the international division of labour. Being unable, owing to limited natural resources or imperfections in development, to produce certain sorts of goods, Hungary has to procure them from the outside world. This implies an ongoing search for foreign markets—not only to pay for the purchase of the above, but also because the country's production capacity in certain industries is clearly able to satisfy greater demands than those made by the domestic market. Parti-

cipation in the international division of labour is an imperative necessity for both these reasons. It is obvious, for example, that should a country shut itself up within its borders and refuse to take note of technological advances outside, it would be become increasingly backward by comparison. In its own interests, therefore, a country must submit its production standards to the judgement of the outside world in order to discover which of its products are sound and consequently worthy of further development, and which would in any event go under in international competition, making it advisable instead to make use of the products and experience of others.

Planned economy and market orientation —as has been proved by the development of the new system of economic management introduced in Hungary in 1968—are not in contradiction with each other. Still, the more an enterprise interested in its own efficiency begins, when planning ahead, to take into account the demands and possibilities of the market, the sooner will its attention be turned to markets which have the greatest absorbing capacity and offer the highest returns. Here in Europe, within the angle of vision of the Hungarian economy, the Federal Republic of Germany has doubtless proved to be a market possessing such attributes. The post-1968 upswing of the Hungarian economy coincided in time with the most prolonged and intensive boom yet experienced by the world capitalist economy, with the golden age between 1969 and 1974. The West German economy was one of the main forces of this boom. In the late sixties and early seventies West Germany, the world's No. 1 exporter, earned such huge incomes which attracted, like a magnet, those out to tap that source of money. No wonder that among those who did their best to join in there were also Hungarian enterprises which had struck up, in a certain sense, a new kind of acquaintance with the world market.

Investment Goods and Basic Materials

In 1970 Hungary exported to West Germany commodities to the value of DM 490 million. Nine years later these exports amounted to around DM 1,700 million, a 3.5-fold growth. The greater part of commodities exported by Hungary are not among articles that benefited from the world market price explosion of the mid-seventies (raw materials, energy sources, special machinery), thus this growth resulted not so much from inflation as from the greater quantity of goods. However, this did not in itself allow the dynamics of Hungarian exports keep pace with the increase in value of goods imported from the Federal Republic. 1970 imports worth DM 520 million quadrupled by 1979, exceeding DM 2,400 million. Every year since 1975 Hungary experienced a passive trade balance, being several hundred million marks in the red in trade with West Germany.

How did this happen? Especially considering that one of the motives for the growth in turnover was that Hungary had become more export-oriented than before. The excess of imports is essentially explained by two factors.

To start with investment. In the first half of the seventies Hungarian enterprises —seeing that in the majority of cases they could count on good marketing opportunities, the full exploitation of which had been handicapped by the obsoleteness of the production basis—set about ambitious development projects, making every effort to secure the most up-to-date investment goods available. The West German engineering industry became one of the main sources of supply, past connections giving them certain priorities additional to the economic reasons just mentioned. As a result, in 1978, purchases of machinery and component parts from West Germany already totalled more than DM 1,000 million.

The second explanation is to be found in the pretty high degree of materials intensity

of production in Hungary. The intensification of industrial production in the seventies —especially in the first third of the decade— did not keep abreast of expansion: the attainment of a greater output therefore required increasing amounts of raw and basic materials. Considering that a growing supply of these could be obtained, if at all, only to a lesser degree from CMEA countries which earlier had been considered the main sources of supply, the additional needs for materials had to be covered on capitalist markets. Proximity and high technical standards combined to ensure that the bulk were obtained from West Germany. The Hungarian chemical industry, for example, has for years been purchasing DM 500 million worth of materials necessary to production from firms in the Federal Republic which enjoy a high repute and have had trading links with Hungary in the past.

Thus, in spite of all the results, serious problems arose in Hungarian-West German trade by the second half of the seventies. The deficit rose from DM 500 million in 1975 to DM 900 million by 1978. Hungarian exports provided cover for only 60 per cent of imports. In addition, as a result of the pattern of imports and exports changing to favour the West German commodity structure led to a steady deterioration of the terms of trade from the Hungarian point of view. The price level of goods imported from West Germany rose faster than that of Hungary's export goods. The considerably slower devaluation rate of the West German mark than that of other Western currencies was not reflected by the official rates of exchange in Hungary, and so enterprises, in practice, remained interested in buying from sources the prices of which were higher looked at from the Hungarian angle.

Growing Hungarian Exports

Owing to the larger than planned level of investment and to overheated domestic demand, the year 1978 had more than its share of problems for the Hungarian economy. External economic equilibrium deteriorated to such an extent that it became intolerable, and half of the Hungarian foreign trade deficit with capitalist countries was accumulated thanks to trade with West Germany. An import level of DM 2,200 million p.a. from the Federal Republic could not be increased further. The question was whether, under the circumstances, there was any chance of improving Hungary's export position. 1979 provided an affirmative answer. In that year Hungarian exports, exceeding all earlier annual growth indices, went up by 30 per cent, i.e. by a round DM 40 million.

The Hungarian export performance of 1979 is not unparalleled in last year's East-West trade. According to the figures of a Vienna market research institute, in 1979 CMEA countries taken all together increased their exports to the West by 32 per cent, as a consequence of which their external trade deficit was $3,000 million smaller than a year earlier. The change that occurred in trade between Hungary and West Germany, however, was out of the ordinary from two points of view. On the one hand, because exports increased at this rate while imports essentially remained on an unchanged level and, on the other hand, because a considerable part of this export surplus—at variance with the practice of a few other CMEA countries—was due not to raw materials and energy sources, whose price level was again rising, but to industrial finished and semi-finished products involving a higher degree of processing.

In the meantime, the ratio of these goods in the pattern of Hungarian exports had risen above 60 per cent—and that of agricultural products which had earlier carried greater weight went down considerably—and even within the latter the ratio of processed food in total exports rose above 50 per cent.

Chemical and Engineering Industries, Metallurgical Products

It is worth taking a brief glance at the role or performance of particular industries in working off this deficit, or rather in attaining that export increment of DM 400 million. For example, the chemical industry alone, which was mentioned above as only a buyer in Hungarian trade with West Germany—realized an export surplus worth DM 100 million. This means that Hungary sold there the same quantitity of chemical products as the Soviet Union did. The chemical industry actually caught up with Hungarian light industry which is considered to be familiar with West German markets.

In respect of proportions the exports of the engineering industry grew at the same rate—by two-thirds of the sales of the previous year—as those of the chemical industry, but even so the absolute volume was still relatively modest, representing all in all DM 70 million. The West German market is responsible for absorbing half of Hungarian engineering industry exports to capitalist countries.

The greatest export increment in 1979 was realized by the metallurgical industry: it sold 110 per cent more milled products than a year before. This is all the more remarkable because, since 1978, the European Economic Community, to protect the West European steel-making industry, has established strict contingents *vis-à-vis* outsider exporting countries. It is to be noted here that, although 93 per cent of Hungarian–West German trade is already fully liberalized today, the remaining 7 per cent, in consequence of operative provisions of the Common Market, includes commodities of which the Hungarian economy could supply much greater quantities (meat, steel, textiles).

The embargo imposed on beef on the hoof in 1973 causes Hungary a loss of exports to the tune of DM 25 million every year.

As already mentioned, export trade in food and agricultural products—which not so long ago had been the recognized basis of Hungary's trading reputation—has gradually lost importance. Absolute volume, however, continues to exceed considerably the yearly sum of DM 300 million. And although a growth cannot be realistically reckoned with, it will certainly be necessary to maintain that position in the future as well. The same can essentially be said also for articles of clothing and other light industry products which are losing in relative importance within total exports.

Will Hungarian foreign trade be able to repeat the record exports of 1979 or to maintain the 1979 rate of growth in 1980, too? That is the crucial question.

All the indications are that the answer will be in the negative, and that for more than one reason. To start with, economic growth in the Federal Republic of Germany will, in 1980, slow down considerably as compared to last year's rate. The markets will therefore be open to Hungary to a lesser degree. Furthermore, competition is strengthening from every direction, and good results stimulate others as well. It should also be remembered that an important precondition for last year's large growth in Hungarian exports was that deliberately restricted domestic development needed relatively fewer goods, and thus more could be sold abroad. It is probable therefore that this year the stock basis will not grow as it did last year.

Because of the inevitable ups and downs of the political atmosphere particular importance must be attached to methods and solutions which, unlike particular deals, include the security of long-term links. When, towards the end of May 1980, Count Lambsdorff went to Budapest, the West German press reported that the projects of industrial cooperation between producing enterprises of the Federal Republic and Hungary are considered to be a sort of model. At the end of 1979 three hundred

and thirty such agreements were in force between enterprises of the two countries, and the deals transacted within their scope realized more than 10 per cent of the total turnover. Examples of such cooperation are to be found all the way from agriculture to the pharmaceutical industry, from the clothing trade to metallurgy, and this not merely to allow Hungarian enterprises to utilize skills and technologies taken over from West Germany, but also *vice versa:* for example, 14 out of 24 cooperation projects in the pharmaceutical industry in Hungarian manufacturing processes. And, besides industrial cooperation established to improving marketing opportunities there are already examples of cooperation in which enterprises from Hungary and West Germany, by engaging in joint undertakings to satisfy the demands of third countries, appear in conjunction on the markets of the latter. Even if, owing to the nature of statistical practices, such transactions may not possibly augment the figures of bilateral trade, in reality they are instrumental in launching or rather preserving those relations which were established in the initial phase of the exchange of goods between the two countries. They are promises that a readiness for cooperation will also help tide over periods which may be politically less cooperative.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

GOOD MEN CAUGHT IN THE TURMOIL OF HISTORY

István Deák: The Lawful Revolution (Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians, 1848–1849), Columbia University Press, New York, 1979, 415 pp.

If "the unsuspecting Hungarian opens his mouth a little pompously in front of the world and boasts about Ferenc Rákóczi, Louis Kossuth, the defence of Christianity, a thousand years of history and the free and generous character of the people", wrote Gyula Illyés in 1943, he is more likely to meet with militant opinions to the contrary than with general agreement. At best he may encounter a complacency born of ignorance. Illyés made his pronouncement in a debate conducted in the columns of the periodical *Magyar Csillag* on the subject of 'national self-knowledge'. The same unsuspecting Hungarian meets with a most painful surprise when confronted by the attitudes of non-Hungarians to the 1848–49 Revolution and the War against the Habsburgs. He may perhaps be prepared to accept—with a mixture of self-pity and bitter self-irony—that the greatest historic achievement of this nation has been merely the fact of its survival: after all, so many sombre images of the death of the nation have been invoked by its poets ever since the beginning of the 19th century. Yet the Hungarian feels rightfully proud of "eighteen forty-eight", since the struggle on that occasion was conducted for pure and noble aims, the cause of European progress. He feels that there is some glory in that tragic failure, and that somehow history has remained indebted to him ever since. There is no other question of the Hungarian past where the contradiction between the domestic evaluation (itself far from uniform) and foreign interpretations is as great as it is concerning forty-eight.

At the time the Hungarian cause provoked sympathy and enthusiasm all over the world. How has this moral capital been lost? Over the years broadly speaking three interpretations of the events of 1848–49 have became current outside of Hungary. Let us note the work of the young historian Géza Jeszenszky, who has dealt with the thorny question of how the "image" of Hungary evolved in England from the middle of the last century until the nineteen-twenties, and how over this period sympathy was transformed into antipathy. This was no mere question of national vanity, since Jeszenszky proves convincingly that this unfavourable image had considerable influence upon the resolutions of the Peace Conference which followed the Great War, which were so detrimental to Hungary. Hence forces and power interests which had already determined a fundamental change in the image of the county abroad had a great deal more to answer for.

The erstwhile Great-Austrian school saw in the Hungarian revolution of 1848 an unjustified rebellion sparked off by national blindness against the legitimate and in the last resort well-intentioned, patriarchal rule of the Habsburgs. In addition the ensuing war shook the entire European state system

and endangered a precarius balance of power. Authors considering themselves to be progressive have tended instead to concentrate on the noble extraction of the leading stratum of the Hungarian Revolution in order to stress its narrow class base, its disregard of the interests of the peasantry, and its general failure to pursue genuinely radical solutions, some writers have even cast doubt on the basic sincerity of Hungarian liberalism, considering it to have been no more than a clever ploy to maintain class rule. The third, the most frequent and most serious set of charges to be levelled against 1848, refers to Hungarian policy towards the non-Hungarian ethnic groups. According to interpretations placing this question in the forefront of the analysis, all liberal, bourgeois achievements of the Revolution and the reform period preceding it were so many blows against the aspirations of the nationalities and even against their established rights. In place of the neutrality of the Latin, the language of Hungarian, alien to them, became the official language. The popularly elected parliament which replaced the mediaeval diet dominated by the nobility also reduced the political representation of the nationalities called into being with the elimination of the feudal state structure, appearing as the responsible Hungarian government, replaced county-level decentralization (which necessarily made for better representation of the interests of the local majority) with Hungarian centralization. As Hungary's independence increased, or as she at least developed a separate identity within the empire, then, so the charge continues, the more subordinate the non-Hungarian national groups became. In other words the Hungarians were out to seize state power in order to realize their own national ambitions.

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Such are the historiographic antecedents of this book by Professor István Deák, on the Hungarian "forty-eight." Professor Deák is a Hungarian historian who lives in America and is a member of the faculty of New York's Columbia University. Given the delicacy of his subject it is no mere play on words to argue whether the author should be called "a Hungarian historian living in America" or "an American Hungarian historian," or perhaps "an American historian of Hungarian extraction." Well, it is obvious from Deák's book (and not only from its dedication: "To my father who served Emperor Francis Joseph in the Great War and to the memory of my great-grandfather who served Louis Kossuth in 1848") that he is fully in line with the thinking of Hungarian historians on the main issues. Even when he argues against them he remains obviously within Hungarian tradition. He knows full well that this is not a private matter for the historians to squabble over and is clear about the hornet's nest which he has tackled. Sometimes he declares his opinions boldly, sometimes he gets them across between the lines, rejecting and reappraising, taking all sensitivities into consideration, and courageously assessing the charges raised again and again by the old "Habsburgology" and by more recent variants. It is not that Deák has simply translated into English the views of the Hungarian liberal, positivist historiographic school of the last century or has adopted as his own the achievements of more recent Marxist historiography in Hungary, although he does of course draw on both to a considerable degree. Aware as he is of all the earlier trends (even describing their approaches to contraversial key issues in small historiographical summaries which add greatly to the value of the book), Deák contributes original, independent concepts on a great number of detailed questions; but in his overall evaluation of the whole train of events he is critically sympathetic to the Hungarian struggle, which he considers basically to be necessary and just though not intrinsically inevitable.

Thus what we have here is a synthesis in

the English language of the whole period of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 and the war against the Habsburgs (known literally in Hungarian ever since as "the war for freedom"). No work of similar compass is available in Hungarian and the defining of the compass must no doubt have been the biggest problem facing the author. He had to find the angle from which this process would appear as a coherent whole to the non-Hungarian reader. To Hungarians its unity and dramatic sweep has always been self-evident—a tragedy in five acts since elaborated by countless generations of poets and historians, with evaluations of the characters always inspiring controversy and excitement and not merely of historiographic interest. Yet the author had also to shade his picture sufficiently to prevent summary judgements from being made. How can the sites constituting the raw material of the myth be properly charted without eliminating the major contour lines of world history? After all no greater internal struggle has ever been waged in this region and its outcome has stamped its mark on the Hungarian mind to this very day. This is why almost all the actors and the turning points of the struggle have assumed a symbolic meaning in the Hungarian tradition, this is the explanation why political parties until most recent times have gone back to the events of 1848 for their own model, this was where they found their slogans and these were the symbols through which they sought to make their own aims comprehensible. History is constantly puzzled by these symbols, which are time and again invested with fresh, topical political content; the symbols intrude and they impede our view of the events as they actually took place.

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Around the middle of the nineteen-sixties the old symbols began to lose some of their mystifying force, and since then they have slowly been gathering dust.* It has become possible to look at the matter more objectively, Deák's study has been preceded by other recent reappraisals, and his position as an American Hungarian (or a Hungarian American) is an especially favourable circumstance. The Hungarian historian writing about 'forty-eight' can make himself understood through subtle hints and half-words, but Deák has to spell everything out in full. He does not have to fight against the danger of seeking a spurious topicality or at least he does not risk being misunderstood on this account. Moreover he even draws some assistance from the English language, which straight away places into another sphere events which in the Hungarian mind have become so thoroughly identified with the linguistic expressions used to describe them. It is worth pointing out that when the subject is discussed in Hungarian a number of contemporary legal and political terms necessarily crop up, but these have by now become archaic and obscure, since their exact meaning is not appreciated except by pro-

* At the present time there is a lively interest in documents relating to the period. The greatest Christmas book success in 1978 was a selection from the Diary of István Széchenyi 50,000 copies of which were snapped up, literally within hours; in 1979 four thick volumes of diaries from 1848–49 were republished after an interval of almost a century; and one of the sensations of the 1980 book week was a paperback edition of the recently discovered diary of the great romantic novelist of the nineteenth century Mór Jókai. All this is proof that traditional interest in these events of the past shows no signs of diminishing. The only exception is the myth-creating romantic work of István Nemeskürty *Kik érted haltak, szent világszabadság* . . . (Who died for you, holy cause of world freedom . . .), which in fact does not so much extend the old myth as reads roughly the same documentary sources through a curious distorting lens. This author sees the events of 1848–49 as some sort of proto-communist, internationalist class war, imputing an unlikely modern consciousness to its heroes, but let the truth be told: this too was a great success. 'Forty-eight maintains its central position in the Hungarian national consciousness.

fessional historians. Deák, on the other hand, translates the old Hungarian expressions into modern English, and then explains their Hungarian meaning, thereby doing much to clarify matters. In the process he creates some new abstractions which tend to make well-known events somewhat alien to the Hungarian reader. This is surely an acceptable compromise, all the more so as it wins for the Hungarian Revolution a place on the stage of world history and creates a potential basis for comparative studies. Deák describes this great climacteric in the history of the nation as a series of political decisions, he analyzes events and the options and obstacles facing the parties involved as a skilled political commentator. He manages to avoid dissolving the historicity of history even as he brings it to life and makes it relevant to the present—the safeguard is once again his foreign audience, requiring him to start every sequence of the analysis from scratch and to gloss all the terms used. The rather lengthy introductory chapter (an instructive one for the Hungarian reader too) is a useful description of the political system, legal and political institutions, the constitution and the concept of constitutionality. Of course it serves the author's purposes well, for the central dilemma between reform and revolution (in the form of order versus rebellion) has been prominent in the literature attacking forty-eight since the very beginning. The book's title "The Lawful Revolution" is therefore not a playful paradox. It encapsulates the essence of the whole complex series of events, the inner conflict which beset the Hungarian camp and the deep social substance of the Revolution and the ensuing military campaigns.

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This constitutional, legal approach is pursued consistently right through the book, lending a structural homogeneity to its presentation of the events. Returning again and again to his legal criteria Deák both measures the progress made by the revolution, and interprets and analyses the entire process with reference to these same criteria. It is not that Deák transforms the history of the revolution into a legal history, but his focus on this aspect provides him with an excellent organizing principle for his material. Some such principle was certainly needed. He himself quotes the American historian, Robert A. Kann, complaining about the impossibility of defining an appropriate framework: "The revolution in the Habsburg empire took place in several theaters and on several levels. All were interrelated. This factor can never be fully shown in a historical presentation, which cannot tell all at the same time." Deák comments: "If this famous Austro–American historian could make such a frank admission, then it should be enough to remind the reader here that in Hungary all issues—constitutional, national, social and economic—were more sharply accentuated and more closely interrelated than anywhere else; that all issues were fought out to the bitter end; and that, while Western Europe and the German states were gradually moving toward law and order, conflicts in Hungary kept increasing in vehemence, with the Hungarians defying the centralizing efforts of the Court and the Austrian government, and the Slavs and Rumanians defying the centralizing efforts of the Hungarian regime... The history the Habsburg Monarchy in this era presents not only a case study of conflicting ideologies and interest groups, both new and old but also a fascinating case study of the desolate confusion of good men caught in a turmoil of which most understood nothing."

The historian has to be a good editor if his readers are to understand events better than did the participants, and it is no discredit to this historian to say that he edits with the instinct of a novelist. Kossuth forms the axis of the book, which may seem obvious but is not at all easy to achieve in

practice. Deák's Kossuth is neither the hero of progressive Hungarian historians nor the idol of the popular myth, fighting with the masses for the success of the revolution, and opposed by a simple counter-pole comprising "the enemies of progress". This is not Kossuth of the legend but Kossuth as a human being, and a politician at that. He is shown to be an ingenious politician, not a man constantly and necessarily standing at the centre of events, the fixed point in the eye of the storm, but rather the man in whom all the internal conflicts of the revolution rage one after the other. The dialectic struggle of reform and revolution becomes his own inner conflict. The career, which thus becomes a suitable means of following and uniting the turbulent events, confirms the greatness of the man—he never failed to evolve with the situation, to keep up with the pace of revolution and rise to each new occasion. Kossuth could sense a situation and the condition and mood of the country as nobody else could. Even Deák is perhaps a trifle unjust to his principal hero, exaggerating the deheroization stemming from the critiques of contemporary political opponents. Failure to do full justice to Kossuth makes a stunning military, economic and political performance (stunning for Deák too, not only in terms of the "soul exchanging times" of the period, as Jókai described them), somewhat incomprehensible.

To put Kossuth into the focus is a courageous step in so far as it compels the historian himself to take a stand on many issues. It is also a useful step for other reasons since the foreign historiography so often describes Kossuth as an ogre or evil genius. Deák presents Kossuth's evaluation of all the debates on liberalism, radicalism, and constitutionalism in Hungary in forty-eight, the leading issues appear in condensed form, and in Kossuth's evaluation it is shown that the two extreme views on the crucial question concerning the national minorities came up against each other: according to the one view the Hungarians were fighting for a free Hungary with equal rights for everybody, and it was mostly through no fault of their own that they antagonized the minorities whilst according to the other, blinded by their nationalism the Hungarians were out both to fight Austria and to settle accounts with their non-Hungarian compatriots, who outnumbered them and formed an undesirable element in the Hungarian homeland.

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Deák's virtues as a historian are shown at their best when he abandons chronology and enlivens the political gallery of the revolution with a series of "parallel lives," with subject always carefully positioned to face Kossuth in the centre. Kossuth and the reform represented by István Széchenyi; Kossuth and the constitutionalism of Batthyány; and Kossuth and Görgey, the General who personifies cold rationalism at one moment and capitulation at the next. Deák does more than take a clear stand on contested or open questions which still engage the attention of Hungarian public opinion, and which were mostly lost to sight in all the reconstructing of history that has characterized Hungarian political life over the past century. In harmony with most recent Hungarian historiography he also peels away all the layers of metaphoric meaning which have accumulated, and this leads him, for example, almost to recreate the personality and role of Lajos Batthyány, the first Hungarian Prime Minister. (It is an interesting and instructive coincidence that a far-reaching reappraisal of Batthyány, is also presently taking place in Hungarian historiography.)

The presentation of such a vexed subject, if it aspires only to be intelligent and comprehensive, to assist in the interpretation of events and to supply the indispensable minimum of background material on the revolution and the operation of a country at war can be crammed into the pages of a not

too voluminous book only at the cost of certain painful amputations. Yet Deák's splendid comprehensive chapters on the organization of the army, on general supplies, on the impetus given to industry and on public administration are real masterpieces. The calm moderation of the historian gives way to an overwhelming admiration as never suspected abilities and energies are suddenly called into being under pressure of necessity in a country left all at once to its own devices. He even permits himself adjectives which have the effect of enthusiastic exclamations which intrude on the strict rationalism of the text and which, with their intensity go some way towards substituting for the rich details which are inevitably crowded out of the picture.

Deák touches upon the 'great questions' with such audacity, he can summarize and synthesize with such aplomb in elaborating his concept of the 'lawful revolution' that (however subtle and shaded his formulations) he inevitably comes up with a great deal that will cause Hungarian readers to wince. The Hungarian edition will provoke arguments amongst the historians too, though certainly not because Deák tends to dismiss the legend; in this respect he will find many allies amongst Hungarian historians.

Finally a word about the exemplary annotation: chapter by chapter the reader is supplied with a complete modern bibliography classified according to topic, both simple and practical to consult.

ISTVÁN BART

ETUDES, SHORT STORIES, ESSAYS

Iván Mándy: *A bútorok.* (Furniture). Magvető, 1980. 107 pp.
Árpád Göncz: *Találkozások.* (Encounters). Magvető, 1980. 217 pp.
Péter Dobai: *Lavina.* (Avalanche). Magvető, 1980. 333 pp.
Géza Ottlik: *Próza.* (Stories and Essays). Magvető, 1980. 297 pp.

If there is any prose writer in Hungarian today who can be unmistakably identified on the basis of just one or two sentences, Iván Mándy is that man. His style and his themes are enough to give him away at once. For nearly forty years Mándy has been writing about the shabbily inarticulate little people of the streets, cinemas, and crowded tenement blocks of Budapest, vagrants unable to find a place for themselves amidst crumbling walls, forsaken staircases, and generally dilapidated flats. His subjects are people hovering like shadows throughout their shadowy existences. Often they are figures deliberately culled from the past, as in the volume entitled "Old-Time Films" (Régi idők mozija), or in his screenplay for Pál Sándor's film, *Football of Old Times*, characters who evoke the fringes of existence in the twenties and thirties, and project lean visions of Mándy's childhood and youth in the style of a Chagall painting. Some of them, of course, are still about today in blocks every bit as grim as their predecessors. Wizened old ladies fumble for their keys, adolescent girls giggle, self-assertive tramway passengers are pompously self-assertive, and journalists rat on their colleagues and jilt their lady-loves. All are caught like figures at Madame Tussaud's; they are all everyday acquaintances, phantoms haunting our memory, but at the same time typical and convincing Mándy characters, pawns endearingly cartooned by the sovereign imagination of the writer.

In Mándy's prose there is always some-

thing nebulous or vague about these shadows, as if they were about to dissolve or disintegrate at any moment, leaving writer and reader in the lurch, and all the more solitary for their loss. It is as if Mándy had devoted so many long years to the treatment of the same themes in more or less the same manner in order to gain a more reliable and solidly grounded picture of his decaying and dusty world, but then been forced to realize while writing that the reality of this world lies only in its dreamlike volatility, in its inaccessability to touch or memory.

Places and objects are no less important than the cast of characters in Mándy's writings. He has given a good many cross-sectional views of this world in a series of excellent short story collections, but now he seems to present some of the recurring motifs in longitudinal sections. "Tobacconists," "The Tram," and "Furniture" each takes a single theme and weaves variations around it. Trams are mythical objects of neighbourhood life—not only for Mándy but for the Budapest public at large. The fact that they are now beginning to disappear, or at least to play second fiddle to the Metro and to automobiles, lends them a certain character in the hands of the fiction writer. This is all the more so as the old trams, some of which have been ploughing the streets of Budapest for half a century and more, have been phased out and replaced by new models. Whereas the old cars were life-long companions to whom people could and did attribute human physiological traits, the new ones are far less friendly and cannot be mistaken for anything other than a machine. In the course of their trials and tribulations, the trams of Budapest often achieved a symbolic image, symbolic of life itself. The first tram to run along a new or repaired stretch of track was a shining example of a new beginning wherever it was seen. The outmoded tram, a heritage of the past, became in the fifties a common peg on which a great variety of complaints might be hung—it was an intensified projection of all the problems of domestic coexistence in cramped and sub-standard housing. The tearing up of the tram rails above the line of the first new Metro ended an era in the history of the city. It seemed to deprive the street of its *raison d'être*. The film director István Szabó, who shares much of Mándy's basic outlook on such matters, was another who frequently exploited the symbolic potential inherent in the tram. For Szabó it epitomizes the general will and will-power to rebuild the country: however delapidated it carries on running.

This cycle of stories consists of short scenes and brief images, études and finger exercises. It eschews any artificial symbolism and the writer makes no pretensions to self-importance. The tram and the pieces of furniture stand primarily for themselves—superannuated veterans, battered objects, which may, however, resemble the people who use them. Mándy's objects are always alive, they too are swept to the peripheries of existence, abandoned when they are no longer useful and finally thrown out. Human careers follow a parallel course. The method is as old as literature itself, or at least as old as the technique of personification. There is a kind of innocent child-like naiveté in Mándy. The people themselves often seem like objects which have sprung to life: an umbrella, a moustache, or a winter-coat. And the objects for their part are people, who sit and squat, pout and sulk, blink unpredictably.

"A roll on the seat. There was a roll on the seat. A cheese-roll wrapped in creased pink, tissue-paper next to the window... A little boy reached out for it. His mother struck his hand. 'Put it down!' An older man, his face smoothly shaven, picked it up. He held it up with just two fingers. He examined it. Carefully and thoroughly. Then he put it down again, showing some kind of unexpected alarm. His face looked guilty and repentant as if he had been caught entering into conversation with some person of very ill repute.

"The conductor gave him a reproving look. As if he were a passenger who was trying to cheat on his fare, someone it was not worth the trouble to bring to book... No one seemed to be concerned with him. He just carried on sitting indifferently by the window in the tram."

But then where is this mysterious and solitary object, the cheese-roll left on the tram-seat, bound for? Fate will probably catch up with it or him in the end just as it will with that delapidated brown chair waiting to be moved out to the corridor, where it will have to stand forsaken, one leg sagging and twisted, until its arm is finally grabbed by a fattish woman in a dressing-grown cum overalls who will lead him away as one leads away a decrepit old relative.

Some critics have tried to persuade Mándy to renew and expand his thematic material. Mándy is, however, determined —or compelled?—to stick to the worn but trustworthy stock of motifs which has served him well hitherto, occasionally conjuring up additional grotesque snapshots of the familiar landscape. He will not redeem the world with them and no doubt he does not want to, but he always manages to delight his readers, and the number of incorrigible Mándy enthusiasts is constantly increasing.

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If Iván Mándy is to his readers like a well-trodden picnic place, marked on all the maps and easily approachable along signposted paths, than his near contemporary, Árpád Göncz, could be compared to a volcano which no one knew existed until it erupted quite recently. He was past fifty when he published his first work, *Sarusok* (Sandalshod), a novel about a modest flare-up of the Albigensian heresy in Hungary. It was followed by a monodrama called *Modern Magyar Medea*, which was also a success on the stage. His most recent volume is a collection of short stories entitled *Találkozások* (Encounters).

The simile of the volcano is particularly applicable to Árpád Göncz because the sense of repressed tensions ready to burst out is very strong in his work. His life has been an eventful and restless one; there is not much in this small but stormy Hungarian world that he has not observed at close quarters. After 1956 he was even imprisoned for a time, for political reasons. Before he made his début with a strikingly original novel he was already known as an excellent translator, rendering into Hungarian the works of Malcolm Lowry and Faulkner amongst others, to whom he feels intellectually close. "Sandalshod" shows that he has learned from these foreign masters, and particularly from Faulkner. "Encounters" is a heterogenous volume in which his stylistic qualities again come through strongly. There are similar volcanic forces at work under the surface, but on the whole these stories are less original in tone than the novel.

"Encounters" offers the reader eleven pieces, ranging from very short études of just a few lines, through sketches filling one or two pages, to more or less full-length short stories. One mini-story deals with the association in a child's mind of a dead mole with the deceased great-grandmother: the image of darkness leads directly to the concept of death. Two stories draw on war experiences, or rather on the experience of revisiting the former front. "Legacy" is about the marriage of two very "creative" people, an impulsively selfish sculptress and a man who started out as a bricklayer and becomes an influential architect. The husband remains a "man of mortar," as evidenced by his attempt to do away with fences —which stand for the illusions of the fifties. The story itself unfolds through the associations of their son related in a series of flashbacks, from which it becomes clear— although the circumstances defy simple interpretation—that the accident through which the boy inherited the legacy of the title occurred as a result of latent conflicts, disappointments, self-deceptions and malad-

justment. The fragmented structure of inner monologues, the tight and laconic dramatic structure with the plot exposed gradually in a mosaic-like pattern, are characteristic of this story and of the volume as a whole.

The longer story, "Encounter," which closes the volume, is rather different. It starts like a Buñuel film. A uniformed chauffeur wearing a tam-o'-shanter is driving a limousine in pouring rain. The vehicle has wooden-spoked wheels and brass lights, its passenger is a bishop, when the car breaks down it is late at night and there is no hope of finding a mechanic anywhere. The two men seek admittance into a mansion surrounded by a stone fence, which belongs to "Madame." We are somewhere in France. After an exchange of courtesies, Madame offers the bishop and his driver accommodation for the night. The bishop stirs the ashes in the fireplace in his room —and a white dove flies out of the embers! Here the Buñuel script is set aside. Madame turns out to be Jeanne d'Arc and the bishop is Cauchon on his way to Rome, where Joan is to be made a saint. The message of the story is that Joan does not want to become a saint, she has no wish to become *past history*. The magic mobilizing force of any Joan lasts only as long as she is generally regarded as a witch fit only for the stake.

"Old Folks" is the best story in the volume. This too is told in the form of an inner monologue, this time by an old woman struggling against symptoms of senility and getting ready to receive callers. After the departure of the guests the reader finds out that they have in fact called in an official capacity on the 90-year-old husband, a great scientist who is even more sclerotic than his wife. The cheap commemoration plaquet they bring with them is a balm for the fears and frustrations of the past, and the old man squeezes it acquisitively in his palm even as the evidence of his incontinence spreads around him.

This is the only story in the volume which has the captivating authenticity of direct personal experience. The others are impossible to fault, but somehow mannered. The adaptations in places seem consciously transparent, as if the author himself was running short of worthwhile themes, which is strange in view of all that Árpád Göncz has lived through.

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Péter Dobai, 38, apparently preferred writing an MA thesis to drawing on his own personal experiences. This is interesting because until now most of his generation has been struggling to overcome the very opposite kind of limitation and to escape from the magnetic field of subjective moods, emotions, and experiences. Dobai had, it is true, already managed to get out from the magic circle of selfish concerns on occasion. For example he did write the historical novel *Csontmolnárok* (Bone-millers) about the Hungarian emigrants who make their way to Turkey and then to Syria after the defeat of the Hungarian army in the revolutionary wars of 1848–49. In this work the intellectual and emotional charge usual with this author is pervasive. Dobai neither paints a sweeping historical tableau nor does he relate thrilling adventures in the romantic traditions of the historical novel. Instead he asserts personal views bearing anachronistic marks of the ideology of the 1970s, examining in the novel various types of revolutionary attitude possible when the revolutionaries themselves are obliged to go over to the defensive.

With his recent novel *Lavina* (Avalanche) Dobai seems out to demonstrate that he is capable of writing "to commission." "Avalanche" is a thriller, moreover one that is supposed to be based on a true case. The story is about a company security guard who has not divorced his wife, although the relationship has cooled off to such an extent that he goes home only occasionally and generally sleeps in his mistress's flat. Nonetheless he goes out of his way to keep up appearances and always explains his nocturnal absences with references to the special

requirements of the three-shift plant which employs him. Even so half of his pay goes to his wife for child maintenance (an arrangement she has managed to secure for herself despite the formal continuation of their marriage). His mistress, who keeps him under constant pressure with her insistent demands for the marriage she has been promised, is also expensive. Gradually worn down under incessant emotional and material pressures, he follows up his initial attempts at petty smuggling with efforts to invest borrowed money into bigger and bigger deals. His accomplice, a "professional" confidence trickster, has no trouble in getting the better of the hero, an ordinary person not versed in such skills, merely a security officer trained to maintain appearances.

Our security guard now decides on a desperate last ploy. He musters a small group of helpers through misleading them with stupid slogans calling for political vigilance (still capable of intimidating people in the sixties) and makes an incredibly amateurish attempt to break the company safe. When this fails he kills his accomplices (he probably would have done the same if the safe-breaking attempt had succeeded) and tries to behave as if he had had nothing to do with the whole affair. Since the only witnesses are dead he almost gets away with it; but when his mistress finds out what has happened, and that he has squandered her own savings, she refuses to give him an alibi for the critical night.

Dobai's book differs from the usual thriller, for the only exciting part of the whole plot is a short bit at the end. Three-quarters of the narrative are taken up by the emphatically dull, monotonous weekdays of the detective. The mechanical sequences of the action are just rattled off by the writer as one reels off a penitential rosary. Since the action amounts only to pitiful small-time dealing, there is not much chance that real suspense can be generated and sustained: the only question is when the guard's financial manœuvres will finally wind up in disaster. It is hard to understand why so much space has to be devoted to these petty deals, and how the reader is supposed to stay awake through these parts. Is this delayed action supposed to increase tension, or are the publishers relying solely on the blurb to programme the reader into anticipating the dénouement of a thriller?

And after the dénouement, how does the exposition look in retrospect? Does the whole long-winded process seem justified? Dobai obviously wanted to achieve something in the style of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, which has, of course, had many other imitators over the years. He reconstructs real-life crime in documentary fashion. Yet there is nothing to suggest that "Avalanche" is actually based on such a case for at no point in the novel does the writer modify his stance as a creator of pure fiction. Hence the only appropriate yardstick for this book is the yardstick of literature, and how closely Dobai followed or how far his adaptation diverted from it is of no importance. However close the fit, what was the author's intention? If one assesses the novel as literature, the aesthetic function of the long background outline that precedes the crime is not at all clear. It is true that it fulfils a technical role in delaying the action, and that the logical and psychological sequence of events is convincing. One may conclude, therefore, that this thriller bears the stamp of a professional who administers his doses of "suspense" in an original way. But in my opinion "Avalanche" fails to penetrate the deeper recesses of its main figure, the security guard, and amounts to little more than a demonstration of craftsmanship; as I said at the beginning, a pass in the examination for entry to the guild of fiction writers.

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Géza Ottlik is one of the most important of contemporary Hungarian novelists—thanks to *Iskola a határon*, 1959, "School at the Frontier," (Harcourt, 1966) his only novel, but one which many critics and serious

readers regard as the best Hungarian novel of the post-war era. Ottlik's life work (he is now nearing 70) does not add up to much more than this novel. He has also published a volume of short stories and there are shorter prose works, feuilletons, reviews, and essays now gathered in the volume entitled *Próza* (Prose). He has supplemented the collection with a frame of personal recollections that lends a more fictional character to the whole.

Ottlik's long silences are just the stuff that gives rise to myths wherever a writer is concerned—they seem to be just as interesting for those concerned with literature as what he has written. Ottlik himself declared in several interviews that a writer remains a writer even when he is silent, for in his view writing is a way of life and implies a certain outlook on the world. What actually gets put down on paper and what does not is often just a matter of chance. With his perfect detachment and secure in the resources of his privacy, Ottlik might seem to belong to a family of Proustian "dilettantes," but in fact there have been few writers of Hungarian prose who could match his education, culture, and professionalism. He is not so much *poeta doctus* as simply a man who is astonishingly well-versed in the craft of prose writing. It is often said of him that his writing standards are so high that he can no longer write anything. He will not tolerate even the slightest imperfection, this is the high level that is eloquently maintained in "Prose." The volume is not strictly fiction at all, but nevertheless it is an important event of Hungarian literary life that these various pieces have been at last put together between the covers of a single book.

As befits the case of a writer who does not give much away in his writings, the most interesting pieces in the volume are interviews with the author conducted by Ottlik enthusiasts and the appreciative literati. Of course, a writer so sensitive to the subtlest shadings of formulation is bound to abhor the imprecision of a live interview, and Ottlik has obviously touched up these conversations; thus they too become valid written expressions of his ideas. His ideal is never a superficial realism, however close it may come to life, but (as he himself often said) a deeper condensation of prose that is hard to express in words but which injects a new quality into life. His splendid essay "About the Novel" was written for a round-table conference held in Vienna in 1965 and testifies to the author's mathematical proficiency. He proceeds with transparently rationalistic and concise arguments, peeling away all the outer skins of his subject until the axiomatic core of the novel is reached. He quotes Kosztolányi, one of the stalwarts of the first generation of writers associated with the renowned literary periodical *Nyugat* (West, 1908–1941): "It is a mistake to think that the poet understands life and explains it in some kind of schoolmasterly fashion. The poet does not understand life, and he writes in order that he might understand it through the action of his writing." This invisible substance adds some quality to the novel which goes beyond story, plot, and characters: it supplies the novel with its creative essence.

Kosztolányi is the subject of the most recent of the essays collected here, whereas an earlier piece deals with the *Nyugat* in general. Ottlik himself is generally regarded as a representative of the fourth and last *Nyugat* generation, for although only a few of his writings were published in the journal in the late thirties, he was among the few writers whose intellectual prose continued the splendid traditions of *Nyugat* even after the war. His loyalty to tradition compelled Ottlik to make a living through translating when circumstances prevented him from continuing his career as a writer. At least in his translations of Dickens, Shaw, Evelyn Waugh, O'Neill, and Hemingway he was able to reaffirm his belief in the value of form and style. As he wrote, translation was for him "condemnation to the galleys, but also an asylum; reading the works of

great writers—one was provided with a refuge and a chance to breathe fresh air."

This volume is no substitute for newer Ottlik works, which one still hopes lie concealed at the heart of his silence; but it may serve to bring home to the writers and readers of the mass-produced feuilleton literature of today the lesson that shoddy tricks and artifice are no alternatives to the real thing: lasting and genuinely creative literature can only be born of a highly cultivated sensitivity to style and form and supreme depth of insight.

MIKLÓS GYÖRFFY

SONG ABOUT INFINITY AND OTHER NEW BOOKS OF POETRY

Sándor Weöres: *Ének a határtalanságról* (Song about Infinity), Magvető, 1980. 157 pp.; Sándor Csoóri: *A tizedik este* (The Tenth Evening), Magvető, 1980, 101 pp.; Magda Székely: *Ítélet* (Judgement), Szépirodalmi, 1979, 139 pp.

Sándor Weöres, translator of Mallarmé, Dante, Shakespeare, and several hundred poets in all from almost every age and every continent, writes on the jacket of his new book, *Song about Infinity:*

"In my poems the meanings of the lines lie not in the lines themselves but in the associations they evoke: their interrelatedness follows not so much from a linear chain of meanings but from their unity of mood and the ideas they flash onto each other."

Weöres began his career as a poet in the early thirties as a child prodigy. In his teens he was already being hailed as an amazing virtuoso, who had mastered forms and techniques with supreme lightness and ease. He wrote one-liners and he wrote complex poems several hundred lines in length. He assumed a thousand masks, wrote variations on the *Gilgamesh* epic, created fictitious Cheremissian songs, composed voluminous philosophical poems, and wrote splendid verses for children. In *Psyché* (1972) he brought to life the œuvre of Erzsébet Lónyay, a fictitious Hungarian poetess of the early 19th century (see the detailed review in NHQ 52.)

The title of this new volume—*Song about Infinity*—gives the reader some indication of its most characteristic formal feature. Most of the poems are variations of the song: the song as a hymn, the song as a prayer, the song as a folk song or folk ballad, the song as a fairy tale. Almost all of them broach the undefinable infinite, they extol secrets of the universe, the "silence of the stars" or the "unknown angel;" there are also autobiographical works, unusual for Weöres, which describe time, greatness and infinity as experienced by the child and adolescent.

One poem draws attention to the insect searching for a path "on the plane of the leaf," another to the night-light whose brownish-reddish edges "virtually defy" the darkness. In *Naphimnusz* (Sun-Hymn) the Sun's eye is "gay," "happy" and "strong," and in *Mulandóság* (Transience) "the wind stretches out and loses its fingers."

The Weöres of a thousand masks, the man who set out to assimilate as many influences and experiences as possible, has remained almost deliberately impersonal in his poetry. He has written his own variations on the great myths, he has assumed the style of so many poets, believing that the obstinate, manic search for personality and intimacy would lead only to a greyness devoid

of meaning. The translator of *The Waste Land* also quoted the example of Eliot, whom he admired for being able to change his style, for turning from modernist to conservative not for dogmatic reasons but in order to carry out a particular task. The lyricism of Weöres has perhaps never been so personal as in *Megkopottan* (Worn-Out), one of the cycles of this latest volume. In particular there are poems such as *Hatvanötödik év* (Sixty-fifth year), *Alterego* or *Mintha sose lett volna* (As if it never had been) which speak poignantly of ageing, the consciousness of death, values and losses. *Megkopottan* contains the following lines:

One thing preserved by life
my vanity drives and burns me.

This is the complaint which rings out in Alterego (all translations in prose):

I don't know his fate nor my own,
So which of the two is the real me?

In the cycle of verses *Évezredek* (Millenia), the four lines of the title poem seem to sum up the poet's sensitivity in an aphoristic manner, a technique he has used only rarely through the years:

The work of art is vulnerable
The desert is invulnerable
Reality is unbelievable
The lie is believable.

In the same cycle *Skiz* (Highest Trump) has "twenty-four angels in the sky" watching a wanderer's steps. The closing poem of the cycle and of the whole book is *Atomfelhő* (Atomic Cloud), a poem in images consisting of playful variations on one rhyme through 23 lines; but the theme—of the threat represented by the atomic bomb—is scarcely so light.

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Sándor Csoóri's new book of poems, *A tizedik este* (The Tenth Evening) is likely to remind the reader of a romantic portrait artist who specializes in self-portraits. He writes:

"what I have been through, that was me."

Csoóri was born in 1930. "My parents were poor peasants and Protestants. Economically they were at the mercy of others... but in their faith and convictions they were wilful and headstrong. The Second World War turned me into an adult almost overnight. An adult? I would rather say with bitterness that I was dragged into the modern age and had my horizons broadened. From the ox-cart I was flung directly into physical contact with the holocausts of the 20th century. My village changed hands seventeen times in the course of three and a half months. After the withdrawal of the front line we spent two weeks burying our dead, first the men and then the animals. We spent the rest of the year filling up the trenches and bunkers." Csoóri wrote this on the blurb of an earlier book, *Jóslás a te idődről* (Prophecy about Your Times), published in 1979. That book was an anthology of the poet's work over the preceding quarter of a century, and it also offered the following encapsulation of his goals as a poet: "In the great war of depersonification, to preserve the presence of personality in the world... The ocean reaches my windows in rain if I, the host, no longer know anything about myself."

The Tenth Evening was conceived in the spirit of this blueprint and it is infused with this passion. The opening poem, *Rejtett önarckép* (Hidden Self-Portrait), says:

What I have been through, that was me,
every day other woes and pleasures,
near to death a strong wind,
the swish of summer and torrents of snow.

His favourite elements are wind and snow, the latter recurring in almost every poem. Once when he wakes "the street is full of snow;" in 1944 the soldier on the run showed "snow and death a clean pair of heels;" behind closed eyes there is "such a lot of snow, such a lot of pear blossom;" on a winter's evening "snow is falling in solitude, no witnesses in sight." In this last poem, entitled *Téli este* (Winter Evening), he wrote:

I see a snow-covered bullet flying
leisurely toward my brow,

it flies in slow motion as on cartoon films
so I still have time!
I have the whole night before me,
all heights of the lace-making sky,
the abandoned snow in the streets which
wants to see
my footprints today, and tomorrow as well.

A romantic portrait painter then, who writes with absolute faith that the abandoned snow in the street is anxious to see his footprints "today, and tomorrow as well." In the struggle against the impersonal, in the cause of individuality, nature answers the poet's call, and he identifies with the elements of the natural world:

. . . I am mud
I am water

—he wrote in his poem *A csongrádi Tisza-parton* (On the Banks of the Tisza at Csongrád). The heritage of romanticism blends in his work with some surrealist effects, and Csoóri has always emphasized the surrealistic elements in folk poetry. He has also written one of the finest Hungarian studies on Paul Éluard. Film too has also exerted some influence on his technique, for together with Ferenc Kósa and Sándor Sára the poet has written the scripts of six feature films, including the award-winning *Tízezer nap* (Ten Thousand Suns).

The poems in *The Tenth Evening* speak of the experience of death, of dead people and past loves. There is the stranger "merely standing amidst my mourning as if he were out of place although he too was born on this earth;" and there is a woman in *Vers két nőhöz, egyidőben* (Poem to two women at the same time) who is always dropping in with good news, "as if she were bringing a message from herself;" and of course the hero of every poem is Sándor Csoóri himself, "near to the earth" and forever "waiting," but ceaselessly painting his mysterious, disguised self-portraits.

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Magda Székely was born is 1936 in Budapest. For her too the holocaust was a basic and determining experience:

Six million ore columns are glowing
Who knows by now which is his mother?

These lines come from the poem *Mártír* (Martyr). Magda Székely experienced the "irreperable scandal of the century" as a child, and she survived it. The expression quoted is that of János Pilinszky, the Catholic poet whose first collection appeared in 1946, when Magda Székely was but ten years old. In the second half of the fifties she acquired from Pilinszky the means of expression on which she relies in *Kőtábla* (Stone Tablet):

. . . nothing can help
but all the same it should not remain
unsaid.

Kőtábla was the title of her first book of poems, published in 1962; her second, *Átváltozás* (Metamorphosis) followed in 1975 • *Ítélet* (Judgement), is a selection containing almost her entire œuvre. It does not exceed 1,500 lines. In the tracks of Pilinszky and his contemporary, Ágnes Nemes-Nagy, she has managed to create original and distinctive poetry. Her verses are laconic, disciplined and traditional in form, with rhymed (mostly iambic) verses scanning regularly, and minimal recourse to metaphor. Often four or eight lines suffice to convey her message. Each poem is an autonomous creation, but together they constitute a thematic unity. *Ítélet* is not a random mass of poems stuck together arbitrarily, but an integral collection in which Székely relates experiences she has undergone and struggles she has waged. Her writings invoke a by-no-means direct and simple process, in the course of which she exclaims:

I want at last some human evidence
that I do not live in vain.

Magda Székely, like other poets of a troubled generations, feels a deep responsibility for the dead. Concerning her own mother she writes:

. . . now I alone am
holding her up in my two arms.

And later again about her mother:

Who killed you? Where? Behind
what mountains did they bury you?

Some of her poems evoke the major figures of the Old Testament, including Abraham (she selected a few lines from the Bal ha-midrash as a motto, where Abraham meditates upon the creation), Jeremiah, Job, Joseph, and Daniel. Another poem is about Josephus Flavius in the age of Titus' triumphal march, a man who sought satisfaction in producing work that would be justified not by the passing moment but by the millenia to come. One of the most poignant poems in this book is *Job*, the range of which includes arid matter-of-fact narrative and emotional clenching of teeth and choked sobs. Like the other poems with a Biblical topic this too has a personal significance.

So far the output of Magda Székely has been characterized by the quest for meaning and reality, loyalty to her forebears and responsibility for the living. Her credo is set forth in the eight-line parable *Horgászok* (Anglers): one of the anglers is content with any fish he catches because "time presses;" but the other is firmly committed to "waiting for that particular one."

LÁSZLÓ FERENCZI

THE WORLD OF GARP ACCORDING TO A HUNGARIAN READER

"Habent sua fata lectores"—I came across this book by chance, without being in any way prepared for it: a book with an unfamiliar title by an unknown author, slipped to me by a fleeting acquaintance who had just finished reading it. It was almost as if I had picked it up on the luggage-rack of an empty train compartment, and this was the spirit in which I began to read it. Therefore I can be sure that it was not mere reputation but the quality of the text itself which convinced me little by little, line by line, that a stirring and well-written, important book had fallen into my hands, a text which one hopes and indeed expects will outlast its success of the moment or show the lack of interest of some critics to have been mistaken.

After some inquiry I found that Irving is not yet forty years old; this is his fourth novel, but it is the first to have found its way from the desks of literary reviewers into the hands of the general reader interested in literature. It was published by Dutton in New York in 1978, and almost simultaneously by Gollancz in London, rapidly gained a place in the list of best-sellers and then appeared in paperback. Such success naturally attracts attention, but still it is nothing particularly out of the ordinary, since this is the way of the world on the Anglo-Saxon book market every year, and, of the several books which share this fate, who can remember even the names of their authors a few years later? If in this case the reader ventures to indulge in the luxury of a little prophecy and surmises that he has encountered a significant writer and an important, memorable work, then he must be moved to his conclusion not by the evidence of popular success but by the intrinsic values of the work. The qualities in question may perhaps lie hidden behind the factors which make the book a success, or they may actively promote it, but in any case they

John Irving: *The World According to Garp.* Corgi Books, London, 1979.

survive and make their impact independently.

Irving himself has referred to his novel as "an artfully disguised soap-opera." There is even a measure of truth in this, in so far as the work arouses very intense emotions, it provokes laughter and tears, and indeed tears of laughter. The author is not ashamed of emotions and of awakening them in the reader, often indulging in unexpectedly strong effects which only in retrospect can be seen to have been prepared with a great deal of literary skill. These open and strong emotional effects would appear to be "out of date," since recent literary currents and schools have tended to rely more on magic tricks, to be executed with a poker face. In such a context it seems to be clownery borrowed from the last century if a writer weeps and laughs in public, and cannot desist from weeping and laughing even when narrating his story.

Irving has perhaps written the first novel to embody as a literary quality the style of "retro," increasingly dominant in diverse fields from furnishings to clothing, from gramophone records to decoration. He not only admits to and arouses emotions but reaches back into the past for form and genre alike. The techniques he employs are those of the classical *roman-fleuve*, the classical saga; he takes the same aims, but only in order to be able to go beyond them and through them to convey a very topical message.

The opening of the work promises us a family story in the grotesque vein. Jenny Fields, daughter to the magnate of a shoe empire, is trying to establish some independence for herself as a nurse when she inflicts an almost fatal wound on a soldier who makes a pass at her in a cinema. She is both a grotesque and pathetic figure at the same time, and equally grotesque and pathtetic is the feminist basis on which she seeks to start a family. Jenny's strange "parthenogenesis" (described with clinical precision in its details) involves a soldier suffering from amnesia caused by a cerebral lesion which occurred during the Second World War: he may be weakening rapidly, he may be dying, but he has preserved his sexual potency.

Jenny's son is entered in the birth register as T. S. Garp, "Garp" being the only word the soldier is able to utter, and the initials T. S. denoting his rank in the armed forces: technical sergeant. Most of the novel is taken up with the story of Garp's life and development. After the end of the war and the birth of her son Jenny accepts a nursing post in a famous college in order properly to provide for her son's education; and in due course she not only chooses a sport for him (he becomes a wrestler at school) but it is she who checks in advance the courses which he will attend and who determines which it will be profitable for him to pursue. If Grap nevertheless grows up into a fairly normal person the credit should perhaps go to him and to him alone; but the romances of his high-school years and all the mischief and adventure which fill them, apart from offering Irving good opportunities to display his grotesque humour and the cruel vision he has of mankind, go to form the common experience of practically all students in the America of today. When he becomes aware, as he does quite early on, that he wants to be a writer, then he pursues this aim with the energy of the wrestler and the steadfastness of the long-distance runner. This leads him also to win the hand of his first true love, Helen, the daughter of his wrestling teacher.

After graduation Grap accompanies his mother to "Europe" in order to set about writing. In this case Europe is Vienna, struggling to overcome post-war torpor. Mother and son occupy a rented flat and get down to their respective tasks. Jenny writes the story of her life, which becomes a huge success a little while later, making the authoress a national celebrity and even a factor in politics: all the radical feminist movements adopt her as a household deity, a role which she is only too willing to under-

take. Garp too writes or tries to write. The strange emotional relationships in which he becomes enmeshed do not, however, prevent him from remaining faithful to his first love, Helen; his first veritable short story is a success, Helen is the first judge of it, and Helen's hand in marriage is the prize he wins.

Meanwhile Helen has become a college teacher of English literature. After their marriage she continues teaching and Garp lives at home, writing, wrestling, running, and looking after the housekeeping. In this manner they lead a relatively happy married life; they are quite unable to separate from each other, though both have their affairs, both sexual and emotional. Helen's first serious liaison gives rise to a tragedy in the family, a senseless automobile accident in which their younger son loses his life, the elder loses his sight in one eye, and Garp himself gets seriously injured.

They recover—physically, mentally, and emotionally—under Jenny's wings in the stately seaside mansion of the one-time shoe magnate, which Jenny has converted into a home for the women who flock to her for shelter. Two sure signs of recovery are seen when Helen again becomes pregnant and Garp again begins to write. One day they return to settle and teach in Garp's former college. The royalty on Garp's first literary success enables them to buy the house of the original founding family (with whose descendants Garp as a child had been locked in conflict, in hatred—but in love as well); and they continue to live there until Garp is shot down by a female member of the family, a desperate and rabid feminist, in the wrestling hall where he is a trainer.

Here the action of the novel actually comes to an end, but there is a last chapter in which Irving carefully ties up the loose threads and pursues the history of each major character through to the end of their lives. Helen still has many years before her. Her son, despite, or perhaps because of, his partial blindness, becomes an artist, both a photographer and a painter, and he dies an early death. We glance into the futures of their friends, and finally of little Jenny Garp, who becomes a doctor and goes into cancer research. A story extending from the forties to the seventies is thus projected forwards into the future, but it points backwards into the past as well, as far as novelistic techniques and methods are concerned, for these conform to the omniscience and comprehensive coverage of the traditional family saga.

Why does this novel then so convincingly assure the reader that it is not merely a clever best-seller but literature that should be around for a long time, something deserving of attention not only as a sociological but also as an aesthetical fact? It would be difficult and complicated to find a valid answer to this question, other than the critic's word of honour. For the moment let us content ourselves with observing that some sort of intrinsic truth makes itself felt in this work; it has to do with the revelation and communication of the inherent realities of the world as it is, and not only their appearances, and there is certainly something which arouses this conviction in the reader.

What is the deeper reality which Irving intended to express through Garp's story, and which, in its extremeness and impetuousness, affirms the modernity and actuality of this work to such an extent that it imposes quite a strain on our critical faculties to discover the archaism and traditionalism underlying it? Unequivocally, it is the cruelty and incalculability of the world—the preordained tragedy of existence, of human existence. A series of characters and scenes carry this message from beginning to end; and it is a peculiar ability of Irving that he virtually always represents tragedy by grotesque means. Horror follows upon the heels of horror in this work, Garp's conception is horrific in itself, and perhaps still more so is the "Ellen Jamesian" movement,

the crowd of radical feminists who protest against the rape and mutilation of a little girl by having their own tongues cut out; to which may be added the series of idiotic killings and brutal accidental deaths which involve Garp and his family, either as eye-witnesses or injured parties.

For the novel goes on to say that there are two ways of extricating oneself from the tragedy of the world. One is the way chosen by Jenny Fields, leading a bustling life in a restricted milieu (but one growing wider all the time) while devoting her wisdom and wealth to rescuing the wretched of the earth, those who fall under the wheels of the Juggernaut and becoming a national and even international celebrity in the process. Garp's way is different: he renounces the world, opts out, and shuts himself up between his writing-desk and the kitchen-table. The message of the novel, unspoken but no less forceful for that, is that this latter way offers no solution. In vain does a man turn his back on the world, it will catch up with him in the end and strike him down. Garp believes he can avoid this fate, the subject is discussed in one of his narratives, "Vigilance," which is integrated into the novel. But Irving knows that it cannot be done, and this is what Garp's story is about.

This brings us to the question of the relationship between book and author, between hero and writer. It shows great bravura and audacity on Irving's part that he not only alludes to Garp's being a writer, but actually works into the novel three major novelettes of his main character. The third of them bears the title: "The World according to Bensenhaver", and this is a novel entitled *The World according to Garp*—the reader might conclude he is being confronted with the case of the legendary tin of shoe-polish... Well, yes and no: thanks to criticism already published in America we know that in nearly all the phases of Garp's story Irving relied to some extent upon his own experiences in life; still the novel is not a travestied autobiography, it is a genuine novel, primarily because Irving possesses the fundamental literary ability of continuing to dream, rethink, and refurbish material in his imagination whether this material be an event or experience in life, an emotion, or an idea. This is how he is able to express in the personage and story of Garp the painful experience that the writer's life (inasmuch as he finds and creates his existence through being a writer) is a marginal one, which carries in itself a constant nostalgia for Life and Living. Garp struggles against this by going in for wrestling and long-distance running as well, but the struggle only intensifies his loneliness and his loneliness increases his fear of the violence of the world, a fear which he projects in the first place onto his children; the grotesque tragedy of life, and the fiasco of the type of solution which Garp attempts, emerges when, as a guiltless wrongdoer, he becomes the instrument of his children's tragedy.

Violence is the principal characteristic of this American world, otherwise so comfortable, agreeable, and eventless. Violence appears here in all its varieties, and another good example of grotesque tragedy is the way in which feminism becomes, so to speak, the focus of it; one of the great comic-heroic scenes of the novel is the funeral of Jenny Fields, which is appropriated by women and which her son can attend only by dressing up as a woman (even so he only narrowly escapes being lynched!).

But violence maintains an almost ubiquitous presence, and perhaps the main but unspoken reason why Garp and Helen stick together despite everything is that they never use violence against each other.

To protest against violence, Irving has chosen a very particular method, one extremely dangerous for a writer. He chooses to go in for some very close-up shots of violence, describing with unbelievable clinical precision not only brawls but also a rape and its consequences: his most risky piece, and a risky piece for any writer, is the afore-

mentioned inset story: "The World according to Bensenhaver," in which he describes a rape committed at knifepoint and the killing of the boy rapist by the women with the boy's own knife and the dismemberment of the corpse. He increases excitement and abhorrence practically to the point of nausea, but the inclusion of this novelette in the novel has a specific explanation: it is through writing this that Garp writes the shock of his own frightful accident out of his system, and its meaning for the work as a whole is no less important, for it is the summation of all that the author—and here Irving obviously identifies himself with Garp—thinks and feels about violence.

I have repeatedly emphasized the force behind this grotesque vision and Irving's general manner of writing. This is perhaps the most remarkable of his artistic methods, this is why his American critics compare him with Joseph Heller and Kurt Vonnegut in the first instance. I think this comparison superficial myself. The difference is striking also in that Heller and Vonnegut use the instruments of the grotesque in language quite freely and in all sorts of ways, while Irving almost never has recourse to them. His manner of telling the story remains serious in tone from beginning to end. A still sharper difference is that Heller and Vonnegut—through different means and narrating different experiences—nourish the grotesque in commonplaces or imagine that it lurks amidst banalities, whilst Irving uses this serious tone and clinical precision in narration to solve something quite different: he slips from reality into phantasmagoria, and his exquisite grotesque-pathetic scenes become dreamlike and positively nightmarish, owing to the intensity with which they are conveyed. As to this style and this vision I know of only one author akin to him in modern literature. Günter Grass in his best works resorted to the same means to raise the grotesque to this high level, thereby solving in his own unique way the problematic of tradition and innovation, tradition and modernity; he drew upon German baroque literature to discuss the most modern of subjects, and made use of the most modern of methods. Irving has a different tradition playing into his hands, that of American realism, accurate and precise observation, one which had been brought to perfection over the preceding half century. He carries on where Hemingway and others left off, and this is the point at which he embarks into the dreamlike.

One major lever on which his success depends is his extremely conscious mode of composition. It would be an easy and gratifying though very copious task to demonstrate how the same themes and motifs recur in various places in the novel, in different situations and in ever different "registers," and how one's recollections of earlier episodes heighten the effect of the later ones. In any case through these techniques in particular but through all those mentioned earlier as well the author manages to give an impression of compactness and of closeness in a novel of almost 600 pages; but from another point of view he achieves "openness" too, as if the recurring themes and their variations were his literary means of asserting assonance between small and large worlds, as if the repetition of motifs were to represent both the richness of life and the act of its self-renewal.

I am just going on and on without getting to the end of it. This is a strange book, much richer than it would seem on first reading. This is perhaps the best evidence there is for the genuine literary credentials of a work: it contains more than we can glean from it after reading it once over, and each subsequent reading reveals something new and valuable. In all probability future generations will stumble upon different gems and nuggets, for John Irving's fourth novel, *The World according to Garp*, is a book of this kind, one worth knowing, one you are unlikely to set aside in a hurry.

PÉTER NAGY

ARTS

HUNGARIAN AVANT GARDE IN LONDON

British art in the 20th century has been provincial and on the edge of the mainstream. English artists, critics, and art administrators have looked to France in the first instance as the fountainhead of modernism, and later to the United States and to West Germany. It is only recently that the British have begun to examine art from countries which have themselves been outside the mainstream, but which like Britain itself, have made a by no means inconsiderable contribution to the development of modern art. Czechoslovak Cubism was shown at the Tate Gallery in the late 'sixties and although the exhibition of Polish Constructivism from the Sztuki Museum in Lodz was turned down by the Arts Council in the early 'seventies, shows of work by Witkiewicz, Stazewski and a more recent generation of Polish modernists were put on by Richard Demarco and the Scottish Arts Council at the Edinburgh Festival last year, and a selection of 20th century art from Rumania, which included three pieces by Brancuşi, was shown at Somerset House, London in 1978. The Hungarian exhibition at the Hayward Gallery therefore comes in a line of gradual exposure to the art of Eastern and Central Europe which has so long been completely unknown in Britain.

In Hungary, the decisive influence in the first decade of the 20th century was the painting of Cézanne. Where in industrialised England it was the urban and suburban subject matter and treatment of post-Impressionism which was influential on the advanced painting of the first decade of the twentieth century, in Hungary Cézanne's influence was clearly more important than any other, although the influence of Gauguin and Hans von Marées was felt too. And it was Cézanne's earthy subject matter, drawn from his native Provence, which was almost as powerful a stimulus as his discoveries about form for Hungarian painters like Róbert Berény, Dezső Czigány, Péter Dobrovics, Károly Kernstok, Ödön Márffy, József Nemes Lampérth, Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba, Lajos Tihanyi and Béla Uitz.

Everywhere in Europe around the time of the Great War writers and artists were finding that they had much in common, collaborating, acting, supportatively towards one another and interacting in their work. In England these links between art and literature flourished briefly between 1913–1915 in the Vorticist movement around Wyndham Lewis and Ezra Pound, with its influential magazine *Blast*, the typography of which El Lissitzky considered to have been one of the seminal influences on the New Typography of the nineteen twenties. But Vorticism died during the war and after the war, in the Twenties, there was in Britain no development of typography, photomontage, caption, and text as there was in the Soviet Union, Germany, Holland, Poland, and Hungary. And indeed it had

to await the arrival of a Hungarian, László Moholy-Nagy, in Britain in the mid-thirties before this area was fertilised. It was this part of the exhibition *The Hungarian Avant Garde: The Eight and the Activists* which was of most interest to the British public, and which received most praise in reviews. John McEwen, writing in the *Spectator*, said of the work of Moholy-Nagy, Sándor Bortnyik and Lajos Kassák: "This is the heroic period of abstract art, its hour of high romance, and in the pictures and graphics —the agit-prop magazine designs are superb—of these three men, it still warms the blood."

Many reviewers felt that perhaps too much space had been devoted to the paintings of the Activists and that this phase in Hungarian painting would have been better represented by more rigorous selection. The exhibition was shown at the same time as a retrospective of the work of the American abstract painter Ellsworth Kelly and it was inevitable that Kelly's clear, singing use of colour should concentrate attention on the more formal and experimental work of the Activists than on the dark and sometimes turgid work of the earlier school of painters.

Undoubtedly one of the most fascinating aspects of the exhibition, brought out by the excellent catalogue, was the strong links between art and ideology and art and society that characterised this period of artistic —and literary—activity in Hungary. Yet there was a sense of a beginning which had to a large extent been prevented from the full development that was promised as a result of the crushing of the Hungarian political revolution of 1919 and the subsequent dispersing of talent to other parts of Europe. Lacking as it did examples of works by Vilmos Huszár, Marcel Breuer, or of the later work of Moholy-Nagy (drawn as it was almost entirely from Hungarian collections) the Hungarian contribution to European modernism outside Hungary was not fully represented. An exhibition which did this would be welcome in Britain, although an exhibition of Moholy-Nagy which started at ICA earlier this year and is now touring Britain with a particularly strong collection of Moholy-Nagy's work done in Britain went some way to making up for this. Also welcome would be an exhibition of contemporary art activity in Hungary, particularly work which has developed further some of the ideas that were pioneered in the experimental climate of the Twenties.

In a lecture given to the Galilei Circle in 1910 which was published in *Nyugat* and was reprinted in the London catalogue, the young György Lukács declared that the pictures exhibited by The Eight "mean battle". He saw their work as a positive move away from the individualism and relativism, which he saw as the legacy of Impressionism, towards a new materialism, a new solidity, a new attempt to impose an order upon the flux of experience. He saw it as a return to the values of the art of the past." "This art is the old art, the art of order and values, the art of the constructed." But in that prophetic final phrase, *the art of the constructed*, he also saw its architectonic quality which would lead art even further from the flux of appearances. "The new art is architectonic in the old and true sense," he wrote. "Its colours, words and lines are merely expressions of the essence, order and harmony of things, their emphasis and their equilibrium." He might have been speaking of the art of Moholy-Nagy, of Bortnyik, and Kassák, although it is doubtful whether he would have seen it in this way in the 'twenties. As John Willett points out in his *Introduction* to the catalogue, Lukács ignores many of the more positive aspects of Impressionism: its concern with everyday life, its attempt to embody the positive aspects of bourgeois life. And he ignores too the social commitment of much Neo-Impressionist and Divisionist art. But he rightly emphasises those constructive aspects that the Hungarian avant-garde drew from the art of Cézanne and used for its own ends.

"In the great cities we are living in the century of technology and sociology," Kassák wrote in the first issue of *MA* in 1916. "The mystical investigation of divinity has been overtaken by a thousand other burning, more immediate problems and the avid desire of our modern nerve-systems to live for the moment has squeezed out of use the ideal of the peaceful village idyll. Instead of patriarchal resignation we swoon in the storm of troubles, and whoever works in this century, and wishes to depict the character of this century, must be a man of his age in his nerves, his blood and his work." And in words which echo not only those of the Futurists but also those of Leger's 1914 lectures: "We desire with all our hearts that just as the poster is a magnificent complement to the modern town, the picture too should fill our room with a life outside us, one that subdues all industrial objects; and as posters jostle for position on the colourful hoardings with their stubborn, world-shattering zest, so let the pictures vie, with each other in today's musty and soporific exhibitions!"

Hungarian constructivist art owed a good deal to Russian models and to the work of the De Stijl group in Holland; but it made its own contribution. It was particularly strong in the area between graphic design and painting, and in the incorporation of the photograph into a constructive ensemble. A belief in future revolution was supplemented by a belief in technology and an over-optimistic estimate of the social palliatives that technology could bring about. Today we can sympathize with this view and admire the Herculean devotion which these men brought to this ideal, but we can no longer share it. It is this which gives it its curious poignancy, poised between the residual hope of a revolution that failed and opposition to the Fascism which was shortly to overwhelm Central Europe.

Here was an exhibition which showed how a country, relatively distant from the main centres of modernist activity, was able to develop a strong and positive twentieth century art. And if ultimately its promise was not entirely fulfilled this was not, as it was in England, the result of a failure of nerve and retrenchment into an academic traditionalism, but of the force of historical and social circumstances which dispersed the most talented artists, a number of whom enriched the visual arts in Western Europe and the USA with their fertile ideas and imaginations.

PAUL OVERY

THE RETURN OF THE ACTIVISTS

The Hungarian avant-garde of the early twentieth century, and particularly the movement known as activism, have been given an increasing measure of recognition outside the country. There have been exhibitions and publications devoted to its evolution, to identifying its literary and artistic antecedents and its achievements, in the course of which the careers of certain outstanding representatives have been illuminated and revealed to a wide public. In 1979, the Goutal Darly publishing house in Paris brought out a 327-page volume of studies entitled *L'activisme hongrois*, equally rich in textual content and illustrations, edited by Charles Dautrey and Jean-Claude Guerlain. The aim of the editors was to project a broad panorama. At their invitation a number of French and Hungarian historians, literary historians, sociologists, art historians, and

musicologists combined to analyse the intellectual life of Hungary at the turn of the century. The authors concerned themselves not only with political, social, and cultural events but with the whole intellectual background which inspired the various currents of Hungarian avant-garde literature and art, amongst which activism was considered to be the most radical trend. The volume includes important source material, such as excerpts from Lajos Fülep's study on artistic recollection, which takes issue with Benedetto Croce's intuition theory and refines that theory in an interesting direction. There are also significant writings and analyses of the age (i.e., of the 1910s and '20s) by György Lukács, Iván Hevesy, József Lengyel, Lajos Kassák, János Mácza, and Ernő Kállai. Several studies are devoted to the circle of the periodical *Nyugat* (West), the poetry of Endre Ady, the artistic views of György Lukács and the Sunday Circle* of the 1910s, and to the precursors of Hungarian activism. Hungarian scholars of note added new and valuable studies to the common effort (including Miklós Béládi, Imre Bori, István Nemeskürty, Farkas József, Éva Karádi, Miklós Szabolcsi, and the art historians Nóra Aradi, Krisztina Passuth, Éva Körner, Éva Forgács, and Éva Bajkay). The researches undertaken in the fields of the theatre, music, urban folklore, and folk art have also been analysed. Richard Crevier's article, "L'activisme entre l'esthétique et l'éthique dans la politique révolutionnaire," demonstrates that Hungarian activism was seeking a new social function for art. By sustaining the idea of a permanent revolution and bringing forth new methods and forms of communications, art was seeking for itself a leading creative and intellectual role in social life. Hungarian activism developed the patterns and forms of its action in a period of rising revolutionary fervour. In the retrograde period which followed and amidst new crises it tried to preserve and develop its social role as an organizing momentum and mobilizer of minds. The volume relies on contemporary photographs, literary translations, and reproductions of works of art to support the statements and conclusions reached regarding the richness of social and cultural life in Hungary at the beginning of the century, and the universality of its concerns. The volume published in Paris in 1979 was complemented by an exhibition, including both art and historical documentation and particularly rich photographic material, which opened in the Parisian suburbs at Noisy-le-Grand, and later visited numerous other French towns (Lyon, Marseille, etc.). To coincide with the exhibition the municipal authorities of Noisy-le-Grand organized a conference in April 1979, at which the authors, the present writer amongst them, were invited to formulate their conclusions and to illustrate the intellectual and creative history of the beginning of the twentieth century in Hungary in a more detailed European context, for the dangers of all kinds of isolationism had yet to make their appearance at this time.

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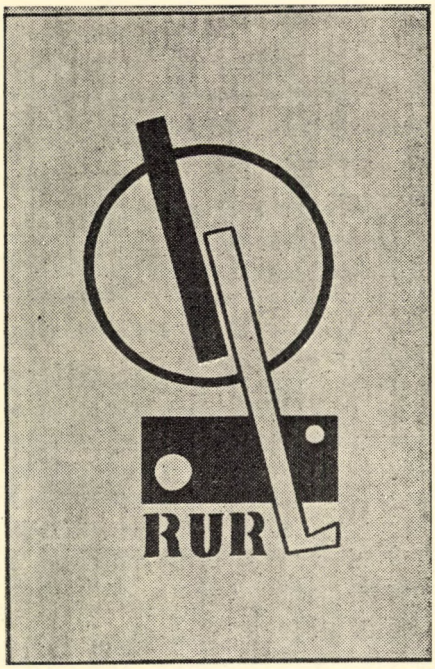
Following the Paris conference preparations got under way for an exhibition of some 200 works which was mounted in January 1980 in Saint Étienne, and transferred to London in February and March; after London the Hungarian Institute of Cultural Relations arranged displays of the material in Rome and Paris. The catalogues of the Saint Étienne and London exhibitions are closely related, both being based on material provided by Hungarian editors, but the London catalogue contains the more comprehensive bibliography, as well as contemporary source materials, analyses of the material on show, and an exact and wide-ranging annals history of the art scene in Hungary.

Following the example of the volume of studies published in Paris, a major part of

* NHQ 47, 73.



Károly Szelényi

Lajos Kassák: Picture architecture, 1922 (From the periodical "De Stijl")

the London catalogue is taken up by contemporary source materials, writings on Hungarian avant-garde by the young Lukács, Lajos Fülep, Lajos Kassák, and Ernő Kállai, expressing first reactions to the new phenomena in art, offering conceptual generalizations and outlining programmes and possibilities for the artists. The present writer, together with Krisztina Passuth, was responsible for the compilation of a selected bibliography of the period and a history of the currents involved. The catalogue, in keeping with the practice of the Arts Council, was printed in 550 copies and distributed to the largest academic and public libraries, in Europe and in the rest of the world. It thus stands a chance of stimulating people interested in the subject to further reading and research.

Krisztina Passuth also contributed a comprehensive study to the catalogue entitled "The International Connections of the Eight and the Activists." She marshalled a whole range of data to prove that progressive endeavours in Hungary were derived from the problems raised in the art centres of Paris, Munich, Vienna, Moscow, and Berlin, and the general attempt to invest art with a new function and a new idiom. The study also shows convincingly that the Eight of Budapest contributed works of unique value to the debates of post-Cézanne European art, that the movement of the activists was of pioneering significance in East Central Europe (primarily as regards the avant-garde in neighbouring countries), and that furthermore the impact of some of its great per-

Vilmos Bertalan

Title page of a novel by Lajos Kassák, published in 1919, designed by Sándor Bortnyik

sonalities, like Lajos Kassák, Moholy-Nagy, and László Péri, extended even further afield.

John Willet, a student of expressionism of international renown, wrote an introduction to the catalogue in which, despite the author's polite tone, it becomes clear that he considers the first period of Hungarian activism, together with the art of the Eight, a forerunner of merely local significance when set beside the period which followed, the phase that determined the paths of some truly great personalities. He seems to be somewhat surprised that in Hungary, isolated both linguistically and culturally, something very similar to trends in other parts of the world in the 1910s and 20s could grow and flourish. He puts the question, both to himself and to his readers: "What then is their special quality? Does it lie in a unifying socio-political vision? Or in the national characteristics of this ethnically and linguistically unique people?"

The sharply phrased questions indicate that Willett to a certain extent seems to want to separate the problems of Hungarian art from universal art, and sees the state of historical and artistic affairs in the 1910s as less interdependent than others have seen them (e.g., Krisztina Passuth, who in the study mentioned above presents a mass of data illustrating interrelations). Willett tends to seek national characteristics in an artistic trend which was basically international. He praises the political role of the artists highly, but attributes independent universal values to only a few of them (Kassák and Moholy-Nagy and practically no one else). This concept essentially distorted the whole message of the paintings, drawings, sculptures, and written documents on display at the Hayward Gallery, it flew in the face of what the exhibition actually had to offer, but it nonetheless provided the keynote for the critical reception.

In its March 1980 issue, the *Spectator* erms Hungarian art an "art of ideas," and ontrasted it with another major exhibition of the Hayward Gallery in the late winter of 1979, a collected display of Ellsworth Kelly, which presented "an art of sensation." The reviewer finds Kelly's optical purity and maturity lacking in Hungarian avant-garde art. The propensity is there in only three artists: Moholy-Nagy, Sándor Bortnyik, and Kassák. (Incidentally, a few weeks earlier there had been a Moholy-Nagy exhibition in London displaying all sides of this artist's activity, but by the time the collective Hungarian exhibition arrived this had transferred to Leicester.)

Finally, despite the strict formal criteria on which he bases his judgements, the reviewer sums up his opinion as follows: "Whether one sympathises with their left-wing attitudes or not, this is the heroic period of abstract art. Its hour of high romance, and in the pictures and graphics—the agit-prop magazine designs are superb—of these three men, it still warms the blood."

Most of the other reviews also concentrated on these three artists. They are the best known abroad, for their works have long been a regular feature of collections and exhibitions. Nevertheless, some papers (e.g., the *Evening News* of March 5, and *The Sunday Times* of March 2, 1980) did actually list and analyse works by other masters as well. It is to be hoped therefore that the names of Róbert Berény, Károly Kernstok, Béla Czóbel, Lajos Tihanyi, and János Kmetty have now established themselves in European public opinion. Simon Vaughan-Winter, for example, after listing the outstanding names, thought that: "This was a brief period of intense artistic and intellectual pressure that produced some remarkable works which still have the power to communicate something of the excitement of the time."

A few days after the opening of the exhibition the very first reviewer to analyse the material on show was Terence Mullaly in *The Daily Telegraph* of March 1. He highlighted the names of Béla Czóbel and Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba, and reviewing the docu-

ments in the second part of the exhibition, he singled out the typographies of Bortnyik for special praise. Terence Mullaly also endeavoured to penetrate the essential message of the works. It was, he thought, the tendency so strong around the turn of the century to strive for a revolutionary transformation of art and society. He quoted some lines from an 1907 article by Endre Ady to support this contention (the article was about the consciousness of the literary, artistic, and scientific revolution that always precedes social revolution).

In *The Sunday Telegraph* on March 2 Michael Shepherd dealt with the formal values and distinguishing features of the material on show. His article war brief but full of excellent insights. He said, for example, that the material "reveals two visual impulses: strong, expressionist force applied to the traditional social themes of art in portraits, landscape, family and social scenes, and visions of the ideal; and the building of a new society as expressed by the new abstract language of art." Without enumerating all the works on display Shepherd states that the exhibition "reveals at least six works which will surely take their place in world anthologies of the century art." He goes on to note a contrast with contemporaneous art in Britain: "There is much artistic pleasure, and a total sense of the seriousness and value given to art, which makes a useful corrective to the skirmishes of the comparable British scene."

G. S. Whittet, who visited Hungary in 1965 and familiarized himself with much of the collections of the Budapest National Gallery, was of the opinion that the works of the Eight and the activists do not typify Hungarian art of the period. They were the achievements of a few, of a genuine avant-garde; their works were accomplished on the fringe and indeed the concentration and quality of this exhibition is not reflected in Hungarian museums. Whittet also evaluated the strict criteria of selection which the organizers of the exhibition had applied, and he too indulged in a brief characterization of the whole movement, and particularly the special features of the Eight and the activists. "Being Hungarian," he writes, "the movement was dominated in its later phase by philosophy and ideology, but in the beginning the painters of the Eight took much of their direction from Paris, not only in the bright colours of the Fauves but from the more concrete structures of the Post-Impressionists such as Van Gogh and Gauguin and, notably, Cézanne." Of the Eight he is fascinated most by the painting of Czóbel, and amongst the activists he is intrigued by the leader of the movement, Kassák (to whom he gives warm recognition as painter, sculptor, and poet), and of course by the more familiar figure of László Moholy-Nagy.

Whittet's overall impression of the exhibition was that it "is not of revolutionary innovations but of a high standard of painterly skills regarding life and art with the intellectual and sensitive approach that, to my mind, typifies Hungarian artistic attitudes."

It is too early as yet to speak of public response to the catalogues and the projected anthologies, but it is clear from the above extracts from the press that the exhibition aroused the interest of British reviewers. The unequivocal committment of these two, consciously organized groups on the Hungarian art scene at the beginning of the century generated much interest; their line of development, differing as it does from that of West European art, has provoked fruitful critical discussion, and thus Hungarian avant-garde painting may now at last be duly incorporated into the received art history of the twentieth century.

JÚLIA SZABÓ

ALLEGRO BARBARO ON CANVAS

A retrospective of Dezső Korniss

Leafing through the catalogue of the Korniss exhibition one is struck to see how few one-man shows he has mounted in the past, particularly when one considers the significance of his œuvre and his prestige among his colleagues. It is obvious that his reticence is not a purely personal matter. It has arisen from the social and cultural positions he has adopted, for as a painter of socialist orientation and avantgarde leanings. Dezső Korniss was necessarily something of an outcast in the artistic life of inter-war Hungary, dominated as it was by academic and novecentist trends. After the war he became a member of the modernist European School,* but the activities of this School were liquidated by a peremptory administrative decision in 1948. Korniss was dismissed from his post as a teacher at the Applied Arts School, and since he was unwilling to corrupt his creative work with the vulgar realism that was gaining the upper hand he found himself compelled to withdraw from the art scene altogether. Between 1949 and 1956 he earned his living by painting puppets and posters. In 1957 he took part in the Spring Exhibition, which gave a green light to artistic trends of every shade and hue; yet despite promising beginnings and successful political consolidation artistic life could emerge only haltingly from the enforced rigidities of the Stalinist years and Korniss's position remained ambivalent. Though he continued to gather followers and admirers, the official art forums did not abandon their reservations easily. He had an exhibition at Székesfehérvár in 1965, but this was followed by a lapse of a decade before exhibitions at Hatvan (1977, 1978) and Szentendre (1979)** Budapest has had to wait nearly a quarter of a century for the present display in the National Gallery (his last exhibition in the capital having taken place in 1947 in the display-room of the European School). The present exhibition of works from all phases of his career indicates that this artist has at last won for himself broader understanding and acceptance.

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Dezső Korniss was born in 1908 in Beszterce, Northern Transylvania (today part of Rumania). In 1911 he moved with his family to Budapest, where some years later he began to study art in the private school run by Artur Podolini Volkmann, which at the time extended much valuable support to talented young artists coming from a suburban or proletarian background. In 1925 he was admitted to the Academy of Fine Arts, where he attended classes held by István Csók, the liberal painter-teacher whose own roots were in the French tradition, mainly post-Impressionism. Csók and his colleague János Vaszary were reckoned to be the most progressive elements in these conservative, academic surroundings. Korniss together with other students of these two professors—György Kepes, Sándor Trauner, Béla Hegedüs, Lajos Vajda, and Béla Veszelszky—established an avantgarde group, which was enthusiastic about a number of contemporary trends in painting, particularly constructivism. In their compositions they experimented with a great variety of materials, including textiles, wood, sawdust, and sand, and they coupled Cubist reduction of form with photo inserts embodying a social content frowned upon at the time. Their awareness of the need to transcend traditional limitations of form prompted them to study

* See *NHQ* 55.
** See *NHQ* 70.

architecture, especially the ideas of the Bauhaus. Under the influence of Eisenstein and Pudovkin they were also interested in making films. In the dishevelled and emasculated cultural life of Hungary in the twenties, their social and avantgarde mentality also attracted them for some time to Lajos Kassák,* and the "Work Circle" behind which he was the driving force.

This period came to an end in 1930 when the young artists left Hungary, most of them never to return. But Korniss came back from Paris at Christmas 1931, and Lajos Vajda** followed him home in 1934. By this time both of them were drawing more realistic conclusions: their youthful ideals of emulating Soviet art and popularizing constructivism in the broad masses would have to be abandoned. Their experiments with street-theatre and choral programmes were smothered by police, while the scheduled mass production of cheap, modern-design articles was thwarted by the economic crisis. Far from having the capital to make a film, Vajda could not even purchase a quality camera to shoot the basic material for his montages. A return to the panel picture, and to the depiction of life in drawings—which a couple of years earlier they had emphatically rejected and condemned as obsolete—became inevitable.

In the mid-thirties, Korniss and Vajda devised a new programme for themselves. They sought to reach back to the roots of art, to that primeval medium which infuses works of folk art, imbued with collective spirit, and which, as they were dismayed to realize, was in the process of disappearing in the overwhelming advance of industrial civilization. They travelled to Szentendre and later Szigetmonostor in search of themes and motifs, and this work was both a rescue job and at the same time a search for a new direction; they believed that a new national art could be born of the ancient kernel, universal in its language, and a synthesis of ancient folklore and modern avant-garde. But since it is impossible to bring forth authentic collectivist art in the complete absence of a receptive community, this impressive programme finally ended in the creation of an individual mythology: the motifs collected called into being a harmonic pictural realm that was personal in tone and balanced in character.

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It was no easy task for the present exhibition to document Korniss's beginnings and his early period in Szentendre, since a considerable part of his output in those years was destroyed during the war. But even the fragmentary material on display reflects two endeavours quite clearly from the very outset: firstly, a constructivist tendency manifested in utter geometrical abstraction and the geometric stylization of natural forms, and secondly, an irrepressable pictorial-decorative vein in which the major roles are played by texture, patch-work effects and lively, contrasting colours. The Szentendre pictures, the focal point of the early period, make use of a narrow range of motifs to mould the elementary medium of human existence into a closed microcosm. Korniss assembles visual elements and projects them upon each other according to some principle of pictorial gravity—a still life, the interior and exterior of a building, a house and a head—and then relies on an architectonic montage technique to place material forms transcribed in the Cubist manner into a system pegged out by perpendiculars and horizontals. The spirit of these designs tolerates no excess, even though the artist fills his seemingly rigorous constructivist outline with powerful colours pressing tensely against each other.

The original Szentendre programme presupposed a basis in society and a receptive public. It was to be realized in the second the notions and concepts of contemporary Szentendre period, post-1945. In the thirties

* See *NHQ* 54, 67.
** See *NHQ* 39, 73.

Korniss had collected folk motifs and studied peasant culture in the process of decay; but his own canvasses had mostly depicted his private environment, the narrow world of the studio, even if this was being held up as some sort of model of human totality. The war and the political changes which ensued split this cocoon wide open, and the painter discovered a richer tapestry in human life and the whole teeming world complete with tragedies and perturbations. This new attitude to life caused the old Szentendre motifs to undergo flexible transformation and consummation. They reappear enriched by new relations, notably with the depiction of insects and leaves. A series of small pictures featuring geometric contours and untinted colours serve as forerunners of the main works of the period.

The second Szentendre period, with its fusion of constructivist and pictorial elements, of abstraction and figurativeness, of pure pictorial form and a symbolic, narrative sense, represents the maturity and stabilization of Korniss's art. The make-up of the artist is basically classical, and in this period, as in the earlier phase, he creates his own closed, harmonic world into which his contemplative, calm attitude to life is not prepared to admit conflicts, except in transfigured form. He is now operating on a higher level than hitherto, but since life is still far short of the idyllic and the artist's intellectual integrity forces him to acknowledge the accumulating tensions of the real world, this new material insidiously works its way to form a secondary line of his œuvre in which purity of form gives way to fullness of expression. As a counterpole to the world of geometry there appears (mainly in his drawings and a few large paintings) an informal streak, unrestricted and undulating sketches, drips and myriad patches, which all call into question the basic harmony of his clear, precise main outlines and an outlook on the world positively exuding confidence.

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The late forties necessarily induced a further transformation, followed by the disintegration of the artistic realm of the Szentendre period. Graphic art and collage increase in significance and Korniss gives full rein to a peculiar, ironic surrealism. He develops a bent for transposing the figures of classical mythology into the sphere of the bizarre, the fantastic and the awful. The artist, though pressures upon him were heavy, refused to crack in the fifties relying on his self-restraint, his rationality, and his puritan way of life to transcend even the most difficult circumstances. The self-sufficient strength of his personality and fruitful introspection were enough to ensure artistic survival. The playful figure of *Miska*, made up of abstract forms and dating from 1954, indicates that the basic character of his painting did not change despite the internal agitation of these years.

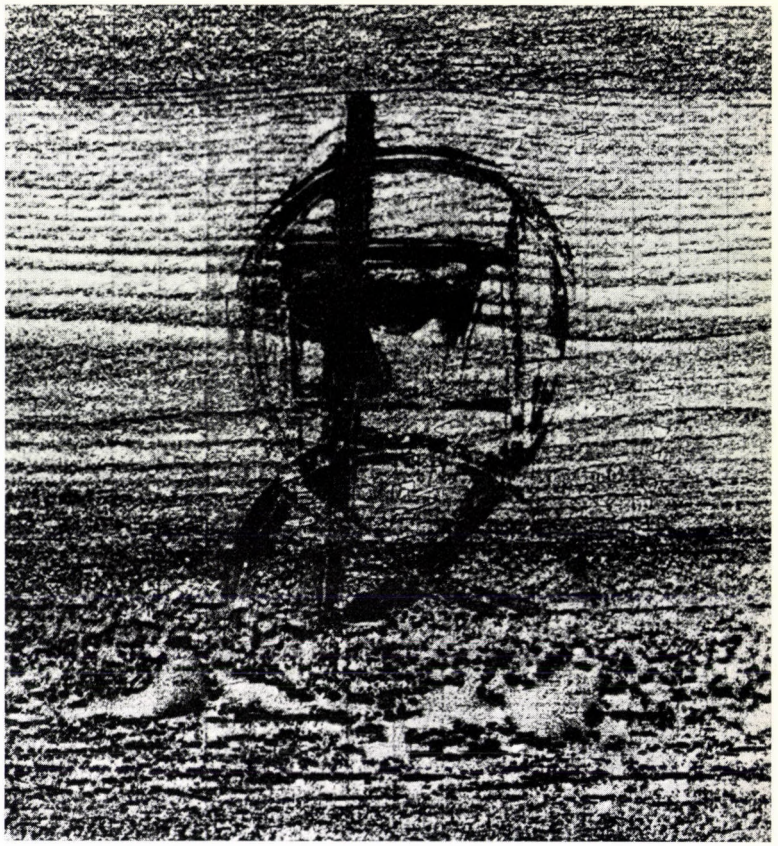
The late fifties opened a period of greater freedom in the flow of information, extended the possibilities of travel abroad, and also ushered in a major artistic breakthrough. In the wake of the 1958 Venice Biennale action painting, calligraphism, and all that was most modern and exciting in the art of Europe reached Hungary. Korniss gave himself vigorously over to the informal vein inherent in him, and which he had begun to nurture some ten years before. Compositions dominated by a single vertical axle with their multiple expressive configurations generate figurative associations which accomplish the earlier, similar endeavours of the forties. Another type of his calligraphies show him under the influence of oriental writing (primarily Arabic and Turkish) and the graphic motifs of Hungarian folklore. Korniss develops a type of picture which is built in the manner in which writing flows, with a protracted horizontal surface filled by lines of superimposed signs. His tint drawings and paintings are characterized by random impetus and free improvisation, and yet they also exhibit a definite, firm structure. Korniss uses one or two colours, and

Levente Szepsy Szűcs

DEZSŐ KORNISS: STILL-LIFE WITH KEROSENE LAMP AND VIOLIN, II.
(OIL ON CANVAS, 142×95 CM, 1937)

Levente Szépy Szűcs

Dezső Korniss: Widow (collage, paper, 36×26,5 cm, 1952)

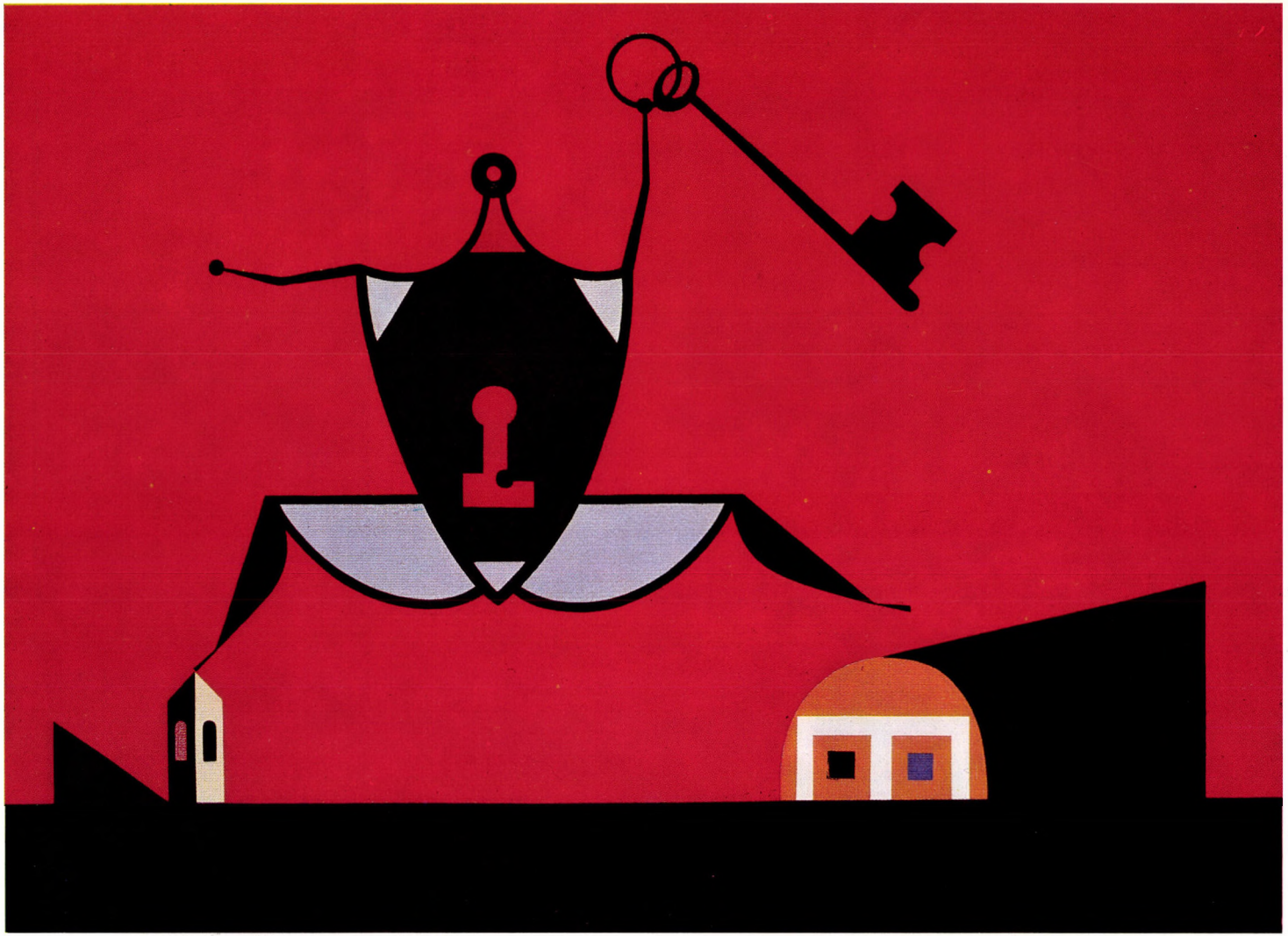


Dezső Korniss: From the series "Illuminations" (monotype, 1945)

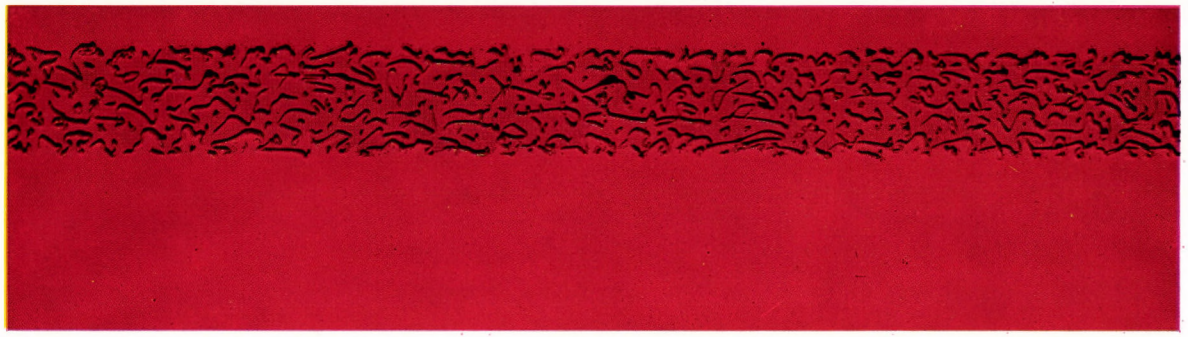
Dezső Korniss: Antithesis II.
(oil on canvas,
126×48 cm, 1947)

Levente Szépy Szűcs

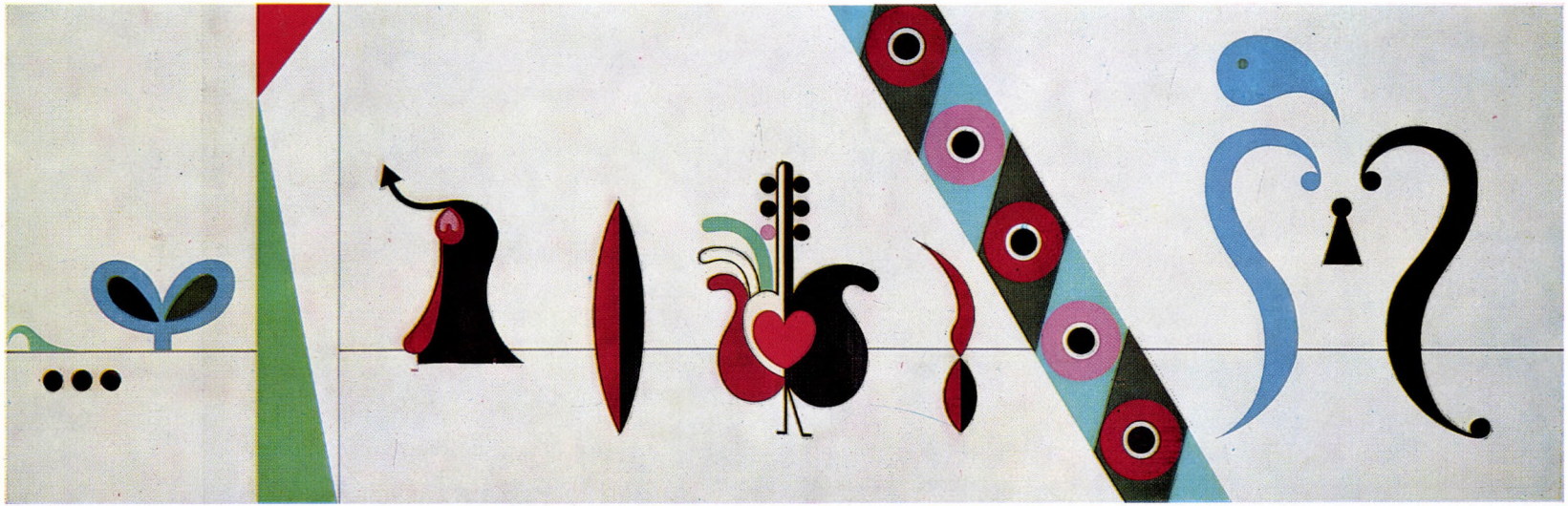
Dezső Korniss: Miska (oil on canvas,
48×31 cm, 1954)



Dezső Korniss: Lock and key (oil on canvas, 59.5×79.5 cm, 1949)



DEZSŐ KORNISS: CALLIGRAPHY IN RELIEF (OIL ON CANVAS, 60×200 CM, 1959)



Attila Károly, Corvina Press

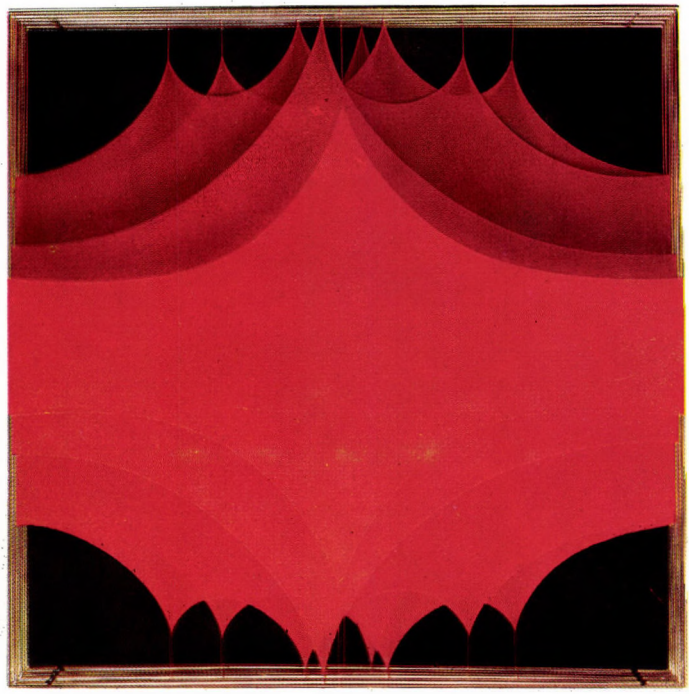
DEZSŐ KORNISS: ALLEGRO BARBARO (OIL ON CANVAS, 100×300 CM, 1975)

Károly Szelényi, Corvina Press

BÉLA UITZ: SITTING WOMAN (OIL ON CARTOON, 87×69 CM, 1918)

Alfréd Schiller, Corvina Press

BÉLA UITZ: "FORWARD RED SOLDIERS!" (POSTER, 100×70 CM, 1919)



Géza Molnár

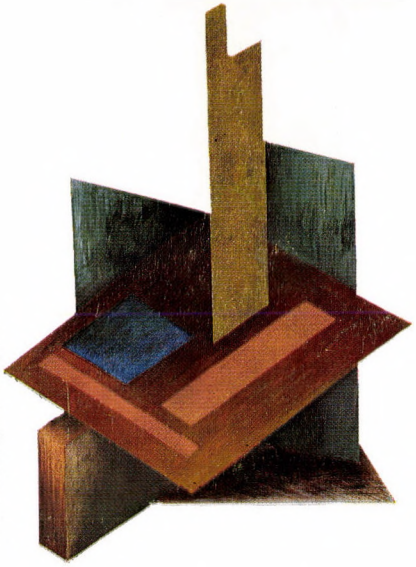
JUDIT DROPPA: STRETCHING (POLYESTER, 110×110×15 CM, 1978)

Katalin Nádor

LAJOS TIHANYI: PORTRAIT OF LAJOS FÜLEP (OIL ON CANVAS, 78×95 CM, 1915)

Alfréd Schiller, Corvina Press

Sándor Bortnyik: The Green Donkey (oil on canvas, 60×55 cm, 1924)



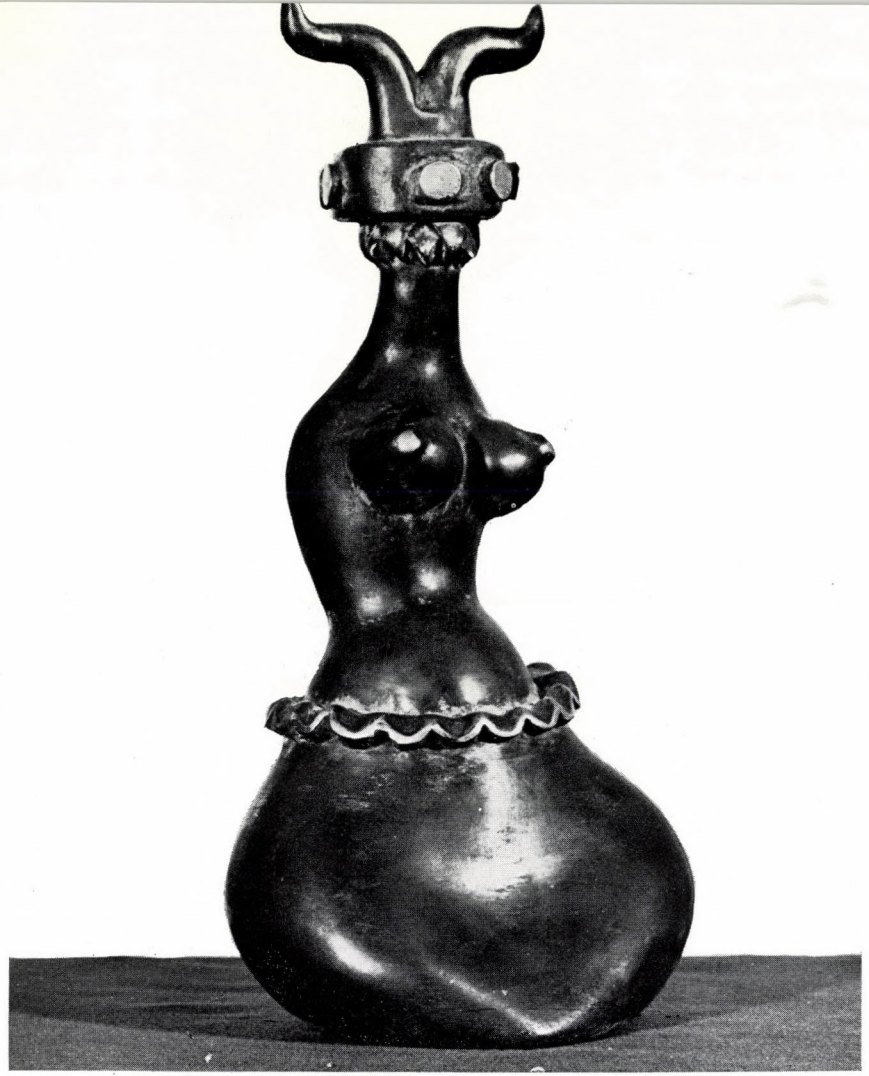
Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wien

Lajos Kassák: Space Construction (mixed technique tempera, cardboard, 27×21 cm, 1922)

József Jakovits: Reticulated nude (bronze, 40×24×20 cm, 1946)

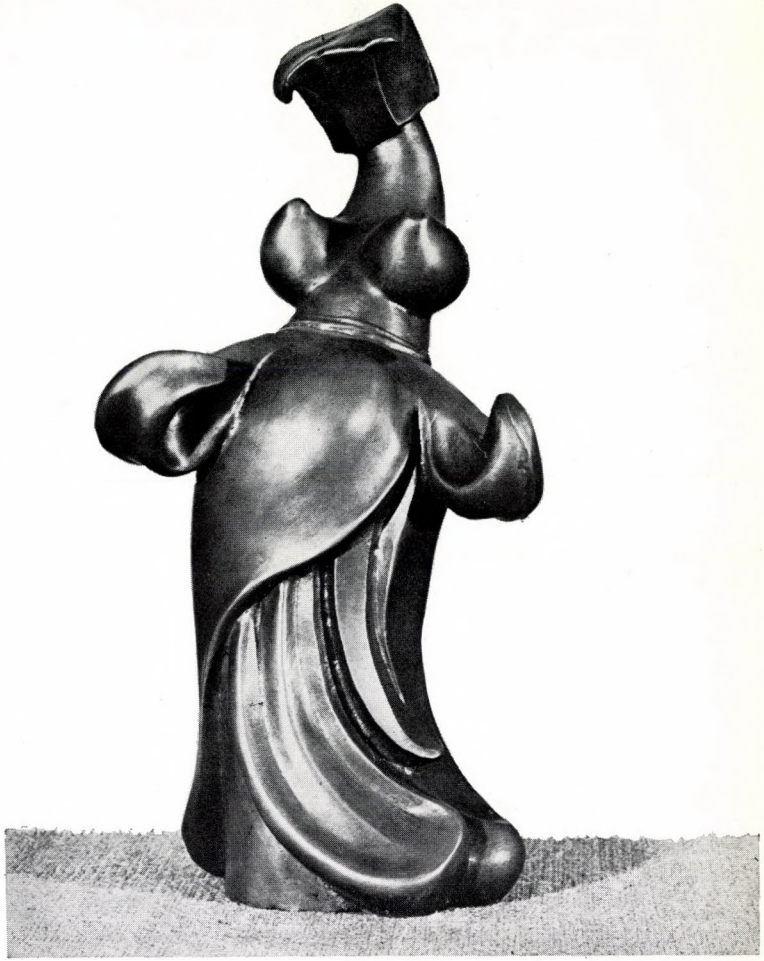
József Jakovits: Black standing figure (wood, 100×15×16 cm, 1975)

György Makky

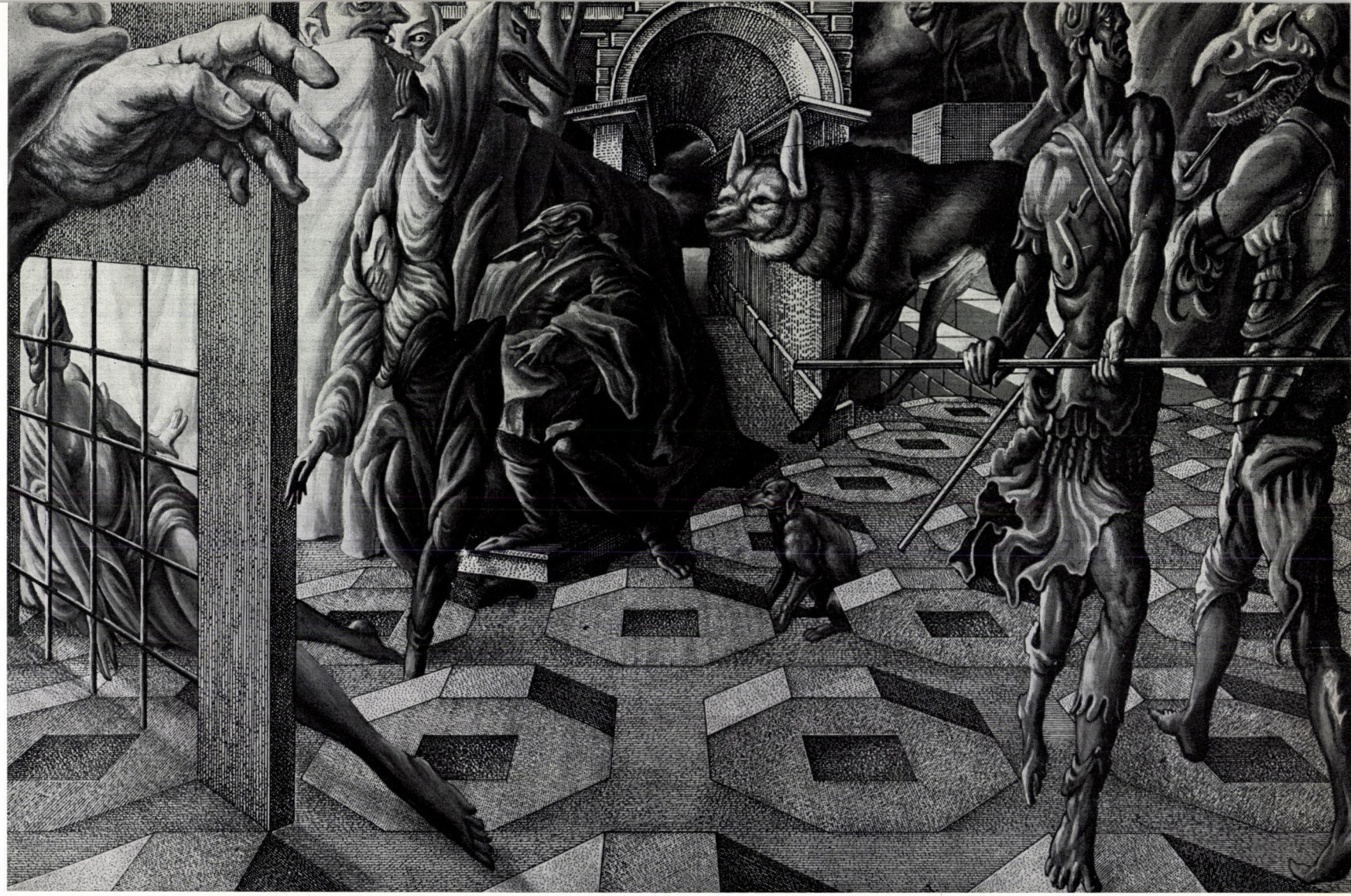


György Makky

József Jakovits: Maid in iron mask (35×15×13 cm, 1956–1958)



József Jakovits: Nun (bronze, 35×16×13 cm, 1956–1958)



Imre Juhász

ANDRÁS FELVIDÉKI: PALACE REVOLT (ETCHING, 30 × 41 CM, 1979)

unfolds his concepts through contrast effects between the background and the sign.

As a counterpoint to the aesthetics of the calligraphic period, which lasted from 1959 to 1963, Korniss created a series of small pictures in 1963 to which he gave the title *Metamorphosis*. Surfaces of a dark tone and intriguing texture are here objectivized into configurations and figures which express a most depressing emotional state, a mood of crisis.

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The most recent period in the life of the artist, from the late sixties to the present day, is characterized by the study of the forms of folk art and elemental geometry. Korniss's art shows two aspects of treating folk ornamentation. First of all a decorative transposition takes place, which, acting via colour arrangements and composition, adapts the motif according to the needs of the panel picture. This decorative level is supplemented in some cases by a thematic, narrative treatment, which develops and unfolds the kernel of the folk element, the associational possibilities inherent in its abstract-ornamental form, and then puts them to use in a unique pictorial narration (cf. *Shepherds, Robbers, Head Motif*). On the other hand *Allegro barbaro*, which sums up this whole group of pictures of folk-art inspiration, links decoration to a more signal-like, more abstract design. In place of thematic associations the artist here chooses to manipulate the idiom of pure colours and forms to express feelings of calm, purity, serenity, and internal harmony. Other abstract compositions of these later years also signify Korniss's gradual abandonment of narrative, symbolic, and associational layers of meaning. The signs he chooses as subjects—crosses, shields, the national flag—become transformed in the course of repeated elaboration and series patterning into simple relations between form and colour, the real contents of which lie not so much in any traditional meaning they may have but in the compositional balance achieved in them, in the correspondence between the size, positioning, and shape of the picture and the central motif, and in the pure harmony of colours.

ZOLTÁN NAGY

CROOKED ARCHITECTURE AND YARN WINDOWS

András Felvidéki, Judit Droppa

According to his original trade, András Felvidéki is a poster designer, an applied graphic artist. In addition to many other kinds of work, however, he has always been drawing and painting, initially just to exercise his fingers, so to speak, but more and more seriously as time went by. He looks primarily to mannerism for inspiration, but he is not concerned with flourishing "high art" so much as with its many derivates —like historism, or the facades of eclecticism, its mortar ashlars and architectural sculpture in mortar. The people of Budapest will encounter familiar elements in almost all of his plates: requisites of tenement houses in Pest and Buda. These he capriciously mingles with both fantastic and realistic human and animal figures and a medley of strange objects. His arbitrariness is only apparent, for all his compositions are based on exacting canons of construction.

In his more recent graphic works the

crowds have become thinner, and he has added figures borrowed from baroque pointings to the paraphernalia of the Budapest streets. He lifts them from their original environment to place them into completely different situations. Besides the consistently graphic manner of performance a distinctive pictorial quality has also appeared recently. Felvidéki is always bizarre, the absurd comes to him spontaneously; but when he has ammassed all the details of his picture plane and the arrangement is complete, he finally raises the composition to the level of reality. These are gloomy pictures, staggering but frightening as well, with frequently puzzling allegories. The viewer has to make a considerable effort himself if he is to share in the artist's irony and humour.

I have counted no less than three stylistic realms in these plates, covering a period of merely a few years; there is a concise realm, a broader one, and the very latest realm, in which the ever-present architectonic elements have become fully independent. The artist lifts one or two details from a number of buildings, and then he seems to pile and shovel them on top of each other, making the horizontal vertical, and building not only upwards but also starting from the top or even from all four sides simultaneously. This is how he develops the blocks of his "crooked architecture".

Arsenal is one of the most crowded Felvidéki plates, with its savage dog, a devil twisted into a spiral—is it perhaps a catapult? —an equally whorled colonnade, and Baroque staffage figures. The surprise solution in *New Years's Eve* is that instead of buses a galley with multiple banks of oars is gliding majestically on the asphalt of the Budapest Chain Bridge over the Danube. The winged lion and gaping-mouthed antique mask of the *Arena* are familiar from the ornaments of Pest houses. *Supplication* is more difficult to decode: its protagonist, an ancient Greek figure, is shooting an arrow at a giant fish twisted into a spiral. Only the string of the bow is real, the wood is the lower semicornice of the coffered inside of a cupola, turned on its side.

In *Court Revolution* the artist has broken with his former dry manner of presentation. Here pictorial effects also appear. Some of the Baroque and more ancient warriors running to and fro in the palace have been turned sideways by the construction so that they look as if seen through a distorting-glass. The pattern of the floor-tiles is also irregular: a square system in any case offers some scope for Op Art effects, but here the system of squares has a false perspective; it is not our eyes that deceive us, the artist has performed another kind of bluff. The purely architectonic element likewise has no role here. In all the other compositions too—the *Flying Body*, the *Floating Body*, the *Relief*—Felvidéki broaches quite different subjects, never repeating himself, even in subjects closely related to each other.

With certain thorough modifications Felvidéki has transposed compositions of architectural elements *(Relief, Floating Body)* into oil paintings. Here, in place of the black-and-white graphic drawing he relies on broken pastelle colours, whose effects come blazing through from beneath the transparent coatings.

Felvidéki seems to have become bored with classical copper engraving, and now prefers working with a special zink etching technique. His earlier graphic works show no tints and the strokes of his pen are meticulously objective; but the formal idiom of his zink etchings seems to recall the old engravings which used to illustrate the novels of Jules Verne. Another part of the material on display shows that he has given up rigorous pen-and-ink drawing and now mixes its linear, firmly formulated pictorial elements with a washing technique. The zink plate tolerates this duality, and even reciprocates the artist's solicitude. The relatively deep hollows of the zink plate lend roundness and plasticity to the expensive paper, which is wetted

before the press-work, and acts not as a technical aid but an artistic ingredient of great importance. Felvidéki's oil paintings, however, are smooth and make use of a quite traditional technique; he stretches his canvasses on a special frame.

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For more than a decade textile arts have been considered perhaps the leading branch of the applied arts in Hungary. Judit Droppa belongs to the second generation of the genre, and her work testifies to the fact that it has lost none of its momentum to the present day. She graduated from college seven years ago, and has been an exhibiting artist ever since. She has also done two displays at the Lausanne Biennial.

Droppa works with an ordinary flat knitting machine, the type used for knitting pullovers, and she constructs her works out of the knitted material. Earlier she opted for wool, but more recently she has become interested in the possibilities of polyester. She stretches the material over a metal frame, which lends an individual character to her work; for in fact only certain points of the material are stretched in this way, and thus the inner contours of the borderlines of the colour ranges create a hollow. The main effect is not derived from the basically hard form, but from the transparency of the knitted material, for the artist always presents these metal framed constructions against the light.

The pieces of the Droppa exhibition in the Blue Chapel at Boglárlelle (an abandoned private chapel which has been transformed into an exhibition hall) were highly effective in the lancet windows. Judit Droppa had the metal frames especially tailored to fit into the windows, and succeeded in proving that yarn is quite as suitable as lead-banded glass to make a quality vitrail. The display actually consists of a single work: a series consisting of six pieces. The first two are entitled *Order*, the second two *Mirror Image*, and the third pair is *Disintegration*. In other words, a *Propositio maior*, a *Propositio minor* and a *Conclusio*.

Besides the outline of the forms framing these metal-and-textile pictures, Droppa expresses herself through the beauty of their colours: colour harmonies and, indeed, deliberate colour contrasts. The material has broad colour, range including oranges (or rather terracottas) and reds, and bright shades of pink and black. Of course, the eye discovers still more, for just as the painter mixes the pure colours on his palette before applying subtle blends to the canvas, so Judit Droppa creates—and in a much more direct manner then the painter—new, mixed colours, shades and overlaps through the transparency of the several textile planes. In the last pair of *Disintegration* she has switched over to a different technique altogether. All she did was to thin out the fabric of the material by drawing out threads, leaving thick layers like stripes in the places where she omitted this thinning. It sounds complicated only when described in words. On the surface of the work it is scarcely perceptible, it remains hidden, reduced, and actually has the effect of suggesting an attitude of taciturnity. It might help to quote what the artist herself says about her working method: "I work hard, my works are born slowly, or rather they develop slowly in my head, in preliminary designs and sketches. When I get down to the machine, execution proceeds at a ripe old pace."

JÁNOS FRANK

JÓZSEF JAKOVITS'S "VITAL SCULPTURE"

His fellow sculptors and the generation that kept up with post-war Hungarian art and regularly visited the exhibitions held between 1945 and 1948 are the only one now familiar with the name of József Jakovits. That was the only time when the self-taught artist, born in 1909, showed his works, at some large collective exhibitions, and a show held together with his wife, Júlia Vajda. Both of them were members of the European School,* which represented Fauvism, Cubism, Expressionism, Abstraction, and Surrealism in Hungary. Yet, Jakovits's sculpture followed none of these trends. His work shows a close relationship with the kind of contemporary work which Herbert Read has termed "vital sculpture." His forms often reveal a profound and integral relationship with the work of Jean Arp. But this relationship, that consists of a similar sense of form, of deriving various forms organically from each other, and of a biological formal realm, is a kinship "of the blood" rather than a conscious attitude. Jakovits considers Max Ernst, Picasso, and Miró his intellectual kin, but his artistic approach is also close to Henry Moore; he, too, arrives at openwork plastic art through an inner logic, and also feels an attraction for the formal treasure of prehistoric cultures with their magic contents.

Nevertheless, Jakovits's sculpture also bears marked individual features. One group of his works—the one most closely linked to his pre-war realistic sculptures—consists of female figures—nudes and torsos—modelled in soft but at the same time large and powerful forms. They are reclining figures, with heads merely hinted at. All the expressive force comes from the posture and the form of the body. Outstanding among them is *Earth Mother*, with a body inclining backwards. This female figure, locked in heavy sleep, is the archetype of primary matter and fertility, that recalls mother earth rather than a nude in the modern sense of the term.

Cubist Nude is another kind of plastic subject. Here the monumental naturality of the female figure is indicated by sharp contours, enclosed within angular forms. Essentially it is the pre-phrasing of *Earth Mother*, but based on a different, less matriarchal outlook. A further development of this work is *Openwork Nude*, which peels off *Cubist Nude*, as it were, and at the same time also relieves it of its angular edges. Another of his openwork sculptures is *Hitler*, but here the penetrability, the negative form carry a different message. Space flows through the distorted, slit head, to bring forth a mis-shapen void, surrounded by staggering forms.

The Szentendre School heritage of Lajos Vajda** was of a decisive—primarily intellectual—influence on Jakovits's sculpture. (He even linked his life to that heritage: he married Júlia, the widow of Lajos Vajda.) The Szentendre tradition is mainly evident in his interest in folk art, and the manner he treats it. If the folklore research work of Vajda and Dezső Korniss*** of around 1936 could have been completed, if they had been able to carry on a systematic exploration and processing of the formal elements in folklore, the way it was started by Bartók and Kodály in music, this could have led to the unfolding of an interesting trend in Hungarian fine arts. As borne out by many works and contemporary documents, in 1946–47, several artists were ready to join in some such programme, but the post-war years lacked a personality who could have worked on the project with a consciousness and consistency like Vajda's, and there was not even time for its unfolding, as the period of dogmatism allowed no scope for modern

* See *NHQ* 55.

** See *NHQ* 33, 38, 73.

*** See *NHQ* 39, 79.

artists. During the short interval, Jakovits carved his surrealistic *Masks*, by making use of folk ornamentation and wood-carving methods, and he continued the trend in his later sculptures too, even though conditions forced him into isolation and deprived him of any possibility of publicity showing his work. His reliefs carved in the first half of the 1950s are massive cultic boards. His most noteworthy reliefs are *Miraculous Stag*, *Boy Changed into a Stag*, and *Winged Figure*. All three portray winged, antlered miraculous creatures, with dynamic forms of an explosive force. A common feature of his wooden reliefs of the first half of the 'fifties is that they end in projections reaching outward and upward, which leave the form open in every direction, and instead of a termination, create permanent tension.

Forms pointing upwards, with their animation on the top, also characterize Jakovits's statues of the second half of the fifties. By that time a more markedly playful feature appears in his works, which becomes typical of his "Baroque"-style sculptures of the late fifties. These works are a mildly manneristic, mildly exaggerating composition of the already mature forms, as for instance in *Nun*, and their specific character stems perhaps precisely from their over-ripeness.

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Jakovits's sculptures of the early sixties, looked at from today, hold out the possibility of his emerging from his isolation and, similarly to some members of his generation, joining into the sculptural events of the time. His *Thorny* of 1960, *Pigtailed* of 1963, and above all his grotesque-romantic assemblages, brought a fresh outlook, a renewed manner of expression, just like the plastic works of the generation of sculptors who emerged in the sixties. Yet, the possibility of an encounter was once again lost. In 1965, Jakovits packed his things, locked up the maquettes he did not expect to be cast or carved, and moved to America, where he still lives.

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Earlier I mentioned the links between Jakovits's work and that of Arp, Picasso, Miró, and Moore, so let me now point to features in which he differs from these artists.

Jakovits's keen interest in the art of prehistoric people is close to Henry Moore's, but he incorporates the experience he gained in this way in quite a different manner. While Moore incorporates the forms of bygone cultures, Jakovits's mythical motifs serve to express a sovereign, personal message, expressedly bent to his own formal idiom. He seeks for hidden psychical resources in magic, of whose revival he hopes to arrive at a new, communal art of symbolic force.

His erotic biological forms also differ from the biological forms of Arp and Picasso. The eroticism of Jakovits's work, unusually intensive by Hungarian standards, expresses not only his elemental desire for candour and straightforwardness, and a rejection of the whole system of hints and metastatic references deposited on the subject of sexuality —all that which in his statues appears as eroticism, at the same time delves into deeper layers: the prying into the secrets of procreation, of the origin of life.

Jakovits's art, which has been presented in this short article merely in sketchy outlines, throws light on the breaks and gaps evident in the history of the last 35 years of Hungarian art. The medium of which his art froms an integral part would have conglomerated out of the totality of the abortive trends that emerged in the third quarter of the 1940s. If those trends had been allowed to unfold, or at least could have died a natural death, we could now see more clearly the place and significance of the artists within the whole—and thus, naturally, that whole itself as well.

ÉVA FORGÁCS

MUSICAL LIFE

ANDRÁS PERNYE
(1928–1980)

András Pernye, the musicologist and music critic, a man of many gifts, held in high esteem by his peers and the public, took his own life on April 4th this year. His death is a great loss, not only because he will be much missed by those who regularly looked forward to his public appearances, especially on television, but also because he used and published only a fragment of his rich store of musical knowledge, leaving behind a lifework irreparably incomplete.

A serious case of polio he contracted in his childhood left him semi-paralysed confining him to a wheel-chair. The simplest movement and especially going from one place to another implied tremendous effort, yet, he was there at every major concert, made frequent appearances on radio and television and taught at the Academy of Music. Music for him was more than an object of passionate love: it substituted for life, as long as that was possible. In a state of declining health he sought refuge in death at the age of 52.

András Pernye was born in Újpest, an industrial district of Budapest, in 1928. He completed the clarinet and composition course of the Budapest Academy of Music in 1950. He was 24 when he started to study musicology at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music, a subject then taught only for the second year. His teachers included Bence Szabolcsi, Dénes Bartha and Lajos Bárdos. He began working as a music critic in 1959 with the daily *Magyar Nemzet*. Although he always regarded critical journalism as a sideline only of his musicological activities and after fifteen years he left the daily at short notice, one should still emphasize the importance of his work as a music critic. After the death or retirement of an earlier generation of outstanding critics, Hungarian music criticism suffered a strong decline in standards from the early fourties. The decline was not only the consequence of the absence of critical competence but was also closely related to the political and ideological turmoil of the war and post-war years and further suffered from the general dogmatic line of official thinking in the fifties. The exposure of all criticism to one-sided influences, its lack of independence and ensuing lifelessness practically became a reflex that made its paralysing impact felt long after the pressure of direct influence ceased to exist. Pernye's appearance on the scene represented a breakthrough: he started a new current in the world of criticism as a whole in Hungary. To do so, more was needed than just an abandonment of the misguided reflexes. It required Pernye's highly refined sense of criticism based on a rich store of knowledge as well as an ability to communicate through a language that would be understood and appreciated by the experts and general public alike. A combination of these three factors explains why Pernye's reviews were the

most widely read feature of the daily, establishing Pernye's unique popularity that accompanied him to the end.

Starting with the 1965/66 academic year, he taught regularly at the Academy of Music, first Hungarian music history, then music theory and general music history. By holding special classes, he also contributed to the training of musicologists. Although he withdrew from journalism in 1974, he maintained his contact with the public through the various programmes of Hungarian Radio and Television. In the period between 1962 and 1969 he produced a radio series on the history of jazz, later he was on the air regularly as a reviewer of records. He was a member of the jury at a great variety of music events and competitions.

Over and above his work as a journalist, Pernye's activities fell into two categories. One consists of his essays, writings addressed to a wider public, while the other contains his scholarly contributions to musicology and music history. Of course the two categories keep on overlapping. His occasional writings, prompted by a concert, record, conductors' competition, or operatic first performance always went beyond the narrow confines of daily journalism to express something more general. And so there was good reason for his volumes of collected articles to contain writings that are in fact linked to an occasion (e.g. "Warsaw Autumn—1964" in his *Seven Studies in Music*, 1973.)

On the other hand, the essayist is also present without exception in his scholarly writings, whether they are relatively shorter studies or more extensive works, consequently these writings also appeal to a public much wider than the musical profession. It was only in his last years that the firm outlines of a kind of descriptive-comparative, positivist scholarly attitude began to emerge, manifesting itself most clearly in his studies on Diruta and Croner (see bibliography) and his series of music publications starting with 1977 *(Musica per la tastiera)*. From that period, the mid-seventies, there was a significant drop in the number of his essay-type writings. At the same time, in the last weeks of his life, the thought of compiling a volume of memoirs, but nothing came of that.

There is a basic idea running through Pernye's entire scholarly interest and oeuvre, an idea described in detail in his book, *Előadóművészet és zenei köznyelv* (Performing Art and Musical Idiom) and emerging in some form in nearly all his writings. According to this, music—by its origin and nature —was a living, dynamic means of artistic communication, continuously changing and transforming in its process of birth. Therefore, unlike a work in the visual arts, a piece of music has no single final and fixed form of appearance, a musical composition is renewed and assumes an individual, irreproducible, concrete form with each new performance. In the earlier periods of music history, and in folk music, performing and composing were joined in a close and inseparable unity, the composer was always a performer as well and the performer could approach, and actually approached, any work in a creative spirit. It was the community itself or, rather, its shared musical idiom which controlled the practice of music and gave it life. Later, with growing differentiation in musical practice, as the communal approach gave way to a more individualistic treatment, the unity of creation and performance gradually disintegrated.

With the development of notation, as it became accurate, "fixing" expanded to cover the details of the work. The active role of performers was gradually relegated. Since they were unfixable and changeable, the creative elements of performing art were slowly forgotten, and this led to the emergence, around 1850, of performing as a sovereign art, and the period of performing art, as Pernye calls it, in which we still live, began. The view that European musical compositions have a single, inviolable and unchangeable form, was born.

This basic thought or guiding idea defines and unifies Pernye's manysided oeuvre as a whole. This is the source of his interest in, and high standards set for, the performing art of our age which also determined his work as a music critic. As a critic, he appears to be performer-oriented—he was less preoccupied with new compositions. This is the source of his interest in jazz, the only phenomenon in the music of our century and age in which creative, actively contributing performing art was fully alive yet and that, thanks to the advances made by sound recording, can be heard decades later. Pernye summed up the conclusions drawn from jazz in a major monograph *(Jazz)*.

All things considered, the same guiding principle led him to choose his specific field of scholarly research. This was the development of German keyboard music from the beginnings (the 1500s) to Bach. Owing to the very nature of research this specific field was expanded to cover the beginnings of keyboard music in general (including 16th–17th century non-German keyboard music) and the history of the development of German music as a whole (including vocal music and instrumental other than keyboard music) in the period before Bach. In his choice of this subject, Pernye was led by the realization that the instrumental (first of all keyboard) music of the late Renaissance and early Baroque period represented a transition between a more ancient musical culture relying on an active performing practice and subsequent music-making that grew increasingly rigid and passive. The early tabulatures or keyboard tutors offer concrete instructions on how a composition could and should be ornamented, filled with life and renewed in a creative performance. Sometimes innumerable, different, consciously transformed variants of the same work have come down to us and these offer us an insight into the flourishing performing practice of the age. The central objective of Pernye's life-work was to chart this material. To realize the aim, he first had to establish the conditions of research work. Only to a small extent could he rely on the materials of the existing music collections in Hungary. So he spared no expense to build up, over the years, a private library truly unique of its kind in which practically every source related to his subject (original editions, contemporary manuscripts, facsimile editions, modern scholarly editions) were available in photocopy or edition form. The library itself is an important part of Pernye's oeuvre. Using the most modern methods of musicological research, it endeavours to survey the whole of current literature, trying to keep up with the bibliography of music publication of a source value that, growing in number every year, has assumed such proportions that it is almost impossible to survey and relies on individual research into authentic original sources. Actually, with his work, Pernye established a new method and, let me add, in the absence of the required technical conditions hardly realizable in the practice of Hungarian musicology, that may well represent a guideline.

The first tangible result of his scholarly research was *The History of German Music to 1750*, a book published in 1964. In the period between 1964 and 1967, the various phases and increasingly clarified details of this enormous work of collection and research were reflected only in details of other writings, for instance, in the study, The Theory of Musical Repetition *(Seven Studies in Music)*, or in the various chapters of his book Performing Art and the Musical Idiom. He began publishing a series of publications on 16th and 17th century keyboard music under the title, *Musica Per La Tastiera* in 1977, two volumes have been published so far *(Italian Keyboard Music* and *German Keyboard Music)*, the third, presenting the musical material of the significant organ tutor of the early Baroque —late Renaissance period (Diruta: Il Transilvano) was completed shortly before his death and further half finished volumes are

awaiting publication. He published the results and lessons of his work as an editor in studies which appeared in the periodicals *Studia Musicologica* and *Magyar Zene* between 1977 and 1980. Simultaneously, he was working on a large-scale monograph summarizing the history of organ music before Bach. The manuscript has remained incomplete in some of its details, but even so is expected to be a work of basic importance for all those interested in organ music and the history of music in general.

ISTVÁN HOMOLYA

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Jazz (Budapest: Gondolat, 1964; 2nd edition: 1966)

Alban Berg (Budapest: Gondolat, 1967)

Seven Studies in Music (Budapest: Magvető, 1973)

1. The Theory of Repetition in Music
2. The Popular Bach
3. Flower and Decadence of the *Bel Canto* Period (see Magyar Zene 1963)
4. Dramatic Time
5. Alban Berg and Numbers (see *Magyar Zene* Hungarian Music 1967, *Studia Musicologica* 1967)
6. Warsaw Autumn—1964 (see Magyar Zene 1964)
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B) STUDIES, ARTICLES, ESSAYS

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Daniel Croner ... Tabulature ... 1681 ... Wratislawia (with Dániel Benkő)—1977/p. 297

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On Mozart's composition primer—1969/3–4.

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Asafiev and the intonation theory (Introduction to the book, The Masters of Russian Music, by Asafiev, Budapest: Editio Musica, 1962)

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The problem of music without words—Jelenkor, 1963/10.

On what they call conservatism—Valóság, 1964/2.

Twenty years of new Hungarian music—Kortárs, 1965/5.

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C) MUSIC PUBLICATIONS

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Vol. 1: Italian Keyboard Music—Budapest 1977

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WAISSEL, MATTHÄUS: TABULATURA (for solo lute)—1573—Edited by Dániel Benkő; "Orpheus"—Early Music for Plucked Instruments, Vols. I—II. Editio Musica Budapest, 1980.

I = XXVI, 101 pp.; II = XXVII, 99 pp.)

The first two volumes of "Orpheus," a new series put out by Editio Musica, contain the material of the 1573 tabulature of Matthäus Waissel (Waisselius) (*c.* 1540–1602), a German master of the lute. This is the first modern edition of material that is likely to stir up considerable international interest. The publisher has divided the 52 pieces of the incunabulum into two volumes, primarily out of practical considerations, but the arrangement is also justified by the nature of the works themselves. The two "Praeambuli" and the two "Phantasiae" which open the volume are followed by 22 intavolations (i.e. adaptations of choral works to the lute), taking us to No. 26. Numbers 27 to 52 are then dance pieces. The format is designed to meet both practical and scientific demands, for in addition to the German lute tabulature in its original form, underneath we find the same score transposed to the guitar using the musical notation standard today. The twentieth-century performer is also given some practical advice in the Foreword, which is printed in English and German as well as Hungarian. The Foreword assesses the art of the compiler of this volume, it sums up the range of his work and his sources, and it also reproduces in translation his original dedication. Furthermore there are notes which provide valuable and detailed information concerning the primary sources of the choral pieces (i.e., vocal models) and dances here rearranged for the lute.

It should be appreciated that sixteenth-century tabulature of this nature are usually put together by artists who gather their material from wherever they can find it: the sources usually include earlier incunabula, manuscripts, and jottings made at performances given by colleagues. The concept of plagiarism was unknown in this age. Enjoyable music was public property, and one fine melody or appealing string of chords would lead to a multiplication of arrangements, or repeated publications of the very same arrangement. In other words, most tabulatures for the lute are compilations pure and simple. Recognition of this fact should not induce us to abandon the idea of reissuing all the publications and manuscripts that have come down to us, because even the copy of a compiler invariably diverged to some greater or lesser extent from the original works copied. Differences in the formal versions of the same piece are of great importance for modern research, because it is such nuances which can throw light on performing style in the age of the Renaissance. One master performs a particular section in one way—another will play the same piece rather differently, and both renditions are equally admissible. The nuances enable us to pinpoint the renaissance spirit in the performing arts, they capture improvization and reveal its special characteristics. It has long been realized that the period in question knew no final compositions: a piece was never finished in such a way as to preclude some further mutation; but we can define how such transformations may take place only if we have a thorough knowledge of all the surviving forms of the work in question.

The possibility that master Waissel was actually the composer of some of the pieces in the volume cannot be dismissed entirely.

This is the last contribution by the late András Pernye, member of the NHQ's Editorial Board and our regular music critic. *The Ed.*

Whether he was or was not, he certainly drew on the best sources. The vocal models of the above-mentioned 22 intavolations were drawn from the most popular and leading composers of the age. Some, including for instance Ludwig Senfl or Clemens non Papa, had died long before 1573. One of the highlights of the collection is the lute arrangement (probably by Waissel himself) of the five-part chanson, "Susanne ung jour," undoubtedly the most popular secular work of the compiler's great contemporary, Orlando di Lasso (*c.* 1532–1594); it is a choral piece elaborated with rich, virtuoso figurations. But the intavolation of the same composer's motette "Veni in hortum meum soror mea," is attributed in the compilation to "Valentini Backvart," referring, of course, to Valentin(us) Bakfark (1507–1576), the Hungarian lutenist. (It may be noted that Waissel's volume is the only source of access we have to this Bakfark composition.)

As mentioned before, the first part (volume I of the modern edition) of this compilation is made up of two Phantasias, two Praeambulums, and twenty-two choral compositions transcribed for the lute. The listener will find this part the more difficult to digest, for it is necessary to know the choral work itself in order fully to understand and comprehend the lute intavolation. Volume II comprises material founded on basic patterns of variation that were well known in the sixteenth century but are not alien to modern ears either. The most popular of these are "Passamezzo antico" of a minor character and "Passamezzo moderno" in what is a major tonality today (the latter built on degrees I–IV–I–V of the major key). Master Waissel constructs suite-like forms in a late renaissance spirit on chord lines already half a century old, expanding the variation into three or even four movements (giving them markings such as "La sua Padoana," El suo Saltarello," or "Le Represe.") The first eight pieces of the second volume make up for two-thirds of its contents, and all are masterpieces of variational ingenuity.

The galliarda, "La Gamba,"or "Chi passa" and "Bel fiore" (also galliardas) have been much less popular than the two "Passamezzo" forms in later ages, but the masters of renaissance instrumental music certainly had a special hankering towards them and were forever expanding their variations. These and a few more dances which space does not permit me to list are the last pieces in the 1573 tabulature of Matthäus Waissel. Its publication now makes a significant contribution towards filling in the remaining gaps in our knowledge of renaissance music.

SCARLATTI, DOMENICO: 200 SONATEN (Urtext) Herausgegeben von György Balla EMB Urtext Serie. Band I–IV. Editio Musica Budapest, 1977–79. (I = 183 pp.; II = 165 pp.; III = 165 pp.; IV = 186 pp.)

"The number of Scarlatti sonatas heard on the concert platform and learned by piano students is relatively small. We can understand this if we consider that the publications including a greater amount of material have not been accessible to larger sections of the public..." (From the Foreword to the publication.)

Readers were informed of the publication of the first volume some two years ago. Now that the planned series is completed, some data may illustrate its significance.

Carl Czerny was the first to publish a large selection of Scarlatti's sonatas—this was in 1839, and he issued two hundred to be exact. His initiative certainly demands respect, even if the publication appears as rather arbitrary in some respects and even though it has scant respect for the authenticity of the original score. Scarlatti's complete sonatas were issued for the first time by Alessandro Longo from 1907 to 1937. It is quite surprising that a man who made a significant contribution to music history in the twentieth century should also have ignored the original, especially since Urtext publications were common enough by the

time of his publication. His phrasing marks are especially disturbing for musicians today, while his suggestions as to dynamics are also highly dubious. (I am personally inclined to reject any dynamic suggestion—whatever its quality—in the case of Scarlatti.) To cut a long story short, Longo's complete edition is of little use either to theoreticians or to practising musicians; it also happens to be terribly expensive and very difficult to obtain.

The Peters edition of 150 sonatas compiled by Keller and Weismann, published in three volumes, brought a decisive improvement. It is altogether beyond reproach, both as to taste and accuracy; its scores are easy to read and it is of relatively easy access. The expression marks suggested by the publishers are printed in such a way that it can be seen at a glance that they are not the work of the composer. I do not wish to retract my own views concerning the relevance of dynamic suggestions, but for these reasons I have no complaints with the Keller–Weismann compilation.

György Balla was ultimately justified in my opinion in relying solely on the primary sources, for every additional suggestion is bound to have some influence on the musician's way of thinking and his eventual interpretation. Each and every expression mark confronts the muscian with a dilemma: whether or not to accept it. This is an unnecessary alternative, because it does not incite the performer to make independent efforts to solve problems of interpretation. In other words: instead of studying the score carefully for himself, the performer will concentrate on criticizing the suggestions put forward by the publisher.

The model for the Hungarian edition was Ralph Kirkpatrick's publication "Domenico Scarlatti, Sixty Sonatas in Two Volumes..." (New York, 1953). Kirkpatrick, the great American harpsichordist and Scarlatti researcher, was actually the first to publish Scarlatti pieces in their authentic form. Also to his credit is the only standard biography and catalogue (*Domenico Scarlatti*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1953; later expanded and revised for the German edition "Domenico Scarlatti," Verlag Heinrich Ellermann, Munich, 1972 ; the catalogue is to be found at the end of the second volume in both editions). As far as possible the catalogue is chronological, but the difficulties in this field appear to be unsurmountable, the main reason being that almost all of Scarlatti's works have come down to us in copies and only fragments were published during the composer's lifetime.

Kirkpatrick's path-breaking studies are of special importance from the point of view of the Hungarian edition, because György Balla has arranged these two hundred piano works according to the ordinal numbers of the Kirkpatrick catalogue. This does not only enable us to trace Scarlatti's development as a composer, it also assists us in grouping the pieces forming a single cycle side by side. (Two such cycles of three movements each are included in volumes III and IV of this edition.)

Of course, the arrangements are to no small extent hypotheses based on Kirkpatrick's research into the original sources. For instance, the problem of related sonata pairs and three-part cycles is not fully resolved to this day, we can only say that the hypothesis is highly probable. "Although some places in the sources show definite instructions for these sonatas to be played after each other, this should nevertheless not be regarded as compulsory. The performer has the right to decide whether he plays these works as pairs of sonatas or not, since each one is also an independent, complete unit in itself," writes György Balla in his Foreword.

As for the criteria underlying this selection, I believe the publisher has done well to avoid dangerous extremes. Going to one extreme, he might have restricted publication to pieces already accessible in the authentic editions; going to the other, he might have concentrated on nothing but

sonatas previously unpublished in authentic form. The latter procedure is superficially attractive, but it would have resulted in a kind of regrettable counter-selection. Keller–Weismann and Kirkpatrick had such excellent taste that they selected many of the best Scarlatti sonatas, one might even say that they made off with the cream; omitting these altogether would have made the Hungarian edition second-rate. (Needless to say, not every Scarlatti piece is a masterpiece of the highest quality.) The first volume of Balla's edition contains 16 pieces not included in the American editions, and the remaining three volumes a further 70–80 pieces in all.

Although a complete edition of Scarlatti's works to serve practical purposes and to satisfy scholars remains a problem for the future, I cannot imagine even a resolution of this mammoth task basically transforming the image we have of Scarlatti. We shall continue to see him as a genuine romantic personality bringing a special colour and flavour to the Age of Baroque. His art is characterized neither by the "introvert publicness" (community character in the ecclesiastical sense) of Bach, his musical contemporary, nor by Händel's extrovert music, catering for large urban audiences. Improvisation is what dominates in the music of Scarlatti, even though he improvises according to strict rules. One often has the impression that he just allowed his fingers do what they wanted, but one feels too the abiding presence of the mind, arranging everything and issuing its own decrees to dictate the movements over the keyboard. In the process one is privileged to witness some striking subjective confessions. A form of motion or rhythmic pattern that seems marginal at first drives itself forward and ends by taking the player or listener to fresh ground; there are moments when one casts about for one's bearings, almost in panic, because the roads are so unfamiliar. Such pieces (e.g. Kirkpatrick 202, central part of a Sicilian rhythm) convey to us the sounds of some sort of heart-gripping, melancholic reflection, with sighing chromatics, weary complaining, and beseechment, while a supple dancing rhythm wraps the message of the whole work in a strange (almost bashful) tulle curtain. Without wishing to read too much into these Scarlatti sonatas it can be pointed out that similar methods were used, to a greater extent and still more concretely, by Bach, Händel, and even by Purcell in the tragic parts of certain vocal compositions.

True, the *geste*, i.e. the musical process itself, always appears in a blunter form with Scarlatti, one that is confined to the limits of court etiquette. With Scarlatti, the aspect of tragedy, as we find it in the great composers cited above, assumes the form of sentimentality. At the same time, or perhaps for this very reason, what is generally and therefore objectively emotional with the others is maximally subjective with Scarlatti. His style and the impact of his music are profoundly individual, *mutatis mutandis* in the manner of that of Chopin, impossible to mistake for the music of any of his contemporaries.

There is neither space nor is there a need here to attempt to assess Scarlatti's real and full significance. Instead, I would only recommend the reader with some knowledge of the piano to try and play as many of the pieces of this publication as possible, or to buy these works on records and to follow the music with score in hand. One is liable to find many of these sonatas very similar at first hearing, but one should not resign oneself to such first impressions. Listen to the pieces over and over again, and then suddenly, unexpectedly, Scarlatti's subjectivity, his tenderly nostalgic world, and all the different layers, atmospheres, and meanings of his sparkling virtuosity will open up to you. Only on the surface do these pieces resemble each other, the essence of their depths is unique and it has as many different forms as there are sonatas which have come down to us.

ANDRÁS PERNYE

PÁL KADOSA — COMPOSER, PIANIST, TEACHER

1.

Surprising though it may sound, the type of composer who shuts himself away in the ivory tower of his workshop and devotes himself entirely to the serious business of filling staves with notes is virtually unknown in the history of Hungarian music. This probably follows from the unfortunate situation that for a long time Hungary lagged some distance behind the musically more advanced countries. The sensible division of labour that emerged quite early on in more highly developed musical cultures made insufficient headway in Hungary. The creative artist had no choice in the matter, he was compelled to combine the role of performer, teacher and organizer. Reaching back in recent Hungarian history, the point might be illustrated by the wide range of activities undertaken by our most prestigious composers Ferenc Liszt, Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. Against this background, it will become easier to understand why Pál Kadosa has had to shoulder four different tasks, each one of which would be a formidable undertaking for an individual.

To illustrate the magnitude of his oeuvre as a composer, I need only mention his nine symphonies, four piano concertos and several hundred piano pieces. But Kadosa has also been a teacher for fifty-three years, perhaps the only great teacher of our century to teach both the piano *and* composition (he still carries on with the former). He is also an exceptional pianist who could have made a brilliant international career, for himself, had he not taken on what so few had been prepared to take on in the '20s and '30s, the mission of popularizing contemporary music. He devoted himself to interpreting works by masters of other countries as well as by Hungary's own younger composers. At the same time, Kadosa has also assumed the role of an impresario, who could attract an audience to experimental works in the general climate of conservative hostility to such music and who is now, at the age of seventy-seven, a living legend of the new chapter that opened in Hungary's musical life after 1945.

This all sounds as ceremonially official as a formal birthday toast. But when one considers that Pál Kadosa is the only Hungarian musician actually living in Hungary who has been elected an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music in London and also the only musician to be so honoured by the Academy of Arts of the German Democratic Republic, one begins to realise the justification for this elevated tone. Let me offer some factual information to support it.

2.

Born in the northern Hungarian town of Léva (now in Czechoslovakia), in 1903, Kadosa arrived in Budapest in 1918 as a young boy of fifteen. He had some knowledge of the piano and was open and receptive to all forms of art. His first musical experiences in the capital involved Bartók and Kodály. Having listened to him play the piano and perused his first experiments in composition, Bartók sent him to Kodály for further studies in composition. This was in 1921, the year when Kodály was dismissed from the Academy of Music, because of the leading role he had played in musical affairs during the Hungarian Republic of Councils. Hence, contrary to what all the musical encyclopedias say, Kadosa studied composition not at Kodály's Academy class (which was to be re-

sumed later) but at private lessons which he attended regularly until 1927. He also continued his piano studies at the Academy under Arnold Székely, who had been a concert pianist of note in his youth. Arnold Székely had been a pupil of István Thomán, who was in turn a disciple of Ferenc Liszt (who had been taught by Carl Czerny, a pupil of Beethoven). Kadosa could be given no finer pedigree than this. He continued his piano studies until 1927, but at the same time he was also an art student and in fact faced quite a dilemma when he had to choose between following up the career of a musician or a painter.

This is how Pál Kadosa himself recalls his studies in composition: "We had to do loads of exercises in harmony and counterpoint for Kodály and we always discussed them down to the minutest details. Analytical sessions, where we would sit down and analyse great masterpieces together, were the basis of his method of teaching. He did not teach us instrumentation, but expected us to read countless scores, primarily of works that we already knew by ear. We never discussed folk music, Kodály never thrust folk music at us in any way. New works were never analysed. Kodály never even mentioned the works of his hero, Debussy. Not even in passing references did he use his own works as teaching examples and he never forced his pupils to accept the individual style he worked out in his own compositions."

Pál Kadosa was still in what might be described as the preparatory stage of his musical studies, when he made his debut as a composer on May 12th, 1923. On this occasion his *Piano Suite No. 1.* (op. 1/a) and three of his songs were performed in the main concert hall of the Academy of Music. A string of aphoristic movements, this Piano Suite also appeared in print in 1923, the expenses involved being covered by a patron. Help also came from other quarters, as young musicians offered each other their mutual support. Two Kadosa works were performed in Berlin in 1925 by the violinist and composer Ödön Pártos (director of the Tel Aviv Academy of Music for several decades, until his recent death) and the pianist and composer Paul Arma (living in Paris over the past forty years).

Like Pál Kadosa, both artists belonged to the left wing avant-garde of Budapest in the '20s (actually, there was no other avant-garde but this one implacably opposed to the Hungarian regime of the age). An identity of goals and ideals linked Kadosa to Lajos Kassák, the constructivist working-class poet and painter whose poetry recitals often featured Kadosa compositions, and also to the poet, Attila József, whose poems he was among the first to set to music. With their linear melody lines of clashing, hard discords and concise forms, Kadosa's early compositions from the '20s show an obvious affinity with the tone and style of Kassák's poetry.

Young musicians recognize no national boundaries in their effort to help one another along the thorny path which leads to artistic recognition. In 1926 the American Henry Cowell presented his own works in Budapest, but his revolutionary innovations failed to draw much favourable response there. But during his visit he met Pál Kadosa, and, having founded the local branch of the League of Composers in Los Angeles in 1927, he invited Bartók, Kodály and the then 24 year-old Kadosa to join the League's international council.

3.

Pál Kadosa received his teaching diploma as a pianist in 1927. He was invited to teach at the best private music school of the age, the Fodor School of Music. In the teaching of contemporary works, this institution had a much more progressive musical and artistic spirit than the Academy of Music. In the '30s, its concert hall became the home of the Hungarian section of the

International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM). The school specialized in teaching the piano at all levels, and in some years there were approaching 500 pupils in all. For the young teachers, this entailed workload that would be unthinkable today. In some years, Kadosa had forty or fifty classes a week, sometimes even more, quite apart from the pupils he taught privately in composition. He taught at the Fodor School of Music up to the end of 1942 when he was finally barred from teaching in the aftermath of the anti-semitic legislation. Most of his talented piano pupils lost their lives during the war. This explains why his first fifteen years of teaching, produced no instrumentalist of major significance but his pupils of this period in composition include György Lehel, chief conductor of the Symphony Orchestra of Hungarian Radio and Television, the composer András Mihály, director of the Hungarian State Opera House and the composer Tibor Sárai, Secretary General of UNESCO's International Music Council.

The teaching post came as a piece of good fortune for the young composer, however it also imposed a heavy burden. He had not long started in the job when, pooling efforts with four other composers, he founded the group of *Modern Hungarian Musicians* in 1928 as forum for young artists who otherwise had no prospect of access to the concert hall. The venture died after only four chamber concerts, all of them first performances, because of inadequate public interest: but it still revealed the potential strength inherent in such collaboration. Ottó Gombosi, then a young man and avant-garde musician (he was Professor of Music History at Harvard University when he died in 1955) attributed great significance to this group. He wrote about them as follows: "We believe that the free association of 'Modern Hungarian Musicians' carries the germ of a better future. Their lively activity, noble intentions and wide horizon undisturbed by artificial walls seem to offer the promise of fruitful efforts to come, which with the help of honest cooperation and respect for genuine talent might establish an atmosphere in which modern Hungarian music can survive, develop and become of vital concern to the general public as well." (Crescendo. Vol. II., Nos 6–7., January–February 1928, p. 26.). Events were to take a different turn, for the revenue obtained failed even to cover expenses, despite the artists' offer to perform for no fee and to help the composers in organizating the concerts. As Zoltán Kodály said, recalling the '20s, efforts to set up a Hungarian section of the ISCM were doomed to fail, because in the whole of Budapest you could not find hundred people who were truly interested in contemporary music.

Pál Kadosa contributed to the concerts of this group in three capacities: as composer, pianist and chief organizer. This marked the beginning of a long period in which practically no musical event of any description took place in Hungary without Kadosa contributing to it in one way or another. For instance, a typical Kadosa recital of December 18th, 1929 featured him performing works by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Hindemith, Louis Gruenberg, Prokofiev, Casella, Fidelio Finke and five Hungarian composers. He was by then regarded as one of the leading Hungarian students of contemporary music. Tibor Sárai had good reason to observe that "He could point to the most different solutions of a compositional problem, drawing not only on the classics, but also on relevant examples from the works of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Hindemith, Weill, Gruenberg or Milhaud. Incidentally, I haven't met anyone else ever since with such an up-to-date, almost note by note knowledge of contemporary music."

This activity, and especially his own feats as a composer, earned Kadosa the leading post of Secretary General in the Hungarian section of the ISCM when it was finally set up in 1932. When this international society to popularise new music was

established in Salzburg in 1922, under the initiative and leadership of Edward J. Dent, a Professor of Music History at Cambridge, the founding members included Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály. In fact, the two continued to represented the Hungarian section until 1932, when (following in the footsteps of short-lived efforts of the 1910s) the Hungarian Section began to function independently as the New Hungarian Music Association. The Association staged some three or four concerts each year; during its lifetime it put on 41 works of 31 foreign composers, and 33 by 18 young composers of Hungarian birth. There were also national evenings; on April 2nd 1932, for example, in the first year of the Association, there was an evening of modern American music (Cowell, Varese, Ives and others); this concert under the baton of Nicolas Slonimsky, was organized in cooperation with the Pan-American Association of Composers.

The Hungarian ISCM section tried to gain access to various concert halls, but a suitable solution failed to materialize until 1933 when a permanent home was found in the large concert hall of the Fodor School of Music. Naturally, it was all arranged by Pál Kadosa. In fact, the concerts held there fitted in nicely with the annual music-history seminar and the concert programme of the School, where Pál Kadosa gave regular illustrated lectures on contemporary music. He illustrated his points himself by performing at the piano a total number of 20 works by 18 different non-Hungarian composers. In 1940, ISCM was scheduled to stage an international festival of modern music in Budapest. Had it taken place, the event would have marked a peak in Kadosa's artistic and organizational activities, but unfortunately, history interfered. In 1939, the laws which deprived hundreds of thousands of their human rights ousted him from the Hungarian section of ISCM, and the outbreak of the Second World War removed any possibility of staging the festival. In the spring of 1941, to symbolize their survival, the countries which Hitler's fascists had not yet taken over organized an incomplete but none the less significant festival of contemporary music in New York. As part of festival, the world première of a Hungarian work was heard on May 19th in the concert hall of Columbia University: it was Pál Kadosa's *String Quartet* No. 2. How the score got to America the composer himself can no longer recall.

Pál Kadosa, the performer, the teacher and the organizer was always striving to ensure that the voice of his fellow musicians be heard. Through his compositions of performance, his own voice was heard at every new and progressive intellectual forums, as well as in the anti-fascist movement—that is, until he found his own hands tightly bound by fascism.

Kadosa was, at that time known both inside and outside Hungary as a representative of the new Hungarian school, the popularization of his works was greatly promoted by Schott of Mainz, one of the most significant publishers of modern music, who printed and distributed sixteen Kadosa works in the period between 1930 and '32. Up to the end of the '30s, the known number of performances outside Hungary runs well into three figures, but the actual number must be higher still. His works enjoyed repeated success at international ISCM festivals, at the various concerts organized by its national sections, at the Festival of Modern Music in Venice, and at many other venues. Naturally in the darkest years of fascism no Kadosa work was handled by any German publishing house; in fact he had practically no fresh compositions published until 1945, but even this could not impose any sharp division upon the continuity of his composing.

His compositions in the '30s are characterised by a new technique, a change of style and tone. Forms are expanded and become more spacious. Kadosa asserts with typical understatement that the aphoristic conciseness of his early compositions it to be

explained by the absence of the requisite compositional technique, the technique required for the elaboration of larger forms that he was to develop later. But one doubts whether this can be true. After all, the works he wrote in the '20s are so refined and complete in their own right! It is rather typical of the age that in his second creative period, he was attracted to Neoclassicism. He retains his wry style, his abhorrence of pathos and fake lyricism as well as his attraction towards harsh, clear tones and strong, rhythmic effects, in the works which typify his output of the '30s; they included his *Piano Concertos No 1. and 2.* (the latter known by the name of *Concertino*), the two orchestral *Divertimentos* and the *Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra.* The only field where change is strikingly apparent is that of melody, which becomes more flexible, one might even say more expressive. It is quite remarkable that the sounds of happiness and optimism concerning the future are expressed in the *Piano Concertino* composed in 1938, when the darkening clouds of fascism already dominated the horizon.

Pál Kadosa gave the idea of emigration serious thought. He turned to Bartók for a letter of recommendation and these are the lines he received back in May 1939:

"Pál Kadosa is one of the most outstanding young composers; his proficiency is very remarkable: this is evidenced by his works and by his performances at several festivals of the International Society of New Music.—In addition he is an excellent pianist and teacher.

His presence will therefore be a great gain to any country where he settles."

Zoltán Kodály urged him not to leave his country, so Kadosa stayed, although treated more and more harshly by his countrymen. He was not allowed to teach and was condemned to four years of almost complete silence, both as composer, and as performer. The only forum he found consisted of a group of jewish artists that gave a rostrum to so many outstanding personalities of the theatre and of music. It was here that Pál Kadosa presented his *Piano Concertino*, here that excerpts from the cantata, *De amore fatali* were first heard. This cantata was based on poems by Attila József, and written for a musical literary programme to mark the second anniversary of the poet's death in 1939. It was amongst the same group that Kadosa gave a performance of Beethoven's *Piano Concerto in G major* on February 11th, 1943: an event recalled by all those present as a staggering experience, filling the audience with hope in those troubled times.

Meanwhile he continued teaching his pupils on a private basis as long as he was able. Like so many others he was called up to do forced labour for most of the war years, but even then he did not give up writing music. "I remember, conditions were rather difficult when I wrote my *Partita*" he said. "Some of its movements took their final shape in my head while I was an inmate on the march. Of course I had to wait until the evening or perhaps the following day or the day after that, before I could put it all down on paper; but particular parts of the various movements suggested themselves while on the march."

4.

For Pál Kadosa, the Liberation arrived in February 1945. Shots were still being fired in Buda when he was traced and was asked to prepare the activities of the newly organized Council of Artists. He was soon appointed vice-president of this consultative cultural body (its president was Zoltán Kodály), and played a major part in promoting the rebirth of Hungarian music life. It was now that all the experiences he had gained as an artist and as an organizer brought their fruit. It is bewildering how he was able to shoulder so many tasks and responsibilities. His own comment is as follows: "I have

been playing an active role in public life, simply because I still believe what I felt at the time, that I was lucky to have survived and to have come through all those hardships more or less unscathed. So it is my duty to show my gratitude for this gift of survival, and this I do by assuming a more active public role."

Since the autumn of 1945, he has been a Professor of Piano at the Academy of Music. The job was his by right, the actual appointment was no more than legitimate compensation. A few years later he took over the leadership of the piano department and was elected a member of nearly all the leading organs of the Hungarian musical scene. He is also affectionately regarded by hundreds as the grand old man, always ready with invaluable advice.

In the period between 1945 and 1965, Kadosa gradually withdrew from the concerthalls. He played chiefly Bartók and his own compositions, and he also produced a few records and radio recordings. Up to the '70s, his most important fields of activity were composition and teaching, but most recently, with his health deteriorating, he has abandoned composing and all his creative energy is now taken up by teaching.

Kadosa's œuvre as a composer therefore spans a quarter of a century, and it features a number of orchestral works and several significant chamber compositions. 1945 did not mark a milestone in tone or style, it was not the beginning of a new period of creativity. He continued polishing the complex and sophisticated style that found its most perfect expression in the works of the '30s. True, he finds it difficult to cast off the tragic tone which characterizes his *Symphony No 1.* of 1941/42 and the orchestral *Partita* composed in 1943–44. But the heavy, dramatic world of his *Sonata for Two Pianos* (1947) is brightened dramatically by the final ring of the finale.

The years following 1948, which witnessed a narrow-minded approach to music at the part of officialdom, represented a difficult period for Pál Kadosa. He fought for the values of contemporary music at a time when modern works were not really appreciated; many of what he believed to be significant artistic ahcievements were liable to lose their value in official eyes from one day to the next. Bartók and other 20th century classics were subjected to quite unjustified criticism. Pál Kadosa never joined those critics, but he reassessed his own style, as he said, following some inner impetus. He simplified the basic tone of his works, hoping to make them more easily accessible to a wider public in doing so. Commenting on that period, Kadosa seems to be his own best critic: "No-one needed these works. Today I know that I did not need them myself, any more than anyone else did."

5.

The period of crisis did not last long. Kadosa's friend and colleague, the composer Ferenc Szabó, was only too right to hail his *Piano Concerto No 3.* (first performed in 1953) in the following manner: "It has taken Pál Kadosa years of remarkable effort, admirable courage and devotion, to try and find an honest artistic form of expression for the new content of his music. There was a time when he seemed to lose himself and his former artistic identity in the struggle with his new musical material and means of expression. But his new Piano Concerto seems to prove that the years of search and crisis are at an end, his art is fresh and strong with its new message and he has rediscovered his musical personality."

Pál Kadosa pointed out in a statement: "The works I wrote in the '20s and '30s and to some extent even my later works, were of an avant-garde nature." It was to this sound that he returned in his last creative period, the extremely prolific years after 1953. He added a fresh touch to compositions through flexible use of the technique of dodecaphony.

True, it was not quite new any longer, but it is impossible to quarrel with the composer when he says: "Because of my age I do not expect, and I don't think anyone else would expect me to become completely identified with every new trend. I have an unflagging interest in them, but I cannot adapt them personally as I was once able to."

An outstanding work of this last creative period was his *Symphony No 4.*, a "Lament to the Memory of a Great Man", completed in 1959. The intricate melodies and pulsating rhythms of this work of tragic tone, written for string orchestra, only are eased in the finale of recitative-like funeral music. The latest, but hopefully not the last items in Kadosa's œuvre, are *Serenade* (1967) for chamber ensemble, *Six Choral Songs* to poems by János Arany (1969) and the *Four songs in memoriam Nelly Sachs* (1970). All of these seem to unveil a portrait in sound of a composer at peace with both himself and the world. It is if his typically throbbing, sharp rhythms and the harsh discords of his music had found an inner tranquility. Acerb melodic turns have become smooth and have assumed a lyrical character in these pieces.

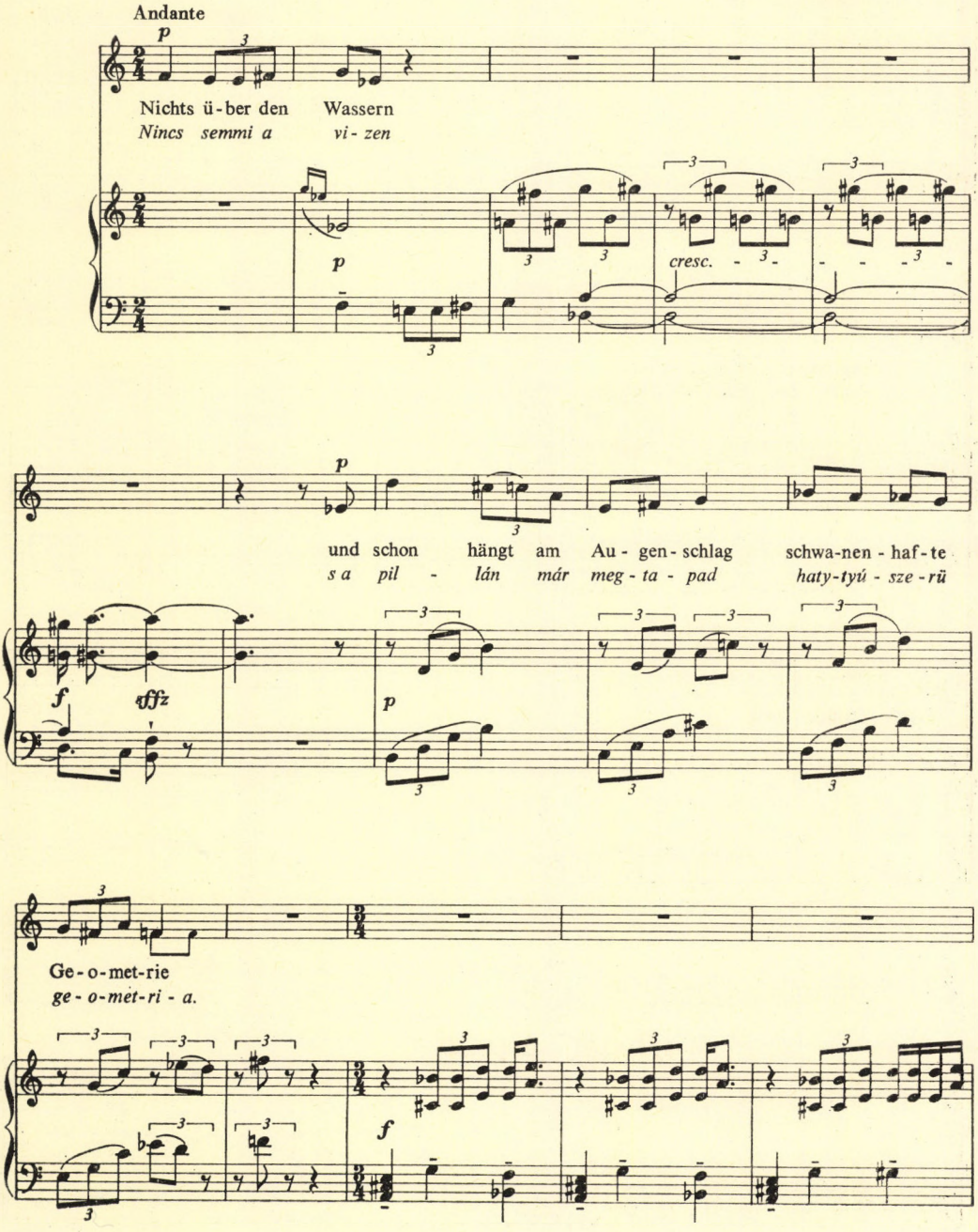
6.

Meanwhile, Pál Kadosa has never given up teaching and still heads the piano department at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music. In fact, he has been raising new generations of pianists for 35 years now. Initially he faced many difficulties, despite all his educational experience. This is how he recalls his first years at the Academy: "As a new teacher with a lot of practice, I was given more than enough pupils. In addition, as a new teacher, I also had to take over pupils the older colleagues did not want, so I really had to work hard." His piano pupils have included György Kurtág (known rather as a composer today) and Iván Erőd (a teacher at the Graz Academy of Music). An outstanding Kadosa pupil of the 50s was Ferenc Rados, well-known all over Europe from the many records he has made.

The Kadosa school began to exercise a significant international influence in the '60s. This was when graduates of his classes included Csilla Szabó and Gyula Kiss, followed a few years later by Zoltán Kocsis, Dezső Ránki and András Schiff. They are now household names throughout the world. It is extremely difficult to get Pál Kadosa to speak about his own teaching methods. When I asked him to explain how his classes have been a training ground for so many truly outstanding performers, he said: "I don't think this is anything special in my class. I think the explanation as to why so many young pianists have left the Academy to became renowned as performers all over the world lies in the excellent system of piano teaching in Hungary, both at basic and medium levels. Let me emphasise ... at medium level as well! People tend to say that we have good piano teaching at the basic but not at the medium level, but I would reject this view; I think we are equally good at that level too, and I think this is what explains the achievements. Personally, I am convinced that it is only a question of luck that I have been able to turn out a few outstanding pianists. I can't lay enough stress on the fact that all I do is try not to stand in the way of the possibilities inherent in my pupils. I have always tried to develop and accomplish the individual abilities I discovered in them, but I would hate to force my own ideas on pupils."

The artistic achievements of the Kadosa school attract a growing number of pupils from abroad to his classes. Professor Kadosa has also been teaching foreign students ever since 1967, when the first Bartók Seminar was staged in Hungary. At these seminars, now organized every summer, it is primarily to performing artists from other countries that Kadosa passes on his rich experience in authentic interpretations of Bartók. "In principle, I attach much significance to the

Der Schwan – A hattyú



From "Four songs in memoriam Nelly Sachs" (1970) to poems by N. S.
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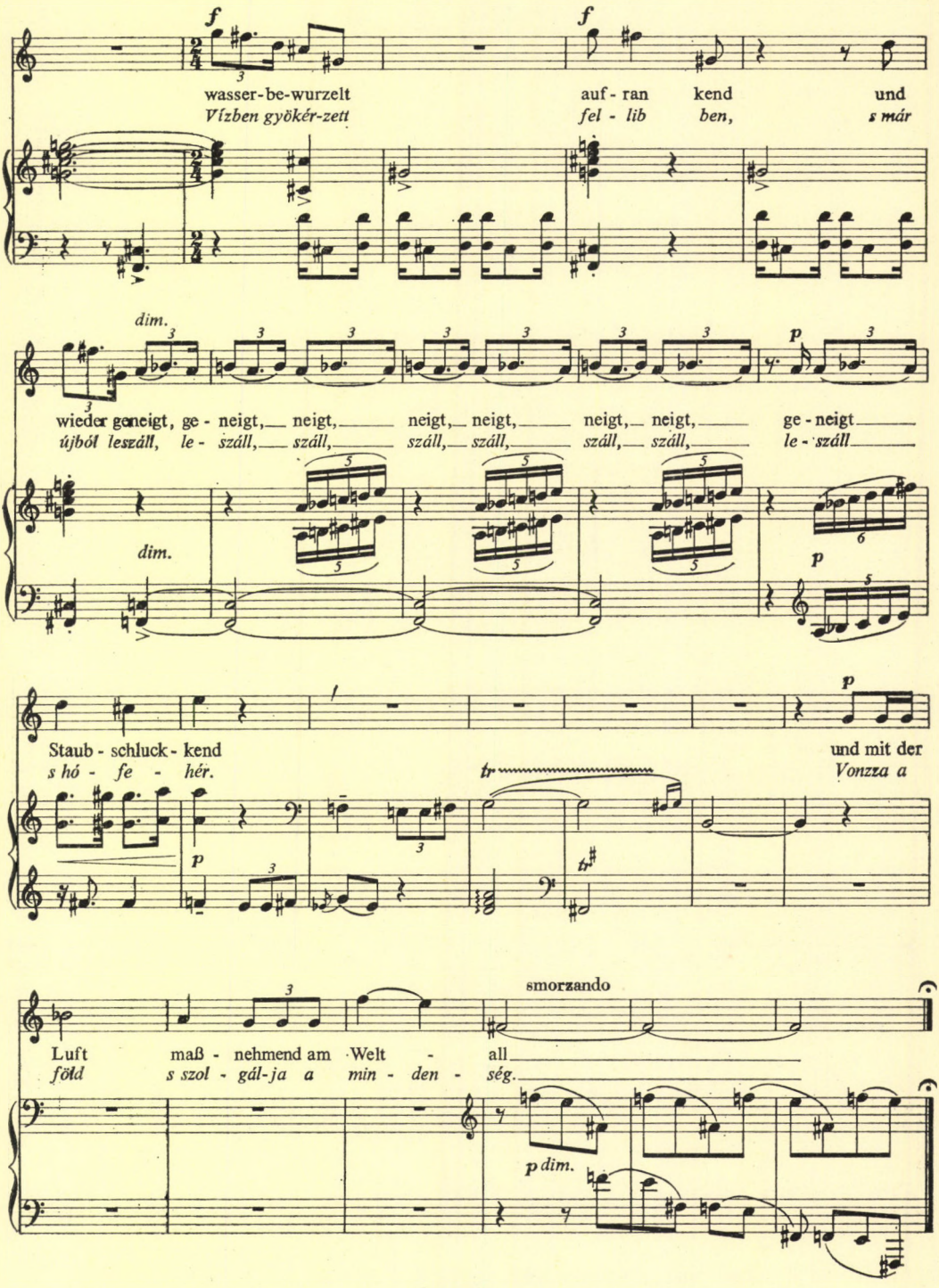
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Seminar, because even when it does not draw directly from folk music, Bartók's works are always based on a Hungarian idiom. And we who are in a more intimate relationship with Hungarian music and the Hungarian language, know this idiom; and we know the intonation of Hungarian music, including Bartók, much better than performers of other nationalities."

7.

So Pál Kadosa's days are filled with teaching and the musical responsibilities he shoulders in public life. He is regularly visited by his former pupils who invariably want him to be the first to hear their works, and he still has an unbelievable number of classes, teaching even on Sundays and other holidays. His youthful dreams of becoming a painter are to be seen in his passionate love of works of art, and his home resembles a delightful museum, in which valuable paintings, statues and furniture have been arranged with expertise and exquisite taste. He used to enjoy bridge competitively and was once regarded as an excellent player; he is still a regular visitor to the Budapest Artists' Club, over which he presides, to watch a game of bridge and meet friends. He probably goes to more concerts than any Hungarian musician, perhaps more than any music critic. Kadosa never fails to attend the first performance of a new Hungarian work, the concerts of all his present and former pupils, and, in general, every musical event of some importance. There is no area of music or the arts where he is not thoroughly at home.

The critic is in an advantageous position when trying to sum up Kadosa's six decades of musical activity, for Pál Kadosa has in a sense done the job for him. He said: "The older I am, the more I tend to notice only what I've done wrong in my career. This only shows you that it's bad to grow old. But it is a thing we all experience if we don't die young. I don't believe my career has been of any outstanding importance, or significance and believe me, I am not fishing for compliments; but the more music, the more really great music I have a chance to know profoundly, the smaller the importance I can attach to what I have achieved myself. Of course, it pleases me if others consider it to have been important. It is a nice feeling, for instance, to know that an undergraduate in musicology at the Juilliard School of Music in New York is writing his thesis on my works. He has found a few positive things there, and I too would like to hope that my life's work does have its positive aspect after all."

JÁNOS BREUER

BARTÓK'S COLLECTION OF TURKISH FOLK SONGS

Béla Bartók: *Turkish Folk Music from Asia Minor*. Edited by Benjamin Suchoff. With an Afterword by Kurt Reinhard. Princeton University Press, Princeton and London, 1976, 288 pp. A. Adnan Saygun: *Béla Bartók's Folk Music Research in Turkey*. Edited by László Vikár. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1976, 430 pp. In English

The material collected by Béla Bartók on his last folk song collecting journey was only published recently—exactly forty years after its compilation. All that could hitherto be gleaned from Béla Bartók's letters, his article written in 1937 ("Collecting Folk Songs in Turkey"), and his Turkish collaborator A. Adnan Saygun's account (published in *Musical Quarterly* in 1951) were anecdotes concerning the trip itself and the actual experience of collecting. The classified collection, which was Bartók's last study of folk music, has been kept at Columbia University Library since July 1, 1944, while the notes recording the earlier phases of the work, as well as copies of the translated texts and the original phonograph cylinders, remained in Hungary.

The fact that this study was published in the United States and Hungary in the same year, moreover taking different sources for a basis and having different aims in view, illustrates the wretched fate of Bartók's legacy. If the difficulties were merely legal ones, concerning ownership rights, then they would not receive mention in a review. However, the mere fact of the Turkish collection's dual publication necessitates some reference to problems which proved to be almost unsurmountable. The person who gets the worst end of the deal is naturally the reader, who not only has to fork out the money for these costly editions but must learn how best to compare and get the most out of them. For instance, which chapter is he to turn to, and in which volume, if he wants to, say, study Turkish folk music for its own sake, or on the other hand, concentrate on Bartók's research into folk music?

The two volumes do not render each other superfluous, neither do they complement one another perfectly—but gaps in the one can generally be filled after consulting the other. Bartók's original conception and text can only become clear to the reader if he studies both volumes, since each is a different interpretation and adaptation of the source material available to its editor. In fact perhaps both these volumes presenting the Turkish folk song collection should be regarded as preliminary publications and we must await a third volume, including revisions, for a more authoritative edition. If we consider the study Bartók completed in America to be the ideal, then the Saygun (or Hungarian) volume is a certain kind of reconstruction. It makes use of Bartók's preface (in a facsimile of his handwriting), and has utilized the notes kept in Hungary as a basis for publishing the songs, in an order based on a reconstruction of Bartók's own. (The preface informs the reader that "Professor Saygun was unaware of the fact that, prior to his leaving for America, Bartók had already had clear copies of the melodies made by Jenő Deutsch and that he had taken them along with him; furthermore Professor Saygun had no knowledge of the Appendix and Notes added by Bartók in America;" this is to say that Saygun knew nothing of the existence of the completed work, which is why he felt obliged to undertake the needless task of reconstructing it.) Over half the book is Saygun's own work, consisting in part of a thorough study of specific questions relating

to Turkish folk music and in part of a commentary on Bartók's study and notes. Saygun has also noted down the songs Bartók collected but did not transcribe, revised the entire text, translated it into English, and included certain hitherto unknown documents.

The American publication under the editorship of Benjamin Suchoff is much closer to Bartók's original work, which it includes in its entirety. The book contains a facsimile of songs cited as examples, as copied by Jenő Deutsch (reflecting Bartók's final revision), as well as the Turkish text and its original English translation by Bartók. The foreword to this publication, however, is less authentic because Suchoff has altered Bartók's original wording in order to smooth out foreign-sounding peculiarities and turn it into current English. Although he has been very careful he has in effect sacrificed the freshness and feel of the original for the sake of linguistic accuracy. The book is supplemented by a study on the present-day approach to Turkish folk music research, written by Kurt Reinhard, a leading authority in this field. It also contains Benjamin Suchoff's account of Bartók's travels in Anatolia collecting material, the preparatory stages of the study, a preface giving source information, and a computerized index.

The reader therefore has to use both works side by side; he may reconstruct Bartók's venture from beginning to end, but he has to pick and choose from two different sources. From Saygun he can learn a lot about Turkish folk music; from Reinhard's afterword he can get a good idea of Bartók's role in the development of Turkish folk music research. If he wishes to study only the music then he would be advised not even to look at the Hungarian publication (apart from Saygun's transcriptions of the music from the phonographs); not only are the scores barely readable but there are plenty of mistakes in the reproductions. How such crude mistakes could be left in a publication intended to be a work of reference is incomprehensible. It is true that the carbon copies kept in Budapest are virtually unreadable in places, and it is quite possible that, where the top and bottom copies have slipped slightly, it is sometimes difficult to tell whether a note was on a line or in a space. But these mistakes should have been rectified by Saygun, the specialist in Turkish music, especially if he had access to the original phonographs.

Bartók's study would merit a detailed analysis and appreciation in a specialized review. The fact that, even in its raw form, it still offers a comprehensive view and accurate information on the various styles of Turkish folk music bears witness to Bartók's extraordinary abilities in the field of ethnomusicology. In any case, his research work in Turkey was originally intended to be a model collection, an example for the Turkish folk music research that was getting off the ground at the time. It exemplified the most modern methods, as Bartók's essay "Why and How Should We Collect Folk Music?" aptly illustrates. However, it is likely that the most significant aspect of Bartók's pioneering work was the actual noting down of the music. Although the study contains most important information of Turkish folk music in general, its musicological premise is nevertheless fairly simple. Its chief aim in point of fact is to uncover the kinship that exists between early Turkish and Hungarian folk music. All in all, it is a unique end distinguished schlarly work in this field; it outlines its subject-matter clearly and answers the questions that crop up in a way that is still valid and unquestionable to this day.

ANDRÁS WILHEIM

THEATRE AND FILM

TAMÁS KOLTAI

BEND OVER TO SEE THE WORLD

The grotesque dramatic technique of István Örkény

I

This is the age of the playwrightless theatrical revolution. Peter Brook's 1966 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *US* was a collective venture; nor do Mnouchkine's political spectacles, Ronconi's paraphrase of Ariosto, Barrault's Rabelais and his Zarathustra—based on Nietzsche—or Robert Wilson's "operas" almost stripped of text, require a traditional author who provides the director with a ready script.

It has been said that the word gradually loses its value, "its credibility, authenticity, and impact diminish from day to day... A diminishing number believe that every truth and everything that really exists can be communicated in the old way. Instead of reality words increasingly tend to reflect words only, words are about words. Those who do not face the further devaluation of our language, i.e. our culture, and hence our existence with resignation, try new ways, looking for new accents, creating new situations, and are willing to attach themselves to everything that regenerates the magic and creative force of the word."

Many theatre people speak of the devaluation of words but the above words are not those of a director disappointed by literature; but by a writer, István Örkény,* whose working tools were language and words and who was the first to notice their deterioration. He died, aged 67, in June 1979. He is often associated with Ferenc Molnár being the first Hungarian since Molnár whose plays have been successfully performed in Western Europe and America. Örkény was actually very different from Molnár, and could be described as the first real Hungarian innovator as a writer for the theatre since his popular compatriot. Molnár was a man of the theatre to his bones, Örkény on the other hand was much more like Bernard Shaw of whom it is said that he needed a subject when his wife suggested Saint Joan. And he took her up. Örkény's plays were very likely born in the same way. "I am an occasional playwright," he said, "with well-developed prose-writer's talents."

As a playwright he came of age with *The Tót Family*. Before that he had adapted a play by Molière and had cooperated on another with Miklós Gyárfás; both were performed, but his own *Voronezh* was shown on television only 20 years after it was written. The subject was the destruction of the 2nd Hungarian Army, deployed on the Eastern front and doomed to perish as the satellite of Nazi Germany. The 2nd Army was made up of two hundred and fifty thousand badly equipped and trained

* See in *NHQ* 77 a story by Örkény, a memoir by Vercors, and Béla Pomogáts on Örkény's prose. Other works by Örkény have appeared in *NHQ* 17, 26, 29, 35, 50, 74—The Editor.

peasant boys, of Jews on forced labour service, and cannon fodder beyond military age. Apart from a certain clumsiness one could expect from a fledgling playwright *Voronezh* is a straightforward, run of the mill play. The dialogue reflects the author's shock, it is the fruit of his own experience. In the P.O.W. camp, where it was written, "experience was still raw and feelings violent." An escape from the Don-bend seemed so improbable that in that context Sergeant Pataki's cunning fed by tender love which helped him fight his way past the officers of the retreating Hungarian Army into the P.O.W. camp can hardly be termed romantic.

A careful reading of *Voronezh* suggests that *The Tót Family* is the same story from another, the reverse, viewpoint. As if he had resolved here what he later recommended to his readers in the introduction of his *One Minute Stories:* "Kindly stand with your feet apart, bend over, and in this position look back between your legs... and lo! the world has turned upside down."

In *Voronezh* Gábor Pataki finally gets home. "One of two hundred thousand... one will be there to tell what happened to the 2nd Hungarian Army..." In *The Tót Family* Gyula never gets home, he "dies a hero's death." Meanwhile a village fire-chief and his whole family produce boxes for a mad major to induce him to preserve the life of their son, who is already dead.

The world has turned upside down. It suffices to move a little forward in time, some twenty-odd years, change our posture and what once radiated the romanticism of liberation has become so amusing that it sends a shiver down one's spine. And yet from another viewpoint this distance is not enough to make us feel like laughter: looking at the objective documents of two hundred thousand victims instead of one Örkény's brow darkens again. *Requiem for an Army*, written in collaboration with István Nemeskürty, a historian, thirty years after *Voronezh*, concentrates on a number of individuals and their fate and for a third time Örkény writes with deep emotion to help him cope with an experienced catastrophe.

What is essential in Örkény's plays is the angle from which he watches the world turned upside down: his point of view is that of the grotesque.

2

In his *Vallomás a groteszkről* (Personally on the Grotesque) Örkény wrote: "The grotesque... does not explain the world, it creates a new world, an imaginary world, a world of dreams which, although it reminds one of reality:—the elements are identical—but exist in a different frame of reference."

What then is specific to the Örkény-grotesques?

In *The Tót Family* a parable is concealed behind the realism of the story. The scene is a small Hungarian hill village in 1942 or 43, during the Second World War. The Major, an officer of the Hungarian army fighting alongside the Germans, has suffered a nervous breakdown hunting for partisans, and comes to spend his leave with the family of Tót, the village fire-chief. He was invited there by Gyula, the son of Tót, who serves under the Major. The family willingly play up to their guest's oddities in the hope that, under his protection, their boy will pull through. At one point, however, they have had enough and kill the Major. All along they remain ignorant of what the audience knows—that their son has been long dead.

Every element of this story sticks closely to reality. Nothing in it is absurd, not even that, on the Major's orders, Tót manufactures boxes all night, with a torch in his gagged mouth, or that a major on leave and a village fireman sit next to each other in the jake and dispose of the cares of the world. Life produces much odder situations, especially in wartime.

The play can also be interpreted as a

parable on the point to which tyranny can be escalated, and the possible limits of tolerance. Read backwards it leads to self-abandonment, the final point of self-surrender. Obviously the soundest way is to combine the two readings: the worse the tyranny the more hopeless the position of the victims, and the more willingly the victims surrender the easier it is to increase and refine terror.

One of Örkény's great *trouvailles* is to set this relationship in an idyll. The Major's manner in forcing on the family the most humiliating actions remains polite, almost shy and reluctant, and the family invent new and new ideas for their own perversion. The idyll could be misleading especially as contrast to the weight of the idea behind it. Örkény placed the action in the home country. More terrible things happened in the field. In this play the war itself seems to have been left out of the picture. The substance of the story would not have changed if the Major had rewarded the family's complaisance and had given the son a place in the orderly room; the subject of the play would still be the same, by the end of the first part, however, the audience knows that Gyula is dead and from then on the war is always present. In the second part we are forced to revert again and again to this information and reexamine the story in its light. Gyula's death illuminates the play's intellectual orbit both retrospectively and from the viewpoint of the dénouement. In this light all the efforts of the Tót family seem not only pathetic and ridiculous but also tragic. Gyula's death is an intellectual catalyst, and on stage it is the major instrument of the grotesque.

The grotesque is built on human inability to experience the tragic and comic aspects of a situation simultaneously. The realization that the ridiculous can be shocking and vice versa comes to us always with a short phase delay. The Örkény grotesque avails itself of this human frailty. Our laughter turns uneasy the moment when we remember Mariska's reason for showing the torch up her husband's mouth. And when, the following moment, we realize that all this self-humiliation lacks sense, the circle is closed, the grotesque has done its job.

Another type of grotesque in *The Tót Family*, making use of a similar mechanism, is already a foretaste of the *One Minute Stories:* that is upside-down logic to the point of absurdity.

An example of this is the play with the characters' height. A simple comic idea is at the back of it: one character is tall, the other small. The Major is stumpy, Tót lofty, a source of much inconvenience; finally he forces himself to walk with a crouch so as not to make the Major feel inferior. Up to this point no more than a common gag. But in an unguarded moment Tót tells Dr. Cipriani that though he regrets it he is unable to change his body height. According to the head shrinker who, naturally, is "not quite mad" it is rare nowadays that people see their own height so clearly: "These days, madam, very few know the measurements of their own body. This is a symptom, just like conceptual confusion. Small men think they are giants, and those who stand head and shoulders above the rest want to look small at all costs..."

This in itself is enough to provoke bitterly familiar thoughts about a world turned upside down. We feel that we have understood the parable but this is the theatre where words are not enough. Privat-Docent Dr. Alfred Eggenberger, the well-known pioneer in cancer research, makes his entry on roller-skates and looks like a seven-year-old boy. Is this an absurdity? Perhaps the absurdity is rather that professors persecuted because of their race must live with false identity papers? In an ordinary world it would be absolutely fantastic and sensational if a Jewish doctor "despite his 43 inch waist regularly walked in and out of the room through the keyhole." But in an upside-down world such things are neither surprising nor rare.

"Nowadays nothing is more natural than to crawl in under something," says Cipriani. After this it does not seem mad for Tót to do the same.

The grotesque is cruel. In *The Tót Family* Örkény toys with the idea of absurdity for the sake of measuring the world's absurdities using rhe rules of a rational logic.

3

Pisti a vérzivatarban (Pisti in the Bloodbath) begins with a peculiar scene: the playwright, overwhelmed with joy because he has completed his work, tries to walk on water; and, o wonder of wonders! the stunt comes off.

Pisti is Örkény's major experiment in the decomposition of traditional dramatic structure and the return to an avant-garde theatre. Those who know something of the history of the Hungarian theatre are aware that this amounts really to taking the risks of walking on water. Fortunately the buoyancy of the one-minute stories helps to accomplish the feat with success. The play, in fact, is a string of dramatized one-minute stories. The coherency of the script, maintained in *The Tót Family*, is broken into fragments. One of its bricks, the Cipriani episode, would fit into the dramatic construction of *Pisti* without change.

"On the one hand there is the minimum of communication on the part of the writer," commented Örkény speaking about his one-minute grotesques. The stage version of this concept demands even more imagination from audiences used to naturalism. Paradoxically *Pisti* does not demand such flights of fancy as Örkény's other plays. Here it is not the wealth of the stuff behind the story which quickens the imagination (in fact there is no story at all); we only have to accept the grotesque key which helps to decipher the whole play. We are led through recent Hungarian history without a central hero or a consistent plot. The eponymous hero changes his personality frequently, he appears in two, three, indeed four shapes. Sometimes Pisti does not exist at all, he is only mentioned by others, at other times he dies but always rises again. He survives wars, revolutions, changes of regime, illegal authority, and even nuclear catastrophe. Pisti is the symbol of our age: he is immortal. Pisti, it should be mentioned, is a diminutive of István, the Hungarian form of Stephen, Örkény's own first name.

Pisti reminds one of those parlour games where the participants think of the same thing but leave it unsaid or say "Pisti" instead. This requires some complicity on the part of the audience. One could ask whether this is a dishonest game. Why doesn't the author speak out openly and tell what he is talking about? Why does he say "Pisti" when it is obvious that he surveys recent Hungarian history from his usual bent-over posture, looking backwards through his legs, not really exhausted by this twisted position.

The answer is simple: this is not a history text but a play. In literature it is better to draw the lessons of history than just reconstruct it. In our times the world has somersaulted several times, if he wanted to see its reality Örkény had to take up the same posture.

If Pisti is taken as specifically Hungarian, one will not be surprised to see him, in 1944, commanding the firing squad and at the same time as one of those up against the wall; to see sometimes two Pistis, one pro-Soviet, and one pro-German, and witness this state of things as long as one cannot know who will win the war; to see Pisti going into hiding, distributing pamphlets, making propaganda, campaigning, being afraid, being executed, liberated, reborn, educated, improved, and set up as an example; a statue is erected in his honour and he is respected as a standard, and then it emerges that he does not exist at all, but this must be kept secret and three days' mourning is proclaimed in honour of his

memory. Every time he rises from the dead and starts from scratch, even if he must start from ruins, paying the price of disappointments; although disillusioned he starts afresh with new faith, and the indestructibility of the resourceful.

What strikes us most in *Pisti* is the rationality and cruelty of the grotesque.

Of all the plays of Örkény this seems to be nearest to the absurd, an impression increased by the absence of systematic dramatic structure. The inner logic and intellectual basis of the one-minute stories is often very different, so are their styles and linguistic moods. Once Pisti is a real person (sometimes several persons), who appears in different shapes but is still identical with himself; at other times he is not a person but an object, an idea, a spirit, a standard, or goal. Pisti is the jolly joker of the age. He can be substituted for everybody who has experienced the last 40 to 50 years in Hungary. It is Pisti to whom things happen in this stretch of time.

Pisti is a historical play. It does not require much effort to translate and interpret every scene, connecting it to a well-known event. The nonsense-language clichés of the hearing recall the show trials, the label on the tin of fish ("The bearer of this document has suffered innocently") reminds one of the rehabilitations, and so on. But the real strength of this technique is just that there is no need to decode every word or situation. *Pisti* is not *théâtre à clef*. There is no background story, only a background atmosphere. It presents small sections from the history of the recent past, not photographs. Only the bone structure is important in these sections. There are no abstractions in this play. It is a little bizarre that's all that the shape and imprint of the X-rayed age appear without their accompanying psychology and plot, but we know that behind the X-ray screen there is reality itself, in its full extension.

4

Pisti's fate symbolizes the inevitability and acceptance of history which stumbles through defeat and victory, zealous faith and moments of disillusion. It is beside the point whether all this is worth the trouble, compelling dialectics of history leave no room for questions, disappointments or moralizing; you cannot evade it, and that's all. Pisti dies and arises. Lately, when wondering about the ways of the world, he has taken to painting the sickle and hammer despite the police, and hopes that the time will come when not only his name will be Pisti but he will be the real Pisti, identical with himself.

Defeat and victory follow each other in *Pisti* as in the mainstream of history. In *Catsplay* they interblend and interpenetrate. Mrs. Orbán wrests victory from failure with an instinct for happiness which is necessary for survival.

The Szkalla girls, once the beauties of Szolnok County, now in their sixties, live many miles apart: Erzsi is a widow (Mrs. Béla Orbán) in straitened circumstances in Budapest, and Giza a wealthy woman in Munich. They often exchange letters and phone each other frequently. Giza is an invalid confined to a wheelchair and has rest cures in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Erzsi is always on the run, and leads a hectic life. She introduces her lover, the retired opera singer Viktor Csermlényi, to her friend Paula and notices with alarm that they begin to nourish tender feelings for each other. Giza anxiously disapproves of her sister's violent outbursts and, as all her efforts to persuade Erzsi to come and share her quiet life prove to be vain, she unexpectedly decides to come home and learn catsplay, that crying-laughing sign language understood only here at home.

Who is Mrs. Orbán? What do we know about her? We learn her name and age, the fact that she is jealous of her lover, Viktor Csermlényi, the retired opera singer. She

quarrels with her family, borrows her fellow tenant's evening gown, and coaxes her cat into living with her. She miaows to Mousy, the young girl in the neighbourhood. She writes letters to her sister, "darling Giza," who lives in Munich and gets treatment at a spa. From time to time she talks to her over the phone, and does not accept a gift parcel of old clothes. Neither does she go to visit her, she has no time, she must raise hell in the dairy shop and grumble at the butcher. She has a rendez-vous with Csermlényi; spying after him takes up a lot of her time. In general she does not care for occupations which befit her age. She commits whole series of senseless, hopeless, and improper acts, she lives in constant turmoil, excitement, and erratic confusion. But she lives; it is difficult to understand this in the cold and elegant silence of the sanatorium in Garmisch-Partenkirchen where thoughts revolve already round the family crypt. This kind of life can be understood only here. The catsplay with Mousy can be played only in Budapest where the miaows need no translation and explanation. Those who play it understand each other without words, because they have been living together for a long time, between the 46th and 48th parallel.

Mrs. Orbán has the strength of those who survive, the indestructibility and endurance of those doomed to live. There is something tragicomical in her which provokes our compassion and laughter when we see that after having been trampled upon a thousand times she lifts her head again and braves the laws of commonsense. Mrs. Orbán is the apotheosis of grotesque heroism and Örkény admires this rare specimen—if we look around attentively perhaps it is not even as rare as all that.

The life-story of the characters in *Catsplay* is also the sophisticated chronicle of the last 25 years of Hungarian society—its bustles, muddle-headed commotions, vociferous quarrels, and blunders—and also of its commitments, told in Örkény's style, without big words. In the introduction to *Vérrokonok* (Blood Relations) Örkény explained that "we can love our country in many ways. With burning, castigating passion like Ady, by sacrificing our lives like Petőfi, or repeating empty phrases like soap-box orators. And, what is more, the temperature of our passion is not constant because it depends on the times: it is not as it was hundred or hundred and fifty years ago. Our climate gets cooler. Our age is not favourable to violent passion..."

The truth is that Örkény is a sentimental writer like all those who compensate their poetic feelings with the grotesque, cloaking their emotions with irony, grimacing when they are deeply moved, and stifling their shock with laughter. Örkény puts his patriotic leanings into a poetic frame; the photos of Erzsi and Giza as young girls, taken on a backwater of the river Tisza on a hazy morning (or was it late afternoon?), take him, as in a nostalgic dream to the all-dissolving acrimonious catsplay, to the moment when we are convulsed with laughter about ourselves, our fate, our tears at finding each other, about life as it is.

5

It is difficult to translate the allegory of *Vérrokonok*. The Bokor family are all railwaymen. They belong to several generations but without exception they are working for one and the same cause: the railway. There are many misunderstandings in the family but every member is ready to sacrifice everything —even their life-blood—for the railway. The oldest Bokor, a retired sleepingcar attendant, is in need of blood. The whole family rally around him although it clearly emerges this time as well that everyone has a different idea of what the railway is about. "The railway is the great cause which we support; the spectators should be able to substitute anything on which they stake their lives, from their country to religion

ot political ideas to soccer or cards"—Örkény mockingly enumerates all these in the reverse order so that the last seems the most important. (This is most certainly the consequence of his posture.) The Bokors "have suffered for their faith and merit our respect because they staked their lives on the railway or on any cause which deserves to be struggled for"; again the author has selected them amongst us.

The allegory in the play is, of course, translatable.

The conflicts of the Bokors stem from the fact that the railway system is not yet perfect although it blindly believes in its own perfection. "Everything would be different if doubt split open these closed systems in some place. Without doubt no change is possible," says Péter Bokor, the positive hero of the play. And the state of things proves him right. There are troubles. Things are not as they should be. Pál Bokor, the retired sleeping-car attendant, whom only the united efforts and life-blood of the Bokors can galvanize to life, is unable to help the new railway generation despite his wisdom and experience. Miklós Bokor is in a very important position now but his earlier vicissitudes—such as the alleged theft of a freight car for which he was sentenced, though innocent, and later rehabilitated—have ruined his nerves so that he is hardly able to fulfil his increasingly complicated tasks. In her worst moments Mrs. Bokor cannot forgive the railway for having eaten up her husband's life. Young Péter Bokor is not an emotional person: he does not proclaim his love for the railway though he is a competent expert. True, his knowledge is derived from books and he has not so far been given the opportunity to put it into practice. The oldest member of the family, the widow of three railwaymen, is a very distrustful person who denounces everybody who, in her opinion, makes suspicious remarks about the railway. And then here is the youngest member of the family, the girl Judit, who wants to work her way up from an automatic ticket-machine to the Information staff.

In spite of the mess the railway functions. No doubt it is often late, does not carry us to the intended destination, compels detours, and collisions also happen. Considering however that we ourselves are on duty everywhere from the control cabin to the points, that we are not only the passengers but also the crew, it depends chiefly on us whether we arrive where we wish to go to.

The closing soliloquy reveals the play's ultimate meaning. Judit Bokor, who finally got into Information, tells us with enthusiastic cheerfulness of the complete confusion which prevails in railway traffic, and the audience, glad to get any information at all, laughs with relief learning about derailed, doodled, falsely directed never-arrived trains standing crosswise on the rails. We laugh with relief because we are carried away by the naive and pure faith of this nice young girl in Information, based not only on the trivial facts but on her commitment to the railway system. We believe in our hearts that sooner or later people will not only like the railway but also know how to handle it and then the number of accidents will diminish. Even now the trains are running, people are travelling, and they arrive to their destination, though perhaps a little late. Walking should be recommended but the trains are faster.

Vérrokonok probes into the relationship of transitory failures and long-term victory. Here, however, victory is not a reality as in *Catsplay*, but an illusion, a beautiful illusion for which it is worth living and struggling. Victory can be achieved without having to deny reality. Judit Bokor informs us of the failures with grotesque charm, but she informs us of reality; the beauty of it all is that she is able to communicate her naive enthusiasm, we almost feel our growing strength and the bulging of our muscles. We should like to jump up from our seats —what do we care for delays, catastrophes,

and the rest. We are marching forward despite everything.

In *Catsplay* the forced triumph arouses some anxiety, the disastrous failures of the railwaymen in *Vérrokonok* seem only trifles owing to the self-ironical acceptance of reality; the mere realization of this amusingly awkward situation fills us with optimism.

6

The third play about the dialectics of victory and failure is *Kulcskeresők* (Looking for the Key). The characters are confined to one room for reasons of philosophy: their behaviour is examined in an everyday situation.

The Fóris couple have just moved into their brand-new flat on a housing estate, but Nelly, the wife, wants to use the opportunity to finally leave her husband. Fóris is a pilot; he has been downgraded several times because his overzealousness has led to too many upsets. Now at last he seems to be on the rails. In spite of her original intention Nelly is compelled to wait for her husband in the flat since she seems to have mislaid the key and cannot undo the lock. Her daughter and a number of neighbours are also shut in with her. Enter Fóris who has once more distinguished himself: missing the runway he landed at the gates of the cemetery. The Rambler, a funny stranger, unknown to all, gradually proves that Fóris has in fact accomplished a heroic deed. In the same way he makes all the others believe that their failures are not really failures. The company begin to have a good time in the apartment which is closed only from the inside (it can be opened from the outside) and they ridicule the only person who does not buy these lies. Örkény's dramatic force resides in his ability to start from segments of reality and exhaust their absurd logic. His play is realistic and accessible to common sense. The scene is a genuine modern housing estate, the characters are people living in the medium of society whose psychology can be followed without difficulty, their actions are routine acts repeated daily, characteristic of all of us. The search for the key, the breakdown of the lock, the dramatic mechanism of the door locked on the inside but openable from the outside, require the accuracy of the naturalistic drama. Örkény, with the help of twists and turns, manages to reach a point where audiences no longer see the real room of the real housing estate apartment, but its symbolical and spiritualized copy prepared for experimental purposes. After a time—we do not notice exactly when—the logical and psychological justification of every trivial happening becomes superfluous and we accept the grotesque exaggerations, the floating away from reality. But the basic situation remains realistic to the end. The stronger the reality-reflecting realism of the performance, the easier we rise into the higher intellectual spheres of the play.

The hero is Fóris, the pilot. As long as things go smoothly he is good at his job. That is as long as there is no hitch. But hitches come. Fóris expects, nay, he makes them come. Because in case of a hitch he has the opportunity to distinguish himself, to prove his qualities. A hitch offers a choice between a safe and a risky solution. The first lies at hand but the second is more beautiful and offers him the opportunity to show off. In general Fóris opts for the second. In this case it may happen that instead of the airfield he lands on the highroad by the cemetery gate. The passengers are insensitive to beautiful solutions and shriek, bite the ambulance men, faint, revile the airline, or travel back from where they have come. But what can you expect from such paltry souls?

The question of *Kulcskeresők* is: how can you touch up obvious failure to become an achievement?

In the second part the Rambler, who is the least convincing character in Örkény's dramatic œuvre, becomes a leading figure.

He appears everywhere where they need him. His lies turn incompatibility into an idyll, defeat into victory, he soothes torments into agreeable torpor. With his conjuring tricks he turns reality into a dream to make it more bearable. The Rambler is real and symbolical at the same time. His tools are sympathy, tender solicitude, and persuasive eloquence so that for a moment he is able to mislead even us. However, before we begin to believe in the greatness of pilots who break out of narrow runways towards the infinity of cemeteries, Örkény turns on the cold shower above our heads.

Enter the radio reporter who has been fired several times because of his sensitivity to reality; he brings with him the obstinate proof of reality, the opinions of passengers about the landing à la Fóris. Listen to a Nobel laureate scientist: "...I swear that the strange thing is that this aircraft is sound, the staff well-trained, the pilot first-rate but... and we find ourselves bumping along a flowered meadow, toward no-man's land... How can you do such things? When will you learn the use of things? A hammer is for driving a nail into the wall, and that jelly-like matter in your heads is for producing thoughts; it is not the same whether you board an incoming train or throw yourselves under it! This is the root of the trouble with you..."

The characters immersed in their illusions are past saving by now: they are the prisoners of the charitable lies and the obstinate but ridiculed respecter of reality can do nothing except, with bitter disillusions, and determination, unmask all dreamers, self-deluders and world-deceivers, and make for the door which, according to the play's fiction, cannot be opened from the *inside*.

This is the end of *Kulcskeresők:* the forced confinement of illusionists and illusion-destroyer. The end is bitter and vehement. However, a shadow of sympathy remains: "An illusion is not only a respite but also a comfort enabling one to continue living," says the Rambler. The sad poesy of this sentence touches also the writer but irony takes the upper hand. The dreamers of pink pseudo-realities are surely not Örkény's favourites. It is characteristic of his sarcasm that he shuts them in self-imposed seclusion, together with their denouncer. Let them do with each other what they can. Let us do with each other what we can because these self-destructive overzealous people with the eternal hitch—need it be said?—are us.

7

The performance of Örkény's plays depends on the director's ability to mix reality and symbolism in the right proportion, and build a solid basis from where he can push off. He must be able to imbue the grotesque with the natural, blending imagination with experience, and freely play with a mixture of earthiness and flight of fancy.

But this does not suffice. The study of the national character behind the grotesque, the historial lesson in the plays' abstract spheres, the social criticism breaking through the farcical or tragicomical surface which make Örkény's plays unmistakably Hungarian—all these must be present in the performance. Hence Hungarian performances have the best chance of offering an optimal theatrical experience. In other countries they are able to peel off only a few layers of these plays. *The Tót Family* appears as a frenetic farce in America or Paris which, at best understood as something specifically Central-East European. This is a great thing in itself, meaning that they have at least discovered the social peculiarity of the story which makes it exotic. *Catsplay* in London, in spite of Elizabeth Bergner's sensational comeback, was no more than a sentimental rhapsody and the critics did not quite see the reason for miaowing. Those who did not spend the last thirty years in Hungary do not understand much of *Vérrokonok*, and *Pisti* —as we have been told by Örkény—was a collective Hungarian autobiography.

Paradoxically it is this Hungarianness which makes Örkény's dramatic technique international. Still, it is not easy to place them on the theatrical map of the European absurd and grotesque. Some doubt even whether it can be compared to modern dramatic trends. Georges Schlocker labelled *Catsplay* a "well-made comedy of manners." It shows the malleability of aesthetic concepts that this has happened also to authors like Boris Vian whose plays, inspired by Alfred Jarry and Ionesco, were called "comedies of manners flirting with the absurd." Several plays by Harold Pinter, from *The Lover* to *Betrayal*, were dismissed with a shrug as light entertainment.

The Örkény grotesque is more (or at least something different) than the Dürrenmatt grotesque which contents itself with the presentation of perverted characters; it is certainly less than Beckett's absurd plays whose philosophy contests the very meaning of existence. It is relatively easy to draw the line between Örkény and the classics of the absurd such as Beckett, Ionesco, or Genêt. I am tempted to say that Örkény's chief concern was not existence but coexistence, and that instead of the secrets of life he examined the mysteries of living together. Consequently he has much more in common with the Eastern European branch of the absurd—if we insist on the term—which, exemplified by Mrożek, discovers absurdity in concrete social situations. In Örkény's plays human conditions are absurd only until somebody discovers that, with the help of a logical act, the world can be set on its legs again. *The Tót Family* is a somewhat Dürrenmattian tragicomedy where the ultimate victim is not the petty bourgeois but the Major who symbolizes the madness of the outside world. The cutting up of the Major by Tót would have a parallel in *The Visit* if the guilty Ill were to carry out the sentence on the guiltier woman millionaire. This means that the Örkény absurd does not regard circumstances as unchangeable. The solution is not to remain legs wide apart, bending low, looking at the upturned world from the same angle, but set the world on its legs again so that we can stand erect once again.

It is difficult to find Örkény's place on the map of Europe because his dramatic technique is not uniform. "Play-writing has never been routine work for me; it was always a quest for adventure where I could pass or fail," he explained in a letter. The grotesque in *Catsplay* seems to be built on the Prévertian motto that "the essence of practical wisdom is to laugh at death and die from laughter." The same motto applies also to the almost-absurd *Pisti* but the difference is tremendous. The dramatic structure of *Catsplay* can be called traditional despite the stage adaptation of the epistolary novel whereas the construction of *Pisti* is perhaps the strangest of all or Örkény's plays. The message of *Catsplay* is that a human being has the ability to outlive himself biologically; *Pisti* says that this possibility exists also historically. The heroes of *Catsplay* are everyday people, *Pisti*'s eponymous hero is symbolic, he rises from every (national) death. Nothing else can unite these two types of dramatic structure other than the odd characteristic of Örkény's grotesques that they measure reality by the absurd, and the absurd by reality.

Every Örkény play has a naturalistic level like Pinter's plays, and a vaudeville-like farcical background like the plays of Ionesco; like Mrożek's plays the have a concrete social background, and like the works of Handke or Kroetz their mood is that of national satire.

And yet Örkény's plays are not like any of them.

In *Catsplay* you see Garmisch-Partenkirchen from Nárcisz Street in Budapest; Garmisch-Partenkirchen in turn commands a view of Léta on the banks of the river Tisza. The writer is able to rise above the world which he represents but in his heart of hearts he remains part of it. The important points and their connecting lines on the

map of the world are more clearly visible from above. Örkény's map is not identical with the cartographer's; perhaps it is this that makes it fit for use throughout the world—it rather sketches that "dreamt-of and imagined world" mentioned at the beginning of this article when I quote from Örkény on the grotesque. According to Meyerhold the world of the playwright is not acceptable outside the theatre. This, in turn, means that it is valid everywhere where the theatre is fit to receive it.

In 1912, the year Örkény was born, Meyerhold wrote an article on the grotesque in the theatre. He quoted Ernst von Wolzogen's manifesto which he called the apology of the grotesque, published by the founder of the Munich cabaret in defence of his own venture. Wolzogen said that it was not true that we were no longer able to laugh. Our short and well-coordinated guffaws were the laughter of the educated who had learned to look at things from above and so get to the depths.

It seems that this is the angle from which the Örkény grotesque looks at things. This is the viewpoint of the Nobel laureate in *Kulcskeresők* who, on his arrival from Canada, makes a declaration about the incomprehensible Hungarian (flying) conditions. In the first performance of the play in Szolnok the voice on the reporter's tape recorder was that of the author himself. But this aloofness exists only in appearance. Örkény has formulated our common shocks and emotions with the effect of giving us the shudders which he considered the most conspicuous characteristic in his description of the grotesque.

It seems at first sight that it is hardly possible to be deeply moved and shiver at one and the same time. But this is the very essence of the grotesque in Örkény's plays and not only because the grotesque is built on the collision of extremes. It seems rather that this shyness as a writer makes him stifle the pathetic by the ridiculous, and mock at pseudo-pathos; but truly great ideas and emotions move him deeply.

Right now the complete decoding of the Örkény grotesque does not promise much success. He has ventured on paths so far untrodden by Hungarian writers. He knew that he was sticking his neck out because "the motivation of the grotesque, the imperative of the writer's attitude, was to negate everything that was taken for granted, and accurately and lawfully delineated." He did not negate the values but the rules. And such behaviour always arouses suspicion: "The grotesque offends the sense of symmetry, overthrows the order of the world, and establishes a new state of balance, new proportions, and new laws, and—to top it all—it claims that this cosmic disorder is an authentic, complete, and (in its own logic) logical world."

BELATED PREMIÈRES

István Csurka: *Majális.* (Picnic in May); József Katona: *Ziska;* László Németh: *Husz János* (John Huss)

In 1976 a highly talented writer of peasant origin died in Budapest at the age of 45. The short stories that he had published early in his career had depicted dramatic episodes of peasant life, the destitution of his own childhood and adolescence, the interdependence of a village family and the life-andt death struggles its members fought againseach other. Despite warm, encouraging reviews and the public recognition that soon

followed, the writer—István Szabó—stopped writing. He felt that no one was interested any more in the petty world of the peasantry, and that his own talent was integrally linked to this world, both as regards the unequivocally realistic attitude he meaintained and his literary style. This crisis plunged him ever deeper into the troughs of alcoholism and self-destruction, to which he eventually succumbed despite all the efforts of his many friends and acquaintances.

István Szabó was a contemporary and close friend of István Csurka. This self-destructive man propelling himself towards tragedy got along fine with the equally talented, but forever smiling and successful "giant suckling" with his perpetual good humour. It was no doubt as an expression of his grief and inevitable self-reproach (however unfounded) that Csurka ("Fall Guy for Tonight," "Deficit," etc.) decided to write a play about István Szabó's fate.

The title, *Picnic in May*, invokes not only the lovely month of May but for Hungarians it conjures up an image of the most delightful plein air painting of Hungarian impressionism, Pál Szinyei Merse's canvas bearing the very same title. The sharp contrast between such a title and the subject matter of the play suggests that some mystery is in store. In a statement about the play, Csurka, instead of resolving this strange contradiction, commits himself to continuing a traditional prime concern of Hungarian literature, which in the past has so often taken the side of the poor and sought to discover and penetrate the dim lives of social outcasts, all those somehow left behind in the course of social and economic progress. Contrast effect is a conscious literary device and the contradiction which strikes one at first sight is in actual fact only an apparent one.

István Horvai, the director of the Veszprém premiere, has offered us a key to the play: "The leading figures of Csurka's plays are at the same time the central figures of his own life: those intimate with the author can spot their friends and sometimes even themselves. It is their personal aspect and authenticity which make these plays so passionate, so natural... The protagonist of *Picnic in May*, István Marhás is a peasant writer. From a socially inevitable process which disorients the individual completely (the disintegration and transformation of the old world of the smallholding peasantry) Marhás draws subjectively sympathetic and honest conclusions which impel him towards destruction and fill him with the urge to escape from all social ties. Society and the great abstractions of life and progress all criticize this attitude with vehemence; they demonstrate its futility, and even question its morality, which is precisely what makes Marhás's fate tragic, or more exactly, tragicomic."

The peasant house which forms the backcloth to the action of the play is surely the most wretched one in the village. The inhabitants are not even real peasants. Marhás's landlady, Mrs. Fügedi, is a work-shy village woman with a penchant for the bottle who makes ends meet through irregular odd jobs. Life has made her tough and cruel. Her rudeness and selfishness perhaps developed as necessary defenses against the world, but by now they have become like an indetachable suit of armour or the very essence of her being. Her daughter, the uneducated 20-year-old Joli with the frightened eyes tries to prostitute her only capital, her meagre charm; and it is not voluntarily that she does so, it is at her mother's behest.

It is neither Marhás nor Mrs. Fügedi but the writer's former friend, the well-situated Zoltán Vámos, who keeps the train of events in motion. For the sake of his career, Vámos was willing to make all the reasonable compromises from which Marhás has sought refuge in delirium tremens, a snub to the world as he finds it. Vámos has come down to visit Marhás, prompted by the solidarity he has preserved deep in his heart, a genuine readiness to help, and a vain hope that he could really fulfil the semi-official social commission he has undertaken. If he can

he wants to redeem Marhás, even against the will of the latter. The planned course of this redemption is first a return to Budapest, and then a trip to Sweden disguised as a study tour, which would be accompanied by a particularly effective detoxication cure opening up a chance of leading the writer back to society. But Marhás resists. With all the remnants of his self-control and dignity he rejects urban civilization and the opportunities for personal reintegration into society. Even as he defends his impossible and hopeless current way of life to Vámos he mourns his past, the vanishing culture of the peasantry and the values of yesterday. The debate between Marhás and Vámos in fact outlines all that was once so vital to István Szabó: the force without which he could face life no longer was no more than the intellectual and ethical substance of the old peasant way of life. It also becomes clear that Marhás's standpoint is dated and untenable. This gifted writer, who made a mess of everything, even his own talent, in his wounded selfesteem, longs to be back in a world which has irrevocably come to an end. His life is past recovery, not only because of the physical and nervous damage caused by alcohol but because of the futility of this nostalgia.

Csurka, who has strong emotional links with his protagonist, dissociates himself from him without finding any proper hero, any adequate force that could take up the struggle with Marhás. More exactly, he confronts him on the stage with a debating partner who is able to express and defend only his own relative truth. Zoltán Vámos is a man of the minute, who has built up an ideology to justify all his own compromises and tries to make himself comfortable under conditions which he has accepted too easily, without question. The realistic outcome of this struggle between two former friends is moral stalemate, and so despite the otherwise realistic staging the playwright has to introduce a rather unrealistic solution to rescue his protagonist from the quagmire. Marhás's unlikely redemption can be accomplished only by the "eternal woman," the Dumb Diseuse who arrives with Vámos and whose stifling erotism and selfless willingness to help are (at least temporarily) able to move the immovable; she conquers Marhás, whose individual drama is thus resolved by her grand presence and her victory. Yet there is no reason at all for optimism. One knows both from the real fate of István Szabó and from the dramatic character portrayals on the stage that tragedy lies ahead. Here too the "fall guy," among the many other losers, is the one who for decades has had the worst run of cards, the one who is unable to cut the umbilical cord which binds him to a world on the wane. Other losers are those who have remained outside of society, like Mrs. Fügedi and Joli. It is in their name that the last, bitter sentence of the play rings out as an anguished reproach: "And whatever is to happen to us?" Csurka's play does not—and cannot—come up with easy answers.

Behind the somewhat extreme drama of the alcoholic who is the main protagonist, this play raises a good many vital, national and generational issues of concern to the whole of the community. In the wake of *Fall Guy for Tonight*, *Picnic in May* can be considered perhaps the best play Csurka has written to date.

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In Hungary József Katona is known above all for *Bánk bán* (1815), the outstanding work of the playwright and of 19th century dramatic literature in this country. *Bánk bán* has been read and analysed by generations of school children, and the literature on this one book alone surpasses József Katona's entire œuvre many times over. It was set to music in the last century, and the romantic national opera which resulted is still regularly performed by the State Opera House. Before the First World War the first Hungarian film was also inevitably a version of *Bánk bán*. The theatre in Katona's birthplace, Kecskemét, is named after the playwright; and it

was the director of this theatre, Sándor Beke, who has rescued one of his early plays, *Ziska*, from oblivion to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the playwright's death.

There might have been theatre people and directors before Beke who were tempted by the idea of staging this immensely long, eight-act play. It is said that it was actually staged in Kecskemét in 1818, but plans for a performance probably did not reach fruition in that year; and so the work has received its première—in a form which, however, is far from being a definitive one—only this year, 167 years after its creation.

Katona, the son of a Kecskemét master weaver, approached history, even in his youth as a law student and actor, with the eye of the underdog. The legend of the French revolution was still a living and decisive historical experience for his generation, which had personal experience of the sharpening of social contradictions in regressive, feudal Hungary. This is why the focus of Katona's historical plays is always upon rebellion, uprising and freedom struggles. This is not to deny that he might have been prompted in this direction by his experiences in the theatre has well, by the example of Schiller and his followers, and also by Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*. *Ziska* tells the story of an anti-feudal uprising, the attempt to mount a national war of independence and its failure. The scene is Bohemia in the 15th century. Ziska is a former minion of King Venceslaus who has become a Hussite leader, but he is not one of the legendary rebels and popular leaders of history. Katona's protagonist is indeed shown as a leader of the Hussites, but the deeper truth is that he is motivated by ruthless greed for power and vaulting ambition. According to one of Katona's biographers, "there is a tempting parallel with the author's contemporary, Napoleon, who reduced the French revolution to his own tyrannical will." The tempting parallel, however, is also liable to lead one astray: in actual fact Ziska's figure is of interest precisely because he represents a combination of responsible patriotism and unbridled ambition in one and the same person, and because he engages in deliberate duplicity to ensure his success, unconditionally bowing to all the requirements and pressures of his environment. He is an armed careerist who never ceases to dream about peace and who, even at the head of the forces of the rebellion, feels ill at ease because of his second nature, the germs of royalism he has preserved within himself. He is fired by the ideals and emotions of the war of religion even when those who have elected him as their leader have in reality long been fighting for the cause of Bohemian national independence. Ziska's social and psychological ambivalence persist until he is confronted by a personal shock which clinches everything once and for all. When the Imperial forces rape his virgin sister, the last emotional binding him to the throne suddenly snap.

The romantic sequence of events enveloping this Shakespearean subject (in the course of which Ziska is blinded and contracts bubonic plague, his dearly beloved daughter asks for his paternal blessing over her relationship with an enemy lieutenant, etc.) unfortunately impede dramatic efficacy, even in the original version of the play. Ziska is finally defeated not by his greed for power, nor by his wavering, but by successive blows of fortune: disease, blindness and old age. The author, reared in the spell of the Kotzebue plays, depicts the horrors befalling the protagonist (and caused by him) with relative restraint; but to depict them at all today is likely to prove disturbing, almost grotesque. It weighs heavily on the individual, psychological and social drama of the hero. The tension masterfully built up in the scenes where Ziska is fighting for power gradually slackens and is finally completely lost amidst the unfortunate circumstances characterizing the end of his life.

Sándor Beke, the initiator and director of this première, explained his objective in this way: "My intention has been to strip away from Katona's text all those flourishes

which are alien and uninteresting for the contemporary audience, and at the same time to emphasize other details not necessarily stressed in the original but most important to the plot; and to give the action a proper background and strengthen the conviction of the whole play."

Evaluations of the outcome differ. Everybody is in agreement with the director that the adaptation should be faithful to the spirit of the work rather than to its structure. What is open to debate is whether Beke has been faithful to anything at all. For example, was it justified to cast the playwright himself and to have him recite some artificial and obtrusive commentaries at the beginning and at the end, plus monologues of the hero lifted from the text? Was it really worthwhile to devise a walk-on role for the contemporary censor, the man whose attitude to the theme of revolt and whose alarm over a few sharply critical passages led him to prevent the staging of *Získa* in the early nineteenth century?

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It is commonly admitted that works from the recent past often seem more dusty than classics dating back several centuries, and László Németh's play about John Huss did not reach the stage for more than 30 years. According to many it is one of Németh's weakest historical plays, lacking an integrated structure. Yet again the delay in staging this play is due not merely to dramatic faults. Set in the 15th century, it is—like all of Németh's works in this genre—autobiographical in conception; behind the historical situation and the problems evoked there lies a distinctive personal message.

The historical subject matter takes us back to the Synod of Constance. This was the first summit meeting of its kind in modern history in the framework of which, in addition to the emperor and the pope, thirty cardinals, thirty-three archbishops, 150 bishops, four prince-electors, twenty-four princes, seventy-eight counts and 676 barons gathered together in order to reform and defend the Church. John Huss, a philosopher and preacher, social critic and university professor, who had risen from serfhood to enter holy orders and become the forerunner and hero of national movements in Bohemia, attended the Synod voluntarily. He went of his own will amongst his enemies to counter the charges concerning him and to put forward the views he genuinely held. He was preparing for a debate, but instead he walked into a trap. The emperor, in whose pledge of safe-conduct Huss placed all his trust, was only too happy to be rid of him; but he was only condemned to the stake when it became clear that the stubborn preacher would not disown the tenets attributed to him. "He who recants, confesses. And to confess an uncommitted sin is a sin in itself," John Huss proclaims.

This bald summary does not do justice either to the play or to the performance given at the Budapest National Theatre, for it does not even reveal the main theme. We know from Németh's autobiographical writings that after the country's liberation the writer was urged by his friends to indulge in a dose of self-criticism. His middle-of-the-road attitude and ideological errors during the war had already caused him to seek an obscure refuge as a provincial teacher, paid by the lesson. The ideological terms in which to couch this self-criticism and its content kept Németh occupied throughout the years 1946–48. He reached a decision eventually by exploring many varieties of potential solutions and their consequences in three historical plays written in swift succession: *Széchenyi*, *Eklézsia-megkövetés* (Public Penance) and *Husz János*. Hence the key to this work lies in the author's personal dilemma of those years. Yet the traditional structure of the play and the vast array of forces which it manipulates on the stage have given it something more, enabling it to maintain its relevance despite the changes that have taken place since the 1940s. Apart from the historical theme and the biographical import of the work there is also a highly

topical drama rich in political and social content, which has a universal validity.

The actual substance of Huss' religious polemics and the concrete charges levelled against him were sifted through the sieve of intellectual history long ago. On a modern stage it is rather incongruous to brood upon exactly what happens to the altar-bread after it has been consecrated. The dramatic question must be whether the advocate of the poor has the right to uphold his own views. "What is this world coming to if everybody sets up his own private court of justice to pronounce on how things should be, and if Christianity assumes a different form in every intelligent mind?" László Németh professes with his protagonist that, "Only a world in which everybody adheres to his best belief is capable of revival." John Huss comes within a hair's breadth of being considered a Saint in his age, and thereby brings the charge of heresy down upon his head. In Németh's play he exemplifies epoch-making persistence and loyalty to a perceived truth. On Németh's stage Huss is not a grim fighter, but a strange, soft-spoken, altruistic doctor of learning, whom his followers, the simple people, embrace with affection and solicitude. The fact that his followers stand beside him even in the shadow of the stake points beyond the plot and shows that their faith not only gives strength to the fighter but also reinforces his basic conviction. It is worth dying at the stake for this sense of life, perceived truth, and the right to think freely, which is what the followers convey to the hero.

This was Gábor Zsámbéki's first staging of a Németh play. Through careful editing and abridging of the text (without violating the essence of the work), he managed to cut the number of characters by one third. The modernity of this performance lay not in exterior features, nor in the puritan stage setting, but in the interpretation and the manner in which the messages behind the text were clearly brought home. Rather than concentrate on the most frequently restated of Németh's subjects, the responsibility of the earthly environment and its failure to understand the ideas of a great man, Zsámbéki analyses the functioning of the mechanism of power, throwing light on the gaping chasm between the man prepared to argue even at the foot of the stake and the mere onlookers, the distance which separates the reformer from the people.

Like almost all Németh plays, *Husz János* is built around a single, broadly phrased, grandiose solo role. Both its conceptual and emotional force lie in the hands of a single actor, and Imre Sinkovits, in the past so often cast in the role of the romantic national hero, offers a convincing interpretation of the lean, ascetic, pensive man of reforms.

ANNA FÖLDES

REAL AND APPARENT CONFLICTS

János Rózsa: *Vasárnapi szülők* (Sunday Daughters), Judit Elek: *Majd holnap* (Maybe Tomorrow)

According to critical reaction and audience response the most successful Hungarian film of recent months has undoubtedly been *Sunday Daughters*, directed by János Rózsa, with the script written by István Kardos. Prestigious professional bodies of teachers and psychologists called attention to its topicality and the truth of its message, while the problems it raises sparked a lively seminar in the psychology section of the Hun-

garian Academy of Sciences. In other words, over and above its aesthetic impact, the film has also made another kind of impression. At the same time, favourable audience response in Hungary has been confirmed at the Cannes Film Festival where *Sunday Daughters* met with unanimous critical acclaim during the *semaine de la critique*.

It is fair to say that János Rózsa has overcome the childish naturalism manifest in some of his earlier films, and has produced a film with a valuable message, composed and moderate in its means of expression, and no doubt his most significant feature film to date, one that can even stand comparison with Truffaut's *Quatre cent coups*, actually quoted by Rózsa in the film. István Kardos's script merits similar praise, for the author did not content himself on this occasion with a good basic idea: he thought it through psychologically and from the point of view of social authenticity. The film depicts real problems and plausible characters who upset the usual defensive reflexes of indifference, resignation, and acquiescence with a force that sometimes brings the viewer close to tears. They demolish our prejudices and appeal to our conscience by revealing through the artistic resources of the cinematic epic a world which is quite unknown to those who have never lived inside it. The scene is a reform school for girls of anti-social inclination. It is not a prison (for the girls are not old enough to be sent to prison by any judicial process) but neither is it an ordinary boarding school: it is the hell with which parents used to frighten disobedient children in pre-war years: a reformatory.

The film is not concerned with the criteria which force the community of such an institute into being, but concentrates on revealing the bleak hopelessness of its inmates, the absence of a family, the lack of support and love, and the drama of social background: the underworld or sub-culture of alcoholism, loose morals, and the immorality, irresponsibility or criminal behaviour of the parents which is primarily responsible for spoiling these young lives. When the film points to the limited means at the disposal of society (or "the authorities") to retrieve the irretrievable, its basic approach is characterized by responsible realism and not pessimism. There never has been and probably there never will be a society that can shake itself completely free of all the problems of crime. There never has been and probably there never will be a society that is not obliged to defend itself against deviant behaviour of one sort or another. The problem so well illustrated in the film is basically this: these children can satisfy their thirst for freedom and their hunger for love, basic human needs in the heart of every child which not even the best institute can appease, only by breaking the rules of the game which they are invited to go along with. This is a vicious circle. Defying punishment, the girls abscond again and again, they cut their veins to show their mettle or exact a revenge, they take refuge in drugs, they dissimulate and have suitors they call "buyers" who bail them out from what they conceive to be a cage, unbearable in spite of all its conveniences. All the time they are fighting against the frustration of being denied freedom, and this leads them to reproduce the same unfortunate behaviour that led them to the institute in the first place.

This "institute" problem has long figured in the literature and cinematic art of other countries, notably Britain and France. In Hungary, however, this film appears like part of the "Get to Know Your Own Country" programme, presenting in place of the usual geographic region a social one.

János Rózsa was wise to rely on secondary school pupils (from Miskolc, Budapest, and Fót) to play the parts of the young persons. They may not have acting diplomas but I would not dare to call them amateurs. Some performances were quite outstanding, including above all that of Julianna Nyakó in the main role of Judit, whose life, adventures, and revolts epitomize the situation

and psychosis of this particular section of society. Several other young performers —Andrea Blizik, Melinda Szakács and Júlia Balogh—could walk into Drama School on the basis of their acting in this film.

The adult contingent is more problematic but through no fault of the actors (Erzsi Pásztor, Ágnes Kakassy, Olga Koós, and the others), who perform their roles faithfully and with great care. The problem lies in the script. It offers an intimate description of the world of children (the central message of the film), but its treatment of the adult figures is superficial and sketchy. Fewer subplots, episodes, and adventures might have increased intensity, not from the point of view of the scientific seminar analysing the issues, but certainly from the point of view of artistic experience and the depth of catharsis. There can be no aesthetics without satisfactory penetration of the psychological requirements, but the two are not to be measured by one and the same yardstick.

Regardless of this reservation János Rózsa's film is a remarkable achievement in the rising trend of neo-realism in the Hungarian cinema, and Elemér Ragályi is, as always, an excellent cameraman.

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Rózsa's film is the most welcome success of recent months, but *Maybe Tomorrow*, by Judit Elek, must be labelled the most painful disappointment of the same period. After a few successful short films Judit Elek gained sudden distinction both inside and outside Hungary with one of the most intimate and original feature films of the nineteen-sixties *(The Lady from Constantinople)*, following which she turned her back on feature films and made a name for herself as a pioneer in the ranks of Hungarian documentary film makers. Her new film falls sadly short of the consistent high standards she has maintained hitherto, but after all such things do happen with film-makers from time to time, and if this were a study of her œuvre rather than a criticism of a single film, I would dwell longer on her balance and high standards in the past. The fact remains that *Maybe Tomorrow* is like its own parody. Since the director sets her standards so high and knows the art of film-making inside out it will be more instructive to examine why and where she lost her eye for proportion and what misconception of an artistic objective led her like some will-o'-the-wisp into this quagmire. A statement made by Judit Elek herself prior to the release of her film would suggest that her aim was to capitalize on the experiences she had gained as a director of documentaries, to go beyond the possibilities and limitations of this genre while retaining what it has to offer as regards depth, power, and authenticity. This is a widespread endeavour in Hungarian cinematic art, but while others have sought to achieve the same objective through a stylistic "documentarization" of fiction (loose, unscripted story determined only in its main lines, improvization by amateur actors, etc.), Elek has started out from the opposite direction. A stylized feature film is her goal but she treats fiction as if it could be pure documentary, discarding evaluation, clarification, emphatic vision, and the organizing principle of artistic interpretation which all help to establish relationships and are vital in a feature film if the audience is to obtain any insight into the director's own attitudes and evaluation. The various episodes instead pile up as an accidental heap of facts about life, and yet not completely accidental, for György Pethő has written a supremely literary script, packed with allusions to various novels and films, which does not come off at all.

A work of art must be an organized piece of reality; any attempt to abandon organization altogether (as opposed to a deliberate aiming at *apparent* lack of organization) does not lead to greater authenticity, only to a chaos on the surface, under which we shall never find deeper relationships, messages, truth, or meanings—in fact nothing but

their illusion. Since the basis of all comic theory is the contradiction between appearances and essential features one feels that this story could have been adapted to the screen more successfully if treated as a comedy, with deliberate exploitation of the humour inherent in its situations. In misinterpreting the nature of their theme, director and script-writer allowed a promising opportunity to slip through their fingers.

The dilemma of love is only an apparent drama posing apparent conflicts for István and Eszter, the two main protagonists—this is precisely what defines their whole relationship. Both have their families, but (departing from the usual formula) neither puts any obstacles in the way of their relationship, neither demands that it should come to an end: in fact István and Eszter do not even have to conceal their love affair. An almost ideal situation, the dream of any dissolute husband or wife, with partners on both sides who reconcile themselves to this fate or, perhaps, find consolation elsewhere and turn triangles easily into squares. The emotional or moral counterpoint of a mature love-affair that would (traditionally) either force the heroes to make a choice or condemn them to double bondage has lost all its weight and sunk to the level of pragmatic detail. In other words the film shows how what is usually and conventionally taken to be a serious human drama becomes in this case the familiar occurrence of everyday life.

Their love itself seems to lack all weight, another feature pointing in the direction of comedy. At least, the film fails to convince the viewer that the last sentence in the final love scene of the film, when they say at their usual meeting place, "let's get away from here," is anything more than a banal end to a relationship in which both have lost interest. It has little to do with any kind of cathartic experience shared by the heroes, for catharsis has no place in farce. What István and Eszter are witnesses to amongst the former's family in the countryside takes up more than three-quarters of the film, is not related in any way to their relationship, and can only be categorized as farce presented in a tragic tone. The viewer merely finds it extremely difficult to keep his bearings in the chaotic hatred and quarrels of relatives wrangling over an inheritance, all the more so as it is difficult to know who is who in such a hotch-potch of burlesque scenes; the fact that, like a medieval mystery play, each articulates his own problems, revealing secrets and pains which are not in the habit of disclosing to others, individuals reflects little credit on a film of the 1980s.

Probably the makers of this film were out to present a fashionable sensation of alienation through a circus firework display of base passions, spectacular bickering, complete lack of understanding, and inability to communicate, and aimless loitering on the part of people who feel themselves not really belonging anywhere. But if there is anything that cannot be presented in an alienated manner, with the aim of alienating the spectator, that is alienation itself. This is a subject where any sort of extraneous approach is bound to degrade or even obliterate the inner drama, transpose it into the field of comedy, a perfectly acceptable option from an artistic point of view. Judit Elek and György Pethő did not pay sufficiently careful and consistent thought to what they wanted to say and illustrate in this film, nor to the means best suited to realizing their intentions. Hence their ideas and aims are lost to the viewer, who has nothing but his own assumptions on which to base a judgement; and their means of expression come nowhere near to reflecting the artistic skill and talent characteristic of this director's previous films.

ERVIN GYERTYÁN

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66, "János Kádár in Vienna, Rome and Bonn," 68, "The Human Factor," 78.

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