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The New Hungarian Quarterly

East-West Meetings of Intellectuals
Iván Boldizsár

The Hungarian Banking System
Béla Sulyok

The First European Homo Erectus
László Vértes

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Solitary Voyage
Gábor Goda

Three Short Stories
Imre Sarkadi

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EAST-WEST MEETINGS OF INTELLECTUALS

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

I am writing this article at the beginning of February 1966, and I am aware that because of the prolonged press incubation of a periodical such as this, it will not appear until after April, and indeed many of our overseas readers will only receive it some time in the middle of the summer because we cannot meet the cost of sending subscription copies by airmail. None the less, I am going to write about the series of international meetings I have had the luck and happiness of attending during the past eighteen months. None of these international gatherings bore the epithet East-West, yet the attraction, characteristics, significance and success of each of them was due to the fact that they were attended by intellectuals from both the eastern and western halves of Europe and, to a lesser degree, from the United States, Latin America, Asia and Africa, and even, at the P.E.N. conference, from as far afield as Australia.

But I am straight away pulled up by a much abused word in the title, one which even now rolled far too easily from my typewriter. I don't think I have to explain which word—it is "intellectual." In all the languages known to me the word has a variety of meanings, and not infrequently they carry an overtone not quite of the pleasantest sort. This is brought out in American in the most picturesque way when they call intellectuals "egg heads," with a combination of irony and respect. "Intellectual" in English has a more restricted meaning than the Hungarian word I am using at this moment: *értelmiségi*. Our word includes both what the English call intellectuals, and professional people. Intellectual does not refer to a profession in English, while the Hungarian word covers everyone who makes a living out of professional work of any kind, indeed all "white collar" workers.

None the less, I use the word intellectuals to describe the men and women who assembled at these international meetings I am writing about, in the more restricted sense of the word, in both Hungarian and English. They are

men and women who—embracing this or that ideological outlook, belonging to this or the other philosophical persuasion, or professing eclecticism—are in any case humanists. They guard their intellectual independence, insist on seeing both sides of any case, look for no exclusive panacea, and are Voltaireans to a man in that, though they will fight what you say, they will fight to the death for your right to say it. This intellectual independence, this careful examination of both sides of every case, and this respect for the opponent's point of view do not, in my modest opinion, prevent them from throwing their whole weight into the struggle for a given cause and if need be risking and sacrificing their life not only in the metaphorical Voltairean sense, but in the very real, physical sense of the word. They are humanists in the sense of Romain Rolland, and believe with him that "the humanism so dear to our fathers, which was confined to Greek and Latin manuals, must be broadened. Humanism must be comprehended in its full sense today as embracing all the intellectual forces of the world." At one time Romain Rolland called this "pan-humanism," at another "active humanism." Thomas Mann called it "militant humanism" at one of the debates of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, the spiritual predecessor of UNESCO, a pre-war body set up under the auspices of the League of Nations. We in Hungary have particularly vivid memories of that session, because it was held in Budapest, and it was on that occasion that the poet Attila József, whom I think I need not, in this seventh volume of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, bury under explanatory notes, greeted Thomas Mann in his famous poem as "a European among the Whites."

I thought this little excursion into semantics necessary not only because it provides an appropriate basis for the notes and conclusions which follow, but also because some of our readers might join with quite a few of the western participants in believing that the broad definition of an intellectual I have given is all very well in the West, but it can't be applied to the more or less official delegates from the East, now, can it? Fortunately it has become abundantly clear from recent international meetings that my attempt at a definition of the intellectual does apply equally well to the intellectuals of the eastern socialist countries. That among the latter there are more who could be called committed intellectuals, to widen Sartre's expression, is not at all the result of political pressure, but the consequence of not twenty but several hundred years of social and historical development. In Hungary, just as in Poland or Czechoslovakia, centuries of foreign oppression and subjugation gave the intellectuals a greater and more active part to play in public life, in patriotic movements and on the international stage than in, say, England or France.

If I remember correctly I have said all this hundreds of times over at all the international gatherings I am about to mention. Two of these were held under P.E.N. auspices, the first of which took place in Budapest in October 1964.

Budapest Round-Table Conference of P.E.N.

The main outcome of this conference and of the Round-Table which followed it, was to link these two words: P.E.N. and Budapest. For many years, beginning in 1957, the International P.E.N. Congresses were the scenes of Cold War skirmishes, with Hungary in the direct line of fire. An English writer, feeling out opinion, trying to sound out contrary points of view, standing in a corridor of the Academy of Sciences overlooking the Danube, just before one of the sessions started, said: "You know if anybody had told me seven years ago that P.E.N. would today be holding its executive committee meeting in Budapest and arranging round-table discussions to follow it with numerous participants from East and West, and with Soviet writers present as observers, I should have stared at him and run for the nearest psychiatrist."

Tradition and innovation. The poets, essayists, novelists or—according to a rival interpretation—publishers, editors and—I don't remember the third term—let's say nobodies—united in the Hungarian P.E.N. Club all felt that the success of the meeting was directly due to them. The directors of the International P.E.N. and the members of the executive committee felt that it was due to them and to what are called the ideals of the P.E.N. This caused no dispute: the real international successes are the ones which all sides claim for themselves. We Hungarians at least could feel that the P.E.N. ideals had been properly fulfilled at last, here in Budapest.

On the third day of the Round-Table discussions, which had as their topic "Tradition and innovation in literature," when I rose to round up the debate, I reminded the assembled writers of a Hungarian author active at the beginning of this century and between the two wars, whom, if he had been an Austrian or a Swede, I could have called a great writer without any hesitation. As it is I can only quote Thomas Mann again—who wrote this of his novel about Nero: "He compressed all his malicious and well-concealed knowledge about art and the artist's life into this novel about the dilettante, painful and bloody, and thus endowed his book with the whole depth, the melancholy, horror and comedy of life." This writer is Dezső Kosztolányi. I told them that thirty-three years ago he had taken part in a similar gather-

ing of P.E.N. in the Hague and had murmured, looking at the assembly of writers, "I wonder what on earth they write?" . . . Kosztolányi answered his own question with a neat twist on the word: "Not letters, not applications, not bills—but, in the strict sense of the word, 'wonders' . . . themselves. The child in them, in all of us. The man in them and in all of us."

The writer and society. The difference made by thirty years, and between the writers of then and now, can be gauged by the fact that though man stood in the centre of the Budapest Round-Table discussions just as in the Hague, he was not, as in Kosztolányi's time, looking back to his childhood, but forward to the maturity of mankind. Throughout the debate and the discussion, as writers examined the questions of tradition and innovation, man, or under whatever name he was being referred to—individual, personality, soul or anything else—in the idiom and style of the various writers, was never seen in isolation but always referred to in the same breath as the notion of and term for society. In the debate on tradition and innovation the defenders and upholders of tradition used society as an argument, and their opponents did the same in support for what was *new*. Underlining that word *new* I have falsified a little the spirit of the debate, since there was not one writer—with the exception of a Dutchman—who would set the traditional against the new in a rigid antithesis.

The first speaker, Gyula Illyés, launching the discussion on poetry, made man the first word uttered (or better still girl, since he began by telling a folk tale about a princess . . .), but his second word was society. Illyés asked a question: "Can the poet find the people he writes for? Can the regeneration of poetry and of society proceed hand in hand?" He himself answered yes, and all the four sessions of the Round-Table conference conclusively echoed his answer. This was no longer a success in terms of "atmosphere," it was a matter of substance, a real achievement in the debate.

The relationship of writer and society is not in the final event one between the writer and his reader. One of the foremost innovations that have taken place since the generation of Romain Rolland, Thomas Mann and Dezső Kosztolányi is that the number of readers have multiplied or, in the words of Michel Butor, one of the most controversial personalities of the conference, "have increased millionfold." No one took him up on this, and in fact there was less argument with him on a number of other matters than he had anticipated on his arrival. He believed that the French *nouveau roman* would lead to an outcry in Budapest, but in the end it was one of a number of trends that were discussed, no more. Michel Butor's speculations about the readers who have grown a millionfold were in fact taken up and developed by a Soviet writer, Konstantin Simonov.

The best thing about the Budapest Round-Table was that it remained round; no one tried to make it square with anything else, either unduly in favour of tradition or unduly in favour of innovation.

P.E.N. Congress in Bled

Though in terms of time the second meeting of intellectuals was the Vienna *Europa-Gespräch*, in June 1965, I prefer to jump to the third, the P.E.N. Congress held in Bled, Yugoslavia, because the subject-matter is somewhat the same. I think my diary of the time conveys its atmosphere and meaning more vividly than a hindsight account.

1st July. The morning train from Budapest arrives in Ljubljana, sixty kilometres from Bled, at one o'clock in the middle of the night. There is no train on to Bled till six. I had sent a telegram to the secretariat of the Thirty-third Congress of P.E.N. and its Round-Table Conference. It said only: "Train arrives in Ljubljana at 0.58 stop Awful stop." We got out of the train in a downpour with Géza Hegedűs, the man-of-all-work of present-day Hungarian literature and with Lili Halápy, the faithful English interpreter of the P.E.N. meetings in Hungary, who this time came to Bled not as an interpreter but as one of the audience. The other members of the Hungarian party: Gyula Illyés, István Sőtér and Mihály Váci had left on an earlier train, but as it turned out they had worse luck and arrived later than we did. We had no time to look round in the summer thunderstorm before we were seated in a Fiat 1500 which had been sent to fetch us.

2nd July. Glorious sunshine. The glass-concrete Congress Hall built in a series of transparencies stands on the shore of a little lake of uncanny beauty surrounded by hills, "a sea-eye," as the Hungarians call a mountain lake. The building makes one feel good just to look at it, and it fits wonderfully into its surroundings. To be inside during conferences, however, is not so good, except when it's cool outside or raining. When the sun beats down on it it becomes a cauldron—and a warning that delegates of all nationalities would do well to take home with them: that styles grown under different climates should not be picked up and transplanted elsewhere, at least without built-in air-conditioning. Luckily, from the second day on the rain took pity on our poor heads.

I arrived in the Hall by myself. Illyés's party had been put up in Villa Bled, President Tito's summer resort, together with the other honorary guests of the Slovenian P.E.N.: Stephen Spender, the Soviet delegation led by Surkov, Victor von Vriesland, the retiring international president, Arthur

Miller, the president designate, the French Claude Aveline, veteran participant of the Dubrovnik P.E.N. Congress of 1933, Rosamond Lehmann, the Polish Parandowski and a few more. Others are still resting, or engaged in writing their complete works. I arrived on the scene in this way, alone, and now I should like to become no more than a reader among the many writers. Ady saw the writer as a "North cape, a mystery, a strangeness, a marsh-light flickering"; I saw them all here as so many chef d'œuvres, so many "Works Selected," so many copyrights, so many dreams; so much good and so much bad—is there really any reason why the vogue for round-tables and symposia and dialogues following the Cold War should have driven writers of all people into each other's arms, instead of leaving them alone with their typewriters or letting them mix with anyone on earth but their colleagues?

To this nagging doubt the first day supplied no answer. We spent it playing at forming societies and ballotting, just as those "other people" do. The international steering committee went on proposing, withdrawing, amending and playing high diplomacy with great ingenuity until eventually only one of the two original candidates remained, Arthur Miller. The recreator of Latin-American prose, Miguel-Angel Asturias, a man commanding great love and respect, and equally worthy of the presidency, withdrew with such thorough Latin *grandezza* that the tall, spare, factual Arthur Miller, always grudging of adjectives, looking like an American Don Quixote, was moved to reply with a burst of almost Spanish eloquence. At one point in the tumultuous debate my colleague István Sőtér stepped in, and the Red Sea of passions rolled back. We all got across unscathed and no unfortunate Pharaoh was swallowed up by the raging waters.

In the evening a reception and get-together in Bled Castle, three hundred metres above sea level, on the plateau of a steep cliff, with candlelight, *slivovica* and *čevabčiča* on the house. Here, sitting on the circular bench running round a linden-tree, just as in Hungarian villages, we met Lajos Zilahy, the Hungarian writer who had been living in the United States for nearly twenty years. Neither of us two, I know, will forget that talk long into the night about what had happened to our life and our dreams, about our work and plans, misunderstandings and misinterpretations, about writers and readers, and above all, our homelands, the old and the new.

3rd July. The second day produced a reply to my first sceptical question, and in two different ways. I had thought of it as my own, individual doubt, but it must have been in the air, because Stephen Spender, the third to speak in the first plenary session, asked it as well. The first contribution was made by Gyula Illyés, just as last October in Budapest. He spoke on the

main theme of the congress: "The writer and modern society." His speech was so brief that someone ought to make it Lesson I in the congressological manual. He defended plainness and intelligibility of writing, but he pointed out that time was working for what was once called obscure, for Franz Kafka, for instance.

The second contribution came from Roger Shattuck, a Polish-born young American professor of literature. He lectures on French literature, as he said, apologetically, in Texas. He began by saying that he represented neither his American home, nor his Polish ancestors, nor French literature, but, as he put it, "only a generation which will be the last on the earth." He paused a little; it was a well-calculated bomb, I reflected to myself, but then it appeared that it was really the bomb he meant. "We are the last generation," he cried, "for never again can there be people on earth who can say they are a postwar generation."

Spender began with this, angrily. He was fed up with writers getting together prattling away about literature. I expected him to quote Lafargue ("Poetry has its most dangerous enemy in literature") and then go on speaking about it, but he did not. He said we should not talk about literature, but practise it. If it was impossible to write collectively, then let the best present read from their poems. The Hungarian delegation was proud as patriots and satisfied as coexistentialists, for Spender mentioned Illyés in the first place; the English poet the Hungarian, the western the eastern. He gave the names of Pablo Neruda, Richard Hughes, Louis Guilloux, Ignazio Silone, Rosamond Lehmann. And stepped down from the rostrum.

4th July. On the third day I had the honour to act as chairman. So it became my task and pleasure to call my compatriot to the platform before some thousand or so writers from five continents. Gyula Illyés knew his duty to international attention: he recited a very short lyric of his, in Hungarian. A Hungarian-born French actress, Madame Véronique Kovács-Charaire, followed with a French translation of it by Guillevic. It lasted three minutes in all. I was in a good position to watch the faces from the platform. They listened to the Hungarian poem with polite attention, turning their ears rather than their faces to the poet: "Well, let's listen to that strange language." But before the end of the poem the look of curiosity eased, they were moved by the lilt of the verse, the rhythm caught them. By the time the French version was spoken they were listening not simply because they were well-behaved ladies and gentlemen or because Spender had praised that poet "what's-his-name?" They listened because they were captivated by the terse beauty, modernity and vigour of the poem.

2nd, 3rd, 4th July. Breaking the usual form of diaries I go back to the first

three days. It was during the recess in the first day's discussions that a conference of a different kind was held, a sort of conference which set this writers' congress apart from all others and which began to give an answer to that continuing doubt of ours—was it really worth while bringing so many writers together? I mean the round-table conversations which took place during the recess, round-table in lower case, please, because the tables at which we sat were really round. This was an innovation of that P.E.N. Congress, and a rather refreshing change for an international conference. For here were the eastern and western and the northern and southern partners in the debate arguing, clashing, picking quarrels and making them up, agreeing and disagreeing, scoffing at each other, sympathizing with complete ease, as if they had been friends sitting round café tables and shouting at each other for years.

This was fixed up in the following way. The plenary sessions began at nine in the morning, and they really did begin at nine, and went on till eleven. Then came a break and fifty invited writers walked over from the Congress Hall to the nearby villa of the Slovenian Academy, while the others went back after the interval to resume the plenary session. The fifty writers settled down around five tables in five different rooms. *Slivovica* and fruit juice were served, and later a cold meal and coffee were brought in. It reminded me of my youth and the Centrál, a coffee house in Pest, where all the big and small literary debates of the thirties took place. At one table the "populist" writers would be sitting, at another the "urbani," and at other tables a mix-up of them both, and every day they changed round. This was a part of literary life which is missing today in Hungary. And that's what it was like in Bled, where people from the east and the west talked to each other, heartily, informally, frankly. No one kept minutes of what went on, the press was only there in so far as they were writers or in their private capacity, and no one had the feeling he was making a public statement, or wondering at the back of his mind about the possible reactions of his worst enemy—or best friend—at home. We all found ourselves saying on the third day that though of course we were, every one of us, staunch defenders of proceedings in public in all other matters, our honest and fruitful exchanges had only been possible because we didn't have to bother about readers, publishers and newspapers, ugh!

There was no chairman at any of the tables; it was merely that the conversation tended to gravitate around some person who had an equal command of English and French, and so could canalize the discussion around a question someone had asked. For the round-tables attacked the same subjects as the plenary meetings. The following morning one of the most remarkable

personalities of the Congress, the six-foot-tall, bearded-like-St. Francis Scottish Professor, Douglas Young, summed up for the plenary meeting the round-table talks of the previous day, sticking to the principle of not mentioning names.

The informal café atmosphere did not get under way at once. On the first day we all sat rather stiffly around the tables. Tell a man to talk freely, and he dries up. One of the subjects on the first day was the writer's responsibility. The rather awkward and tongue-tied silence was resolved by an Italian writer—we all promised not to mention names—"What if we talked, instead, of the writer's irresponsibility," he suggested. A lot of laughter, and the Italian writer glanced sharply at a Czech colleague and myself. What did we think of it? We laughed. I urged him to begin. He made a witty and animated case for the argument that the writer had no responsibility to anybody except... and in ten minutes time, because he was a very good writer, because he had to draw the positive from the negative, because he couldn't help himself, there he was, nicely involved with the writer's responsibility.

The first day had six official subjects for discussion on the agenda, all of which had been printed in advance in the programme. We were asked, or rather we asked ourselves, was literature more or less important today than it had been in the past? Had the writer's responsibility and role in society increased or decreased? To the first question all five tables gave the same answer, as we discovered over lunch and while strolling beside the lake—more important. Such complacent self-congratulation, by the way, was not very typical of the round-tables. The second point, the discussion on the writer's role, met with a greater amount of scepticism. At three of the five tables it was agreed that the importance of the individual writer had diminished but that of literature as a whole had increased in stature. I had better leave Douglas Young to clarify this; the subject is a somewhat delicate one and liable to bring a hornet's nest about one's ears. "It has been stated that in some countries the writer enjoys complete freedom. This complete freedom at the same time decreases the writer's influence upon the readers." What on earth does this mean? I happened to sit at the table where this statement was discussed, and I joined in. An American author, the editor of a magazine with a mass circulation, said at the height of the battle about freedom that though it was true that there was nothing which could not be said in his paper, including the opposite, nobody cared. He would willingly give the half of his kingdom if he and his paper could enjoy the attention society commonly gave similar writers and journals in some East-European countries.

One of the substantial results of the East-West exchange has been that Hungarian, Czech, Polish, Soviet and Cuban writers at all the five tables could at last—and in my experience for the first time—convince their opposite numbers in the West that the writer in our countries was not a *private person*. This is not a socialist innovation, it is part of a national tradition. In Hungary it dates from the sixteenth century and the soldier-poet Bálint Balassi, in Poland from Balassi's contemporary, Mikolaj Rej. A well-known poem by him, which has recently appeared in the Seuil *Anthologie de la poésie polonaise* is called: "The Republic, or the National Assembly." I believe we succeeded in making our western friends understand that the criterion of poetic greatness was one thing with us, and another with them. Today in the West a poet is great in proportion to his ability to keep away from public affairs. With us, on the other hand... I tried to make our point in the debate by translating the quotation on the title page of a volume of Ady's poems, which, put into pedestrian prose, runs as follows: "I was always harassed by money and the plaything of vices and virtues, but my inspired poetic pencil was never interested by anything but politics and love."

The Americans quoted a non-literary example of the increased public role of the writer, in Robert Lowell's invitation to the White House. Lowell's name, they said, had become a symbol, even among those who had never read a single poem of his.

The little groups at the tables were reshuffled every day. Géza Hegedűs told me on the third day that one of our opponents of the previous day had just been heard arguing at another table that the writer could not choose to be a private person, quoting Einstein as a sort of example. Einstein's private meditations, so his unassailable argument ran, led to the atom bomb, which was anything but a private matter.

5th July. The subject today was mass media and their relationship to literature. Here we all sat round embracing Goethe's "*himmelhoch jauchzend, zum Tode betrübt.*" Some went as far as saying that these mass media, TV in particular, were worse than the horror films, they undermined literature and corrupted the reader. Others, Arthur Miller among them, countered with the argument that films, radio and above all television brought the words, thoughts, and very frequently the personality of the writer to audiences which had never before been in contact with a better standard than horror films or had enjoyed stuff with no standard at all. The enthusiasm of a French writer led him to forecast a new classical age in which a new unity of writer and audience, as in the times of Sophocles or Shakespeare, would come into being through the mediation of TV.

In the end this prospect brought much joy and satisfaction to everybody on all sides. And because it was writers who were sitting around the tables or in the seats of the Hall, many were left with the sneaking hope that they would be called upon to be the new Sophocles or Shakespeare.

Europa-Gespräch in Vienna

Of all the meetings of intellectuals I ever attended, or indeed read about, the one in Vienna was the most comprehensive, thorough and successful. The meeting in 1965 was the seventh in a consecutive annual series bearing the name of *Europa-Gespräch*, but it really only became European in that year, because Europe had previously been represented by Western Europe and North America. That year was the first when the Russians, Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs and Hungarians were also invited.

The title of that meeting sounded a bit like building castles in the air: "*Brücken zwischen Ost und West,*" but the subtitle was a lot more to the point: "*Europa—Koexistenz oder Kollaboration?*" This is something which invites a lot of phrasemongering, prevarication, rehashing of old *clichés*, mutual recriminations and castles in the air. The Vienna conversations were businesslike, frank and thought-provoking.

Vienna, 15th July.

It all got off to a bad start with a lot of boredom and some of our hackles rising. Avalanches of speechifying. Gentlemen, the Mayor. Gentlemen, the President of the Republic as former mayor. Gentlemen, the deputy-mayor in charge of cultural affairs. I slip out before the fourth speaker begins. I am enticed back by Mozart. Following the speeches a string quartet; after all, we are in Vienna. The Europa-conversation is opened by an American. Not just any American, but one of the most interesting and controversial figures of the postwar years. George F. Kennan. Described in the programme as "*Botschafter und Prof*"—"Ambassador and Prof." But for the last two years he has been ambassador neither in Moscow, nor in Belgrade, nor in New Delhi, but only a professor at Princeton. That rising of the hackles is produced by a chill reminiscence of the dead days of the Cold War; why must a European conversation begin with an American lecture?

Is it perhaps because the Vienna hosts wanted to have a big and "impressive" name? Maybe. But chiefly to stress how far we have come from the cold currents and icy seas of the Cold War. Have come? Who? Just now,

with things as they are in Vietnam? The Vienna Conversation has also proved very instructive from this point of view. The Austrians had invited, as they said, "the world of European intellectuals through their representatives." It turned out that they had invited no one but humanists, centre and left of centre, from England, France, Switzerland, Norway, the German Federal Republic and Holland. It seems that the word intellectual is beginning to mean the same thing in both halves of Europe.

This is the "we" who have come a long way from the Cold War. This first person plural includes the West-European partners of the conversation, and they too write *we*, meaning the Polish Adam Schaff, the Czech Hajek, Professor Ota Sik, the "Kafka-expert" Goldstücker, the Yugoslav Supek, and, I hope, myself as well. It is worth paying a little attention to Vienna, because it has given eyewitness proof how far the western intellectuals have got away from the Cold War. Not that they are any nearer to effective power. They weren't any nearer in the Cold War years either, but in those days conversations with the part of the world where we live was still impossible. Towards the end of the conversation I feel that the East-West bridges mentioned in the title are not quite so much up in the clouds as I thought. The Western intellectuals seemed very keen on getting to know us, on starting a dialogue. We had a nice long talk in Vienna. And this was mainly due to the fact that the "Eastern" side knew a little, if not much better, the "Western" ground than they did ours.

The end of the detour. I see now that I left poor Kennan with his mouth open in the middle of his speech on the first day. His language was what struck me first. He never once used the expression which in the following day's discussion I avoided using myself in giving voice to my pleasure in this way: "The expression which begins with an 'i' and continues with 'roncurtain.'" Nobody used the phrase from that day on, or—like I—they referred to it as "*Der Ausdruck, der mit Ei anfängt, und mit Sernervorhang endet.*"

Kennan's language was a fairly faithful reflection of his thoughts. It was also striking. The ideologist of the first phase of the Cold War, with practical experience of the theory of "containment," taking his point of departure from philosophical and political coordinates different from ours, he made out a nice case for the necessity, indeed, inevitability of coexistence. Backed by solid arguments and in the restrained language befitting a Professor he took a stand against the armaments race and the nuclear policy, pointing out the dangers of nationalism in European (and not only European) thinking, and finally, with a cautious show of patriotism, declaring that he would not like to see his country continuing to play the part of "the guarantor of European security."

Isn't this Viennese picture a little too seductive? True, Kennan, as I said, is far from power at present. Obviously he is far *because* he thinks as he does. But this does not lessen the fact that his stand is symptomatic. Kennan and the best part of the participants in the Vienna conversation, as well as those whom they were representing, without credentials it is true, but not without approval, a few years ago were committed to the same position as is officialdom today in all questions concerning the Cold War, nationalism, nuclear superiority, disarmament, and the leading role of the United States. That something had changed in western thinking in the relationship of the intellectuals and politics had already been indicated by Kennedy's policy, and above all by his attitude. The Vienna conversation testified that this change in the attitudes of the best minds in the West had deeper roots and was more decided than we in the East would have thought, judging by western political symptoms.

Plans and reality. The Austrians had taken the work of preparation seriously. They made a point of including no generalities in the programme. The title of the first working session was "*Kooperation in der Praxis.*" Vice-Chancellor Pittermann opened it with an account of the nationalized sector of Austrian industry, and he emphasized its readiness to cooperate. A logical supplement to his speech followed in the form of a detailed report given by Dr. Simon Koller, the Austrian Ambassador in Hungary, on "Economic and Technical Plans in the Danube Basin."

I sat through a talk on east-west trade relations by a Swiss economist, Max Weber, but to be frank I did not understand much of it. The title of a lecture by the great Soviet atomic scientist Jemeljanow was given in the programme as, "The Plan for an Atomic-Generated International Electricity Supply Grid." That was not quite the subject he spoke on, he said less as well as more. He did not go into details about this exciting and splendid plan, but he explained thoroughly and unambiguously the dangers of the spread of non-peaceful nuclear energy in Europe, and with that he contrived to sharpen in a marked degree the sense of reality of the whole Conversation.

A French engineer named Camus, but no relation, was down in the programme for a lecture entitled "Pre-Fabricated Housing in the East." I decided the time had come for me to go over to the neighbouring Museum to look at my favourite Breughels. Robert Jungk, the Austrian writer, one of the organizers of the Conversation and author of a deeply moving book about Hiroshima, kept me back. "Don't run away," he said, "what we are going to have now will be reality, not ideas and dreams." I put up a small defence in favour of ideas and dreams but I stayed. It was worth while. Monsieur Camus told us that he was a capitalist and no mistake, and that

he liked it, but he owed the greatest experience of his career as an engineer —and it wasn't to be despised as business either—to socialism. He owns a factory producing pre-fabricated housing components. His products were noticed by Soviet engineers at an exhibition. The upshot of it all was that he was invited to do "in hundred thousands what I had been doing in hundreds."

East? West? On the second day of the Vienna Conversation the Prague professor Eduard Goldstücker said to me before the session: "I shall begin my talk on Kafka tonight by asking what they mean by the title of the Conversation: 'Bridges Between East and West'. Prague is a hundred and twenty kilometres *west* of Vienna."

Goldstücker could not put the question that day because someone had put it before him. It was Kogon, also Eduard by the way, who lectures on sociology in Frankfurt-am-Main and is the editor of the *Frankfurter Hefte.* He asked the same question from the chair in the afternoon session, and he too quoted Prague, only he said it was a hundred and forty instead of a hundred and twenty kilometres.

I recall this incident and Kogon's figure for two reasons. One is that I found this question on the East-West dichotomy, coming at the same time from both East and West, as very symptomatic of the atmosphere at the Vienna talk. It was one way of getting rid of Cold War mentality and language. We did not look for the things dividing us but for the things linking us together, though at the same time no one was trying to gloss over the differences that genuinely existed.

In this spontaneous effort an important part was played by Professor Kogon, the director of the Vienna Conversation and the chairman of most of its sessions. The man himself, and what he represents, is the other reason why I should begin the second part of my account with him. As a Catholic who opposed the Nazis he spent years in a concentration camp. When liberated he wrote a book, the first of its kind, about the concentration camps, giving it the apparently objective but in fact accusing title, *Der SS-Staat,* "The SS-State." The book, including the pocket editions, has sold millions of copies, and teachers in some German schools use it as a textbook. This same Kogon was driven into hostility to the "East" by the successive waves of the Cold War and the long delay in the ebb of Stalinism. The Vienna Conversation demonstrated with almost scientific precision the process by which people like Kogon find their way back to their original position and resume the dialogue left off fifteen years ago. Incidentally, one of the dangers of the Vietnam adventure is that it creates divisions where they shouldn't be and puts the clock back.

To keep the record straight I have to add that the Conversation introduced another type of person, also in the chair. Kogon was occasionally replaced by a certain Herr Czernetz, an Austrial Social Democratic deputy, who was very regrettably bent on acerbating the differences between East and West and kept dredging up arguments of ten to fifteen years ago. I imagine it was not quite what he intended, but he certainly played the role of the negative catalyst in the experiment. Participants from abroad naturally received his strictures with icy disapproval, or argued with him, put him right on a number of points, those from Western Europe quite frequently undertaking the task instead of ourselves; on the second day the audience booed him, and from that day on he was not seen again on the rostrum which our witty writers, like schoolboys, nicknamed the "altar."

On the "altar." I was on the "altar" for half a day. The afternoon was taken up by a debate on objectivity, while the evening was given over to literature again. The first point, querying whether it was possible for the dissemination of information to be objective, in knowing and making each other known, promised to be a fairly prickly subject. Well, we got a few prickles on the fingers here and there, but the fruit we were after turned out to be good. It was during this debate that we discovered for the first time in the Conversation that it was quite possible to talk about the most ticklish matters in friendly interchange without budging from positions of principle. It was here that the Dutch Dr. L. Staellert, editor of the periodical *Delta*, approached the question of coexistence in a fresh way that commanded my respect. He started out from the approach of the natural sciences to matter to arrive at relations between *Weltanschauung* and reality. The scientist, he said, looked for the hidden reality of matter, but when he began he did not know what reality; none the less that hidden reality determined his work. But how was he to know if he was looking in the right direction in the search for the hidden reality of matter which he did *not know?* The answer, said Dr. Staellert, was that he did *not* discover it from the *not-knowing*, but from a deeper, more genuine *intuition of truth*. Staellert finds the same sort of parallel in the relationship of reality and world-outlook, of man and ideology. And although he wove the fabric of his conclusions out of the warp and weft of philosophical idealism, his final conclusion is acceptable and progressive. These are the sort of recognitions which generally provoke opposition, but which are accepted in a down to earth way as matter for discussion in an international and "inter-ideological" conversation.

His argument proceeds to maintain that the basis of every outlook is not so much cognitive as intuitive. This does not stand up to criticism, and the moment I hear it I start reasoning to myself against it; but it is worth while

continuing to listen because it soon appears that this is not unlike the preliminary theorem that leads to the main theorem of Pythagoras about the square of the hypotenuse, which can be forgotten later. And this means, the Dutchman goes on, rather more soundly, that in the dialogue of ideologies this intuition of truth is even more important than it is in science. Very much as the complete openness with which scientists communicate their findings to each other, so the same complete openness is essential in the, great dialogue of our age. "What this implies is that we must allow the other party to express his point of view. Not as we would like him to express it, but as it is dictated by his truth-intuition." Here we return to science: "What happens in these conversations is like something going on in scientific research, in that we are searching out the connection, the way to the other man, and his thinking, when we are engaged in the quest for truth, much as the research worker delves into matter to find the hidden reality. For the recognition of this connection, that we live together, is an essential part of the truth," i.e., peaceful coexistence, *coexistentia pacificalis,* if you prefer. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

Humanist "right," humanist "left." Jiři Hajek, the editor of the journal *Plamen* published in Prague, read a very elegantly written contribution with the title "The Specific Mission of Writers." He was described as "Prof. Hajek" in the programme, but for simplicity's sake the organizers promoted all and sundry to Doctors and conferred professorships—right and left—as the waiters used to do in Budapest cafés and the Italian waiters do today. The task of literature, he said, is not to cheer people up in and out of season, but exclusively to explore the human condition of the age we live in. The idealist-humanist Staellert and the Marxist Hajek read prepared texts, but somehow they seemed to have agreed beforehand to make the same points. According to Hajek what good literature does is to seek for the truth in both halves of our divided world, and by doing so make the world less divided. He followed this with an observation which struck me so much that while still in the chair I asked him to lend me his text, and during the Austrian Jungk's lecture (but I was attending, teacher!) I copied out the relevant passage. "Good writing in both parts of the divided world has this further trait in common: it reveals the tragic in the human condition of our age in all its fullness." True enough, each side offers diametrically opposed interpretations of the tragic: the humanist "right," to borrow the phrase of the Polish philosopher Lesek Kolakowski, holds that the tragedy inherent in this situation is unalterable. The humanist "left" sees a rational way out in socialism, and that progress along this road will recognize and overcome at least the social causes of the tragic.

One can argue about this, and so we did, but certainly it provides an excellent starting point, together with Staellert's thesis for the East-West dialogue. The editor-in-chief of the Paris *Preuves*, François Bondy, who had recently visited Budapest and Prague, took these two arguments as his point of departure, and after a few constructively malicious remarks in comparing his experiences in the East and the West, called for more visits by "Eastern" writers to the West, because he thought the present flow of literary traffic was unbalanced.

Dialogue and institution. In the course of the debate proper Robert Jungk put forward a proposal which met with a remarkable fate. He proposed that on the analogy of CERN *(Conseil Européen de la Recherche Nucléaire)* in Geneva, we should set up an East-West Press Institution as an outcome of the Vienna Conversation which would serve to assist mutual understanding between the two sides. The suggestion was promptly rejected, so unanimously that in this case there were no two sides. Why? Shouldn't theories be translated into action? Not always. Conversations of the sort we were having lose their point and effect if they are institutionalized, if somebody is given the "independent" job of running them. Staellert's analogy does not hold here; physics and literary ideologies cannot be regarded alike.

In the course of further debates the most exciting—in the political, more, cinematic, sense of the word—was the Munich publisher Kindler's Ehrenburg-affair or rather scandal; in the literary field Goldstücker's Kafka analysis; in philosophy Adam Schaff and O. Flechtheim's debate on ideological coexistence; and in human terms the lecture by the Czech Professor Ota Sik.

Cloak and dagger film. At first I was puzzled to account for the presence of Kindler at the meeting. All I knew about him was that he owned and published the West-German mass-circulation picture magazine *Revue* which was worth millions. (Since then he has sold out.) This man, a typical figure of present-day West-German life, got up and in twenty-five minutes told us what had happened to him because he had published Ehrenburg's Memoirs. First he was called a traitor to his country. Then pamphlets against him were circulated throughout the country. Next a statement was forged in Liechtenstein, purporting to have been written and signed by him, and it was sent to his business partners. Kindler went on with the publication of the Memoirs. His family and children were threatened. He was called a Moscow agent. A paper published a statement by someone who declared he knew Kindler was a homosexual. Another said that he was given to raping young girls. Both said he was syphilitic. So far all this is more humorous than tragic. The really alarming thing was to follow. The Memoirs were

duly published. On that day, in October, which was a Saturday, after all the shops in the big cities and University towns in West Germany had closed, the windows of all the booksellers in which copies of Ehrenburg's Memoirs were displayed were pasted with placards saying: "Paid Agent of the Jews! Traitor! Traducer of the People!" Since that day—one and a half years ago—not more than a hundred and twenty copies of the book have been sold in the whole of West Germany.

Kindler himself concluded that "events like these indicate that there are Nazi, extreme right-wing and anti-Semitic groups active in the German Federal Republic and West Berlin. These groups are permanent, they are organized, and they are in a position today to organize a simultaneous campaign like this throughout the country."

This shocking story showed at the same time that there were some who had the courage to defy and oppose open and underground terrorism. The question, asked by everyone there was—how much longer?

Literature and philosophy. Kindler was followed by Goldstücker and both their speeches were strikingly and unexpectedly similar. Goldstücker told us that Kafka was first published in Nazi Germany, in 1934, with a band round it "Only for Jews"... That was not the main point of his lecture, of course, but the process by which, thanks in the first place to Goldstücker's own personal efforts, Kafka was—to use his own phrase—demilitarized, a phrase I think I first heard used by Sartre at the 1963 World Conference on Disarmament. The Polish Adam Schaff, armed with all the panoply of his knowledge of the Western world and its ways of thought, proceeded to explain the parallelism of peaceful coexistence and the conflict of ideologies. To which O. Flechtheim, a sociologist in West Berlin, retorted with the theory which he called futurology. And the rest of us sat round with open mouths.

But most interesting of all was the lecture given by Professor Ota Sik. Putting all of himself into a ruthless exposure of the faults and an unshaken affirmation of the present and future of socialism, he managed to bring the most complicated and abstract problems of political economy well within the compass of the ordinary man.

Société Européenne de Culture in Venice

The fourth East-West meeting of intellectuals I am going to speak about began in October 1965 in Venice with a remark reminiscent of one I made in Budapest a year before. But in Venice it was not the place but the time that

was significant. On the first morning, when the session had got under way in the ambulatory of the San Giorgio Maggiore, one of the most peaceful and harmonious places in the whole world, the French Claude Roy said: "Boring. I'll rather go for a stroll in the town."

The first day's meeting of the *Société Européenne de Culture*, S.E.C. for short, was, to make no bones about it, thoroughly uninspiring. Still we agreed with the Polish sociologist, Adam Schaff, who said to him: "What wouldn't you have given, fifteen or even ten years ago, my friend, to have felt bored this way one morning?" He made his point; Claude Roy yielded. The important thing was that we felt all bored together, Frenchmen, Poles, Englishmen, Czechs, the Dominican theologian from Louvain, and writers and critics from Moscow or Tbilisi, Dutchmen and Hungarians. Except for the Spaniards, Portuguese and Albanians, all Europe was there, together.

Together. Why? In the first place because it was fun to get together. The idea of a *Société Européenne de Culture* first arose back in 1948–49, that is to say, at a time when both halves of Europe were chilled by the first icy blasts of the Cold War, but still far from suspecting how long the cold spell would last. Italian sociologists and writers, above all Umberto Campagnolo, Professor of legal history at Padua, the present General Secretary, went from one group of intellectuals to the next throughout the width and breath of Western Europe. They went to see the French Julien Benda and François Mauriac, the English Julien Huxley and A. J. P. Taylor, the Italian Terracini and Jemolo, and last but not least the doyen of them all, Thomas Mann. What they wanted was an association of intellectuals to prevent the division of Europe. They defended the European intellectual tradition in the name of a general humanism, but the slant was so manifestly in one direction that the best of the left-wing intellectuals—and under this heading I include Catholics of the left and other left-of-centre intellectuals, or as S.E.C. likes to describe them, "men of culture"—all responded to the appeal.

By the time the first assembly met in a city which symbolizes the cultural continuity of Europe—Venice—the frontiers had closed. It is a special piece of fortune for the Hungarians that the Eastern socialist half of Europe was represented among the founders of the Society by two Hungarians, Tibor Kardos, Professor of History at Rome University, and at that time Director of the Hungarian Institute in Rome, and Mór Korach, Professor of Chemistry, who was then teaching in Florence. Both of them had taken part in the preparatory work, but after the Society had been duly formed they had returned to Hungary. Their names nevertheless have been on the list of members from the very beginning.

Dialogue. In the first—what shall I call it?—lopsided phase of its activ-

ities, the *Société Européenne de Culture* introduced a word into the international language which has since gone over big. I mean dialogue. S.E.C. members were using it in their meetings, executive sessions and in their brilliant periodical, the French-language *Comprendre,* when angry and spiteful monologues were mostly the order of the day. As soon as the thaw in the Cold War began, they tried to purs the dialogue into practice. They invited intellectuals from the socialist half of Europe to their assembly meetings in Rome and Venice, elected a Soviet Vice-President in the person of Boris Polevoj side by side with the Italian President Ungaretti and the Swiss Antoine Babel, another Vice-President, and today Polish, Yugoslav, Czechoslovak and Hungarian members take their places in the executive council at the two annual meetings. Hungary is represented by some forty scientists, writers, professors and artists in the S.E.C. A meeting of the executive council was held in April 1965 in Prague and another will be convened this coming October in Budapest.

But what is the subject of this dialogue ? I find myself in some agreement with another of Claude Roy's remarks—does it matter what ? Of course it matters what the United Nations or UNESCO are dialoguizing (brrr!) about, and it isn't quite unimportant what the International P.E.N. or COMES are talking about, either. But there are international meetings, and the Society of European Culture must be regarded as the most important of them, unique in its comprehensiveness and influence, where the mere fact of meeting is the real point. What really mattered was that thinking, and therefore always a little sceptical, minds from both sides of Europe should get acquainted with one another, and through this relationship acquire a reasonable, or at least a better, picture of science, art and literature on the other side of Europe, in other words, of the mental climate and atmosphere in which people "over there" are living.

The following main items figured in the debates: the organization of an *Association Mondiale de la Culture,* apart from the *Société Européenne de Culture;* the protest of the intellectual in political matters; the difficulties of the dialogue between Catholics and non-Catholics. We constantly found ourselves confronting the somewhat Crocean philosophy of S.E.C., the "*politique de la culture,*" which evolved during the years of preparation, mainly as a result of the work of the General Secretary, Umberto Campagnolo, a man of restless mind and untiring activity. This philosophy was at times vindicated, at times attacked, and oddly enough sometimes by the same persons.

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It is still the beginning of February; it will still be the middle of summer before many of our readers receive this number. And these last lines of my essay are intended to give an answer to the question haunting me all the time I have been setting these memories down on paper. Isn't everything I have been writing past history, out of date, *vieux jeu*, the span of a short year? We all know why. It isn't the intellectuals who have changed, it isn't the intellectual *rapprochement* of East and West; Vietnam lies between. It was that war that made me write this article. My deepest desire, our deepest desire, for I know I speak for the many friends and acquaintances I made in Budapest, Bled, Vienna and Venice, is that by the time this issue of *The New Hungarian Quarterly* reaches you we shall talk of the Vietnam war in the past tense. But till then: meet and talk we must.

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A SELECTION FROM MODERN HUNGARIAN POETS

THE SOCIALIST BANKING SYSTEM AND THE HUNGARIAN BANKS

by

BÉLA SULYOK

I

It will soon be fifty years since the first socialist country appeared on the scene of history beside the capitalist system of world economy, and it is more than twenty years since this example was followed by a number of European and Asian countries. This would seem ample time for getting to know the socialist system in its various aspects. On taking a closer look, however, we find that this "now" non-traditional system has a whole series of economic, political and cultural peculiarities which are *terra incognita* to the majority of those living in capitalist countries, and often even to experts in the respective fields of knowledge. Even those who are well acquainted in theory with the social and economic differences frequently have only vague and mistaken notions about their real content.

This is also the case as regards the role of money, credit and banking in socialist countries. In the West I have often met the view that these branches of the economy, having developed into basic elements of modern life in a capitalist soil, could only play a declining—and at all events bureaucratic—role in socialist countries. With the rapid growth of contacts between inhabitants of capitalist and socialist countries in recent years—including tourist traffic and visits to relatives—I often hear from foreigners visiting Hungary how surprised they are at the important role of money, credit and banking under socialism.

Yet this should be no cause for surprise for anyone thinking in historical terms. The economy, like society or man himself, develops organically, and a society that does not set out from the achievements of its predecessor is inconceivable. This is valid even if the earlier society is criticized or has become obsolete in some of its aspects. Such criticism does not mean that the forms which have developed can be nullified or that they can be replaced

by something utterly new through mere speculation. Even the most revolutionary process has to set out from the old components.

This is no less true of money, credit and banking. These existed already before capitalism, but their role and importance changed considerably as the capitalist system evolved, and they really flourished only under modern capitalism. The instruments and institutions of both early and contemporary periods of economic history, even if they differ considerably in their content and functions, all derive from the same fundamental necessities. Money has been used for thousands of years in the most different social and economic systems. Ever since the first primitive division of labour, the products resulting from this division (e.g., into farmers and craftsmen) had to be exchanged on the market between producers and consumers. In examining whether money is necessary in the socialist economy and what its function is, what one really has to investigate is whether a division of labour exists there and whether remuneration is generally proportionate to the quantity, value and diversity of the labour involved. Now, socialist economy seeks to establish the most advanced form of the division of labour so far known, and this necessitates the market exchange of goods produced within the framework of the division of labour. Socialist economy too is a commodity economy, where the value of the commodity produced is measured on the market in terms of money. This market, however, is not a free but a regulated market, where production is based not on the estimates of individual enterprises, but on global assessments. It is regulated in the sense that the means of production are socially owned and only the owners—usually state-owned enterprises or cooperatives—can mobilize labour, with the assistance of money (wages), for the production and sale of goods. It is regulated also in the sense that prices are not the spontaneous result of supply and demand. Supply and demand are taken into account in advance, and even their unforeseen effects are limited. The price mechanism varies considerably in the individual socialist countries: it extends from fixed prices for all commodities to fixed prices for fundamental consumer goods, maximum prices, etc. In no instance, however, is the sale of means of production to private persons permissible, and this in itself is a strong regulating factor. In the planning stage, production—constantly assessed and controlled by society—aims at anticipating the needs of society; through the money paid out to the participants in production in remuneration of their work, an equilibrium is created between production and needs, between supply and demand. But under socialism money also measures how efficiently the socially owned production plants apply their means, to what extent they are able to expand production in addition to replacing used equipment, and

how much they contribute to the common expenses of society through the budget. As a separate unit, the enterprise measures its production costs, its receipts and the results achieved.

II

I have tried to present society and the economy as a living developing organism, constantly advancing from a lower to a higher stage through transformation of the old, existing elements. This is valid not only as regards the transformation of primitive society into feudalism and then into the more advanced capitalist and socialist societies, but within each social formation as well. In the course of its evolution, socialist society seeks to realize various models of socialist economy.

In the first stage of development, planning was generally directed at determining production and consumption, the entire process of expanded reproduction in every detail, not only in their principal outlines. At this stage the market, money and banking serve primarily as a means of checking whether all details of the plan—in its entirety and at the enterprise level—conform to the original decisions. It is obvious that such a central predetermination of the division of labour, of market exchange, of demand and supply *(centralized model of planned economy)* can only be successful and more or less free of contradictions in a relatively simple economy.

At a later stage of socialist society, accompanied by an increasingly complicated economy, the role of money and of the banks inevitably grows larger. In Hungary, the view developed that the plan should determine only the principal outlines of long-run economic development, mainly investment, but should not include details and quantitative indices.* These principal interconnections, expressed in values, have then to be realized—through a regulated market and by using money and credit to influence value relations —in such a manner as to assure a maximum, yet balanced, satisfaction of needs at a minimum cost and with maximum economic results. Planning can therefore not replace money in an advanced socialist economy, but these two implements of direction should mutually contribute to perfecting each other's functions *(model of planned economy built on regulated commodity and money relations)*. A practical example will serve to illustrate this. The central plan determines how and within what production capacity the aluminium industry—of which the products can be sold favourably both in Hungary and abroad—should be developed. But the enterprises themselves

* Cf. the article by József Bognár in No. 21 of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*.

should plan and decide how many aluminium pots and pans or fittings they will produce, on the basis of centrally regulated and influenced market conditions in which financial tools, such as a variety of taxes, naturally play an important part.

This becomes even more obvious if we keep in mind that, as the economy becomes more complicated, the role of international economic relations and, within these, of foreign trade, is also growing and that the international division of labour is expanding. If within the complex economy of a single socialist country it is impossible to foresee each detail of the processes realized at tens of thousands of enterprises and the totality of the circumstances influencing them, this applies even more to the exchange of goods between socialist countries, involving political, economic and social conditions that affect production and economic processes at hundreds of thousands of enterprises employing tens of millions of workers. In the first stage of socialist development, the countries concerned undertake mutual deliveries of goods set forth in minute detail, at prices fixed in advance for several years and on the basis of a bilateral balance of deliveries. But if changes occur in the conditions of production, e.g., if new technological achievements reduce production costs, the predetermined price and equilibrium no longer operate faultlessly.

For this reason, in the second stage of socialist evolution, when the exchange becomes technically more variegated, new methods taking better account of commodity and money relations are needed; and so the idea of multilateral clearing is gaining ground. Moreover, the principle of peaceful coexistence between the socialist and the capitalist worlds no less than economic expediency and necessity call for extensive relations on the part of Hungary and other socialist countries with capitalist companies and countries. The planning of goods exchanges with capitalist companies necessarily involves more figures that are mere estimates. I do not intend to touch here on the integrational trends that make foresight in the development of international contacts even more problematic. All this shows that a decisive role should be attributed to money and commodity relations (based on market and value relations) in realizing the principal outlines of planning in international trade.

III

This short survey of the evolution that has taken place in the system of overall direction of the socialist economy will have shown that a mere description of the existing situation is not sufficient for an understanding of the Hungarian banking system and its functions. In the course of twenty years of socialist construction in Hungary, the organization, operation and role of the banks in the country's economy have changed considerably, and further changes are anticipated, some of which are already being realized. To understand the socialist banking system and its role in the economy, it is therefore necessary to give an outline of how these functions have evolved and how they are expected to be modified through the gradual reform that is to be introduced in the system of directing the socialist economy.

Hungary's present banking system was basically established in 1947–48. Organizational changes occurred in later years too, but these were of secondary importance. But there have been considerable functional changes, both as regards substance and methods.

Prior to fascist rule, German occupation and economic collapse in 1944, the Hungarian banking system was fundamentally similar to those in the neighbouring Central European countries. Banks, savings banks, land banks and credit cooperatives—some of them Hungarian and others foreign owned (without respecting each other's hunting grounds)—supplied the private enterprises with short- and long-term credits. Credits were granted to industry and commerce, to agricultural producers as well as to private individuals, often at usurious interest rates. Most of these institutions tried to obtain deposits of surplus capital through a wide network of branches and affiliated local banks. It was into this haphazard system that a not very consistent Banking Act, the discounting activities and credit regulations of the Central Bank, and a system of control carried out through the Central Corporation of Banking Companies *(Pénzintézeti Központ)* introduced some elements designed to aid the state in imposing its economic policy and selective credit policy. The extraordinary economic difficulties in the thirties and the first half of the forties, the country's defencelessness in the face of fascist Germany show that these measures were largely condemned to failure.

From 1945 to 1948, when the nationalization of banks and the development of the new banking system began, the old credit system was essentially left intact, although from 1947 on there was state control. In subsequently setting up the new banking system, the task was to develop the old commercial banks into members of the new, socialist banking system. For this it had to be decided what elements of the old banks could still be used and

what the functions of the new institutions should be. The Second World War and fascist rule had caused a heavy inflation of the pengő currency then in use. All credits, claims and deposits could therefore be considered extinct, and only some *in natura* values (e.g., the buildings) and above all the skilled employees of the banks could be taken over by the new organization. The great multiplicity of banks was replaced by a very clearly outlined banking system, which consisted of the National Bank of Hungary *(Magyar Nemzeti Bank)*, the Investment Bank *(Beruházási Bank)*, the Hungarian Foreign Trade Bank Ltd. *(Külkereskedelmi Bank)*, and the National Savings Bank *(Országos Takarékpénztár)*.

As may be seen, this is a completely centralized organization, although in the first stage of development Hungary, like the Soviet Union, toyed with the idea of establishing a wide range of decentralized banks for each branch of the economy (industrial, agricultural, communal, etc.). But this was abandoned in favour of a more centralized system. Obviously the more an economy which is building socialism sets out from the idea that the processes of production and distribution have to be determined in detailed central plans, the greater the necessity for a centralized banking organization. The principal function of the banks under such circumstances is to check the execution of the plan and to notify the superior organs of any departure from the plan, so that these should be able to take the necessary measures.

If, on the other hand, a socialist economy is based on commodity, money and market relations (although in a regulated way and within the framework of a planned economy), then decentralization of the banking organization according to branches appears expedient. Yugoslavia is an extreme example of the application of this principle; a multitude of branch and communal banks have been established there around a central bank confined to the issuing of money and the regulation of credit policy. Practice will show whether this solution takes sufficient account of the regulated character of the socialist market economy and whether it leaves sufficient room for planning in the mutually complementary unity of planning and of value relations based on money. In production, especially in the production of consumer goods, demand and supply may play a decisive role. In developing means of production, i.e., in investments and in the branches of industry producing capital goods, a number of other important aspects in addition to the momentary supply and demand (money and commodity relations) have to be taken into consideration, above all foresight, the accelerated conversion of science into a productive force—in sum, planning. It seems to us that the best solution is to create such a combination of the banking system as will allow room for central planning and direction of the proportional

structure of the economy as well as a selective credit policy serving it, while relying on commodity and money relations for the details, which can be influenced in the desired direction through the selectivity of credits. It is likely that a central bank with a network of branch banks is most suitable for such a purpose.

IV

Let us look at the functions fulfilled by the *National Bank of Hungary*. This bank has a monopoly in the spheres of currency issue, credit and foreign exchange, and at present a monopoly as regards money circulation as well. Since all enterprises and economic organizations are obliged to keep their money at the National Bank, to sell it their foreign exchange and to keep their current accounts there, and since, at the same time, it is the banker for the state budget, i.e., handles the deposits and the expenditure of the budgetary organs, and since, finally, it alone is entitled to issue money, the National Bank is in a position to keep its finger on the pulse of the entire economy. The economic organizations present their financial plans, based on their planned production and sales processes, to the National Bank of Hungary, discuss them with it and point out the credits they are likely to need in fulfilling these plans. In addition to taking account of financial resources in the shape of the money deposited by the enterprises and the budget organs, and through the issuing of currency, the National Bank is thus in a position to prepare a central credit plan showing the volume of credits that may be granted to the various branches of the economy. In this credit plan, the National Bank sets out from the assumption that the credits it grants will only serve profitable economic activity (production and distribution), covered by material values, and for fixed periods, usually of short maturity. These short-term credits to the enterprises supplement the fixed assets obtained from the state budget.

This system was in essence developed simultaneously with the centralized model of the planned economy. It sets out from the assumption that the principle of selectivity is embodied in the national credit plan based on the national economic plan. After the preparation of the central credit plan, it thus becomes the task of the National Bank, when individual credits are drawn, to check whether the actual requirements, expediency, content and realizability of the planned production do or do not in fact correspond to the assumptions made at the planning stage. If the Bank's findings are negative, it warns the directorate or Ministry supervising the enterprise

that the original assumptions were unsound and may ask for an examination and correction of the mistakes made; in the final resort it may deny or withdraw the credit.

From what has been said and bearing in mind that the accounts of the other banks are also kept at the National Bank, it is evident that in essence the emission of money may also be regarded as planned, since this represents the difference between the resources accumulated at the National Bank (financial means of the population, the enterprises and the budget) and the credits granted by the National Bank; the appropriate goods needed to cover them may be calculated economically. Consequently, any divergence from the planned emission would reveal a weakening of the realizability of the goods produced, i.e., a disturbance of the harmony between supply and demand. The National Bank may help in overcoming the difficulties by calling on the planning bodies to correct these phenomena. It is thus through supervision rather than through direct credit policy that the National Bank fulfils its task of implementing economic policy.

In the model of planned economy based on regulated market (commodity and value) relations, the role of the National Bank will be far greater. Since in this model the details of the plans of the enterprises are not determined centrally, the National Bank, through its selective credit policy, may exercise a direct influence on divergencies in credits drawn or currency issued from what has been planned and what is expedient. This selective credit policy has to redress possible imbalances in the domain of production or of consumption. Through the selectivity of credits, the production of products in demand may be assisted operatively, and the production of goods in low demand or of insufficient quality restricted. Within a system of overall direction that is planned in its principal outlines, this method provides an elasticity that is indispensible in an advanced economy.

The monopoly of the circulation of money is worth mentioning separately, although it need not be considered an absolute precondition of a socialist economy. The National Bank has the sole right of keeping accounts for all economic organizations, and the sellers may therefore simply send to the Bank for collection all documents concerning the counter-value of goods delivered. This system provides a high degree of safety for the producer, but the automatic payment often poses problems, because the quality of goods delivered is frequently not examined with sufficient care within the relatively short deadline. Moreover, if the buyer can only pay by using an unplanned credit, even the National Bank may be unable to determine adequately why the sales proceed slower than foreseen, and whether the Bank is not issuing credit for products that are difficult to sell. A debate is now going on in

the socialist countries as to whether it would not be sounder to return from the collection system to the transfer system, thereby helping to realize a change-over from the existing "sellers' market" to a "buyers' market." This, however, would undoubtedly mean sacrificing the possibility of quickly comprehending the entire financial situation on the principle of a single creditor.

The National Bank of Hungary is also the central executor of the foreign exchange policy. Hungary's centrally determined foreign trade and foreign exchange plan is realized in such a way as to oblige every economic organization to sell to the National Bank the foreign exchange which it earns and to request and purchase from the National Bank all foreign exchange needed to cover expenditure abroad. Such a method makes the central husbanding of accumulated foreign exchange possible with all the advantages of such a concentration in one hand, but it has the disadvantage of encouraging the enterprises to expend all the foreign exchange allocated to them, at any cost. This system is further supported by the circumstance that in the socialist countries, in general, foreign trade is not transacted by the producers themselves but by foreign trade enterprises established for this purpose. Although this may be simple, its principal negative aspect is that the producer gradually ceases to react sensitively to requirements and prices abroad. To counteract this a number of important industrial enterprises in Hungary have obtained the right to export, and a further application of this trend in the new system of direction will, it is to be hoped, make every producer sensitive to market conditions abroad. It is probably necessary for the National Bank to be responsible for the central husbanding of foreign exchange in the socialist economy, because the maintenance of the foreign trade monopoly of the state enterprises is certainly justified. This makes it possible for the National Bank to direct its deposit and credit operations on the capitalist international money market and with the socialist countries and the International Bank of the Comecon in such a way as to ensure—through its knowledge of all the foreign exchange receipts and obligations concentrated in its hands—an optimal use of the opportunities provided by these operations. At the same time, the restrictions now imposed by the centralized economy are not an inevitable consequence of socialist economy, but rather of the policy of expansion that accompanies the building of socialism in every country, a policy that demands foreign exchange control in numerous non-socialist countries as well.

It should be clear from what has been said that there is a close link between the branch managers of the National Bank of Hungary—with its comparatively wide network of branch banks—and the enterprises. Nobody is

better acquainted with the stock situation, production, and the production problems of the enterprises, as well as with their credit requirements and foreign exchange needs, than the experts of the National Bank. In the centralized model of the planned economy, the central planning organs cannot possibly take this vast mass of information into full account in compiling the plans for industries as an aggregate of the enterprise plans. At best, this was feasible only as long as the economy as a whole was in a stage of relatively simple, extensive development. Once the model based on commodity and value relations is constructed, the selectivity of bank credits—within the plan determining the principal outlines—will be governed in detail by the rich experience and extensive information accumulated by the branches of the National Bank and by the comprehensive survey of the situation available to the National Bank itself.

V

As I have already said, the relations between the foreign trade enterprises and the businessmen and companies of the capitalist countries are more difficult to foresee and to plan than other economic processes, even in the centralized model of the planned economy prescribing the detailed tasks of the enterprises. In several socialist countries, this fact gave rise—already before the recognition of the necessity of a model based on commodity and value relations—to a particular kind of bank, the foreign trade bank—in the case of Hungary, the *Hungarian Foreign Trade Bank Ltd.* The basic task of this bank is to make it possible—whenever opportunities arise in the contacts with foreign companies that were not yet or could not yet be foreseen when the plan was prepared—to finance these opportunities and thereby realize a transaction promising additional results. This makes imports over and above the plan feasible if, in terms of Hungarian or foreign currency, they offer advantages to the national economy as regards either exports or domestic utilization. An example of the issue of such credits is the purchase—beyond the plan—of machinery whose cost is quickly covered by exports. Activities of this sort often demand the initiation of foreign trade transactions. They require a very shrewd staff with great commercial and financial experience.

As a result, and because the previously described functions of the central bank demand a large and often unwieldy organization, the foreign trade banks in a number of socialist countries—e.g., the Soviet Union, which has a very large number of enterprises—took over from the central bank all foreign

exchange functions customarily handled by capitalist trading banks. In these countries the state bank (bank of issue) carries out only those functions of the foreign exchange authority that are connected with the husbanding of foreign exchange and generally fall within the jurisdiction of the central bank in capitalist countries too. In the Yugoslav banking system, the banks of the different branches of industry, besides financing production, also carry out the operative functions of financing foreign trade.

VI

In the socialist banking system, in addition to the Central Bank (bank of issue), the *Investment Bank* plays a decisive part. Its task is to finance the expansion of fixed funds, the investments required by the national economy. Nowhere is the difference between the capitalist and socialist economies so obvious as in the domain of investments. Socialist planned economy cannot renounce the advantages derived from determining the direction and principal proportions of economic development by means of a planned, unified economic policy. This is precisely the advantage which the capitalist world too (e.g., France, the Netherlands) seeks to ensure for itself through the concept of planning.

However, the centralized model of the socialist economy interprets these ideas—just as other methods of the model thus far examined—in such an extreme way that they could be successful only at an early stage of development. In Hungary, during the first period of building socialism, investments were supplied almost exclusively from state means, from state revenues centralized in the budget, i.e., from taxes and from enterprise profits, and amortization, included in the price of products and paid over by the enterprises to the state. The amount thus assigned by the budget to economic development was transferred to the Investment Bank by a central organization (consisting of the Planning Office and of the Ministries) which reviewed all recommendations made by the enterprises and drew up an itemized and detailed programme. The Investment Bank then financed its execution and checked whether the construction of buildings, the acquisition of machines, etc., corresponded in price and efficiency to the original plans. This was true not only as regards the investments of the individual enterprises, but also as regards the state's cultural, social, health and military projects and other activities connected with the infra-structure. This system of course has all the advantages of decisions embodying a central economic policy, but such "free" gifts from the state induce each enterprise to recom-

mend large investments, even if they are not justified; and after they have been authorized, the enterprise becomes indifferent to their speedy, exact and economical realization. Expenditure for social and welfare purposes thus appears to belong to the same category of investments without return, as the investments serving economic purposes at the enterprises, although the profitability of the latter has been investigated in the calculations of the Investment Bank. Yet, if the enterprise is not required to refund the investment and thereby induced to pay careful attention to the returns on it, profitability will not always be used as a measure by those who can best influence costs and efficiency at the most appropriate time. Such a system can only be satisfactory if the economy in question is so simple that the investments and their efficiency can easily be observed by the planning and executive organs.

The model of the planned socialist economy which takes commodity and money relations into consideration sets out generally from the assumption that the large investments, affecting the entire structure of the national economy, and the establishment of a new enterprise (e.g., new power stations, new system of canals, a new branch of industry) should continue to be financed by the state out of the budget, without any obligation of repayment, and should be centrally decided, planned and controlled. The existing enterprises, however, will be free to dispose of part of the amortization and profits realized by them, and for further investment requirements they will be provided with long-term credits, which will have to be repaid out of their own revenues during a period varying according to the nature of the production branch in question. It follows from this concept that under such conditions the Investment Bank will not simply finance and check the execution of planned investments, but will have to make important decisions on complicated questions involving all the inter-connections of the national economy. With the exception of the largest investments, the plan will only determine what branches should be developed and to what extent, and what the minimum return on the investments should be. The Investment Bank will have to make a selection among the credit applications it receives from the enterprises, and in doing so will have to depend on a complicated system of banking investigation, perhaps on the invitation of tenders as well as on a very differentiated application of the stipulations for long-range credit and repayment. If the selection corresponds to the selective credit policy of the government and the principles of granting selective credits, the resulting development will proceed in accordance with the central will and at the same time seek out the most efficient objects for investment.

The evolution of the banking system in a number of socialist countries led to the fusion of the investment banks with the central bank organization. The reason for this was the logical train of thought that the financing of the fixed and current assets of the enterprises, the issuing of short, medium and long-term credits may be most harmoniously realized, the development of enterprises and branches of industry and of the entire economy more effectively surveyed, if all monetary processes of expanded reproduction are centralized in one place. In other words, the bank which finances day-to-day production at a particular enterprise knows best what should be done at the same enterprise in the domain of development. In the Soviet Union, for instance, financing by a single bank is the standard practice, while in Hungary the two banks have not been united. The reason here was the consideration that as long as production was financed by credits and investments from the budget, such a union would cause complications. There is no doubt, however, that as we go over to the new system of directing the economy, this problem will again arise, and it will have to be decided whether the short-term and long-term credits should be amalgamated within a single institution. As a transitional measure towards the new system an important step away from budgetary allocations to medium-term loans had already been taken earlier in the evolution of Hungary's planned economy. The Hungarian Investment Bank already grants loans for the purpose of reducing production costs and of completing—in the interest of export development—transactions that exceed the plan and the foreign exchange operations of which are realized by the Hungarian Foreign Trade Bank Ltd. These cover elastic purchases repayable within two to three years.

VII

The bank which directly serves the population is the *National Savings Bank* (known as the OTP—from *Országos Takarékpénztár)*. Originally established to accumulate the short- and long-term savings of the population, it initially kept current private accounts, accepted savings deposits and issued long-term state loans. The building of socialism demonstrated in practice that the population needed not only a savings bank for accumulating their savings, but also a bank for carrying out other monetary operations. Consequently, the granting of loans by the National Savings Bank has been developed stage by stage. Instalment purchases by the population are centralized here. In a socialist economy, the national plan and the central credit policy make it impossible for instalment buying to become an unwieldy and un-

controllable conglomeration as happens in some capitalist countries, where—both in the stage of expansion and subsequently—it causes considerable anxiety and difficulty to governments and economic organizations. Yet instalment buying is a financial tool particularly well adapted to stimulating or reducing purchases by the population.

The most important type of credits granted to the Hungarian population is the building loan. The increasing volume of private building is regulated through fixing the limits of these loans and through the corresponding credit policy. Credits are granted for the building of family homes, home units, cooperative and freehold flats, and may influence the choice among them by granting credits on more favourable terms for one or another of them.

In accumulating deposits, the National Savings Bank tries to introduce various forms of deposit which correspond to particular circumstances. For instance, besides deposits payable on demand and fixed deposits, the so-called lottery deposit books are very popular. Here the total interest on all the deposits is raffled and the prize may take the shape of cash or of some prized commodity, e.g., a car. The acceptance of deposits is complemented by a number of other activities designed to encourage savings, among them the issuance of savings stamps for school-children. Long-term public loans are no longer being issued by the state; the drawing and repayment of the old state loans is handled by the National Savings Bank.

The National Savings Bank also has charge of communal deposits, grants advances on communal incomes, and organizes lotteries, football pools, etc.

This varied activity, which affects millions of the population, demands a wide network of branches. Deposits have increased within ten years from 1,000 million forints to almost 20,000 million, and the other activities of the bank have grown in similar proportions. The Savings Bank now has more than two hundred branches in the capital, and over three hundred in the rest of the country. In addition, 3,200 post offices accept deposits and effect payments on the bank's behalf.

*

In drawing an outline of the Hungarian banking system, I have attempted not only to describe it statically but to indicate, in its principal aspects, whence it has come and where it is going. I should emphasize, however, that in indicating the direction in which its forms and tasks appear to be developing, I have mostly expressed my personal views. A great number of economists are debating these issues in Hungary and in other socialist countries, and only the upshot of these debates will permit us to give a more definite

picture of the future of Hungary's banking system. Yet I am convinced that in tracing the main lines of progress I have made no serious errors.

In conclusion I would once more like to recall something that is often misunderstood in non-socialist countries. Socialism, like any other social, economic and organic phenomenon, is not static, but is in a state of continuous evolution. It is hardly necessary to explain that capitalism does not have the same forms today as when it was born; in today's England it differs from the one described by Dickens, and in the countries of Asia and Africa too it is unlike what it promised to be at the start. The same is inevitably true of socialism, which advances by stages and, in its outward appearance, means and institutions, is far from identical with that which first took shape in the Soviet Union five decades ago. In the course of this organic evolution, it strives to achieve the same goals through constantly improving methods.

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ECONOMIC GROWTH AND THE INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

by

IMRE VAJDA

I

Economic growth is essentially a modern concept, a child of our dynamic age. A few decades ago, in the midst of successive fluctuations and economic crises, the most developed countries, with the support of their leading economists, directed their attention primarily to achieving and maintaining an equilibrium. Even in evaluating economic statistics growth was of little significance up to the Second World War. Today, however, economic growth is an issue that enjoys widest publicity—far beyond academic circles—and forms the subject of government programmes and international conferences. The efficiency of social and economic systems, the success or failure of economic policy are measured in terms of economic growth, involving the movement of the entire economy rather than the gains or losses of individuals. In his otherwise rather contestable article entitled "Is Capitalism a Success?" published in the June 1965 number of *Encounter*, Andrew Schonfield based his affirmative answer on the exceptionally rapid post-war economic growth in the West, completely ignoring, among other things, the ominous role of armaments in this growth.

Moreover, the dividing line between advanced industrial countries and developing countries, of which the entire world has become conscious, necessitates a sharp differentiation in the domain of economic growth as well. This divergence lies outside—and not within—the fundamental differences between the socialist and capitalist systems.

In the as yet under-developed countries, economic growth calls primarily for the increased use in the production process of potentially existing but hitherto largely unexploited resources, including—in addition to manpower—mineral resources, power potentials and arable land (or land that may be made arable). This extensive stage of economic development is inevitably

linked with the international division of labour. On the one hand, it involves the acquisition of investment goods and of the necessary specialized training and know-how, as well as of a certain amount of consumer goods and food products. On the other hand, it calls for the export of industrial raw materials and certain kinds of foodstuffs. The problems involved need not be dealt with here, since they were fully brought to light at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development held in Geneva in 1964.

Contemporary historical conditions, however, require an approach to the problems of growth of the developing countries reaching beyond the framework of simple and balanced exchanges within the international division of labour. Neither the imaginary world market conditions of hypothetical free competition nor the more realistic conditions of monopolistic, limited competition and market restrictions offer the developing countries growth opportunities such as would satisfy their political and cultural requirements and keep pace with their rapid population increase. As regards the latter, the traditional equilibrium, based on a much lower average life expectancy, was to a great extent upset by the colonial civilization of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In his work, *An Essay on the Principle of Population,* first published in 1798, Thomas Robert Malthus asserted—and let us not forget that he was referring to conditions in contemporary England—the universal tendency of population to outrun the means of subsistence and maintained that an equilibrium could be restored only by war, famine and pestilence and by the influence of misery and vice. Some of his later commentators tried to justify Malthus by saying that he could not foresee the astonishing development of transport and colonization which took place in the nineteenth century and had increased so enormously the area from which foodstuffs and raw materials could be drawn during that period. This was a characteristic attitude: only one area counted, this could do the "drawing," while the other, the one to be "drawn" from, was of no interest. Colonization in fact drew—for the colonizing powers and for other industrially more developed countries—foodstuffs from the colonial world. For this purpose, and to maintain the colonizing apparatus, it did, it is true, reduce some of the balancing effects quoted by Malthus, such as epidemics, but it did not seek to overcome the basic social ills: the misery remained and could be "enjoyed" throughout a longer life-span. The social benefits gained through decades of struggle by the European and American labour movement and now generally accepted in the industrially advanced countries, remained unknown in the colonial and semi-colonial world. The colonial governments would indeed have refused similar demands indignantly and brandmarked those who voiced them as rebels. The gigantic profits of the colonial period

were absorbed by the industrialized countries, and it was there that—aided by the devastating wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—they contributed to the solution of the Malthusian dilemma. The scene of the dilemma was thus transferred to other continents, to peoples far beyond Malthus' horizon.

To obtain some mitigation of existing unbearable tensions, the culpable omissions of the colonial period have to be made good in the coming decades. But it is not possible to solve this task exclusively on the basis of market relations. In what remains of our century, and presumably also in the next one, very considerable means—the magnitude of which I shall attempt to estimate later on—will inevitably have to be transferred from the industrialized world to the non-industrialized or only slightly industrialized one, and that not out of obvious moral considerations alone, but also because the political, economic and social problems that characterize our age and have become so threatening in the past two years can be solved in no other way. The precondition for this solution, however, is the real independence and freedom of the peoples affected.

To some extent we are here confronted with a parallel—on the international plane—to one of the principal theses of J. M. Keynes, set forth in 1935 in his *General Theory*, to the effect that "... it is an outstanding characteristic of the economic system in which we live that... it seems capable of remaining in a chronic condition of sub-normal activity for a considerable period without any marked tendency either towards recovery or towards complete collapse. Moreover, the evidence indicates that full, or even appropriately full, employment is of rare and short-lived occurrence."* It was from this thesis that Keynes proceeded to the demand that full employment be secured through the mobilization of means which would otherwise not have been brought into motion in the economy analysed by him, the circumscribed model of a capitalist industrialized country. Keynes, it is true, had his sight fixed not so much on growth as on achieving equilibrium—an equilibrium between potential resources and the goods that may be produced through them, which in itself already meant a considerable growth compared to the sub-normal state. At the time when the *General Theory* was written, unemployment in the United Kingdom fluctuated between 10 and 18 per cent (similar figures applied to the United States). Full employment was therefore capable of increasing production by leaps and bounds. Keynes sought new paths of advance within the given model, but in doing so he was also undeniably influenced by visions of the threatening "complete collapse"

* John Maynard Keynes: *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money.* Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, pp. 249–250.

of bourgeois society. In the nuclear age—three decades after the publication of the *General Theory*—the danger has vastly increased and is fraught with the threat of annihilation. Its avoidance—and at the same time a large-scale expansion of the opportunities for growth—requires internationally coordinated action designed to realize a purposeful reconstruction of the present mechanism of world economy. It calls, in particular, for international cooperation on the part of all industrialized countries, socialist and capitalist alike.

The above concept involves a regrouping of means of a magnitude hardly adumbrated—despite its merits—in the report which Professor Raoul Prebisch, General Secretary of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, submitted to the Conference. It was the task of the report—and of the Conference—to elaborate proposals to be realized in the next few years following the end of the Conference. This is why the "Prebisch-gap" of 20,000 million dollars foreseen up to 1970 has received so much publicity. As is known, no adequate sources have yet been found to bridge this gap. Yet even if this sum were, by some miracle, made available by 1970, this would only suffice to prevent a further deterioration of the disproportions, but it could not liquidate the disproportions themselves. Some 1,500 million people are involved, and their average annual per capita income would—for a start—have to be raised to a minimum of 200 dollars if it were to approach the lowest income level in the industrialized countries. This would necessitate an additional annual income of 300,000 million dollars, and, taking a capital-output ratio of 4 : 1, a capital of about 1,200,000 million dollars—a dizzying amount! Taking into account the very limited accumulation possibilities and the anticipated rapid population growth of the developing countries, a capital of 800,000 to 1,000,000 million dollars would have to be transferred in the next three to four decades—unilaterally and without counter-value—from industrially developed to the developing countries. This is little less than the national income of the United States for two years. To demand a counter-value in the form of instalment payments or interest, would fatally weaken the efficacy of the transfer. The Prebisch report pointed out that in the developing countries, the burden of obligations from interest and amortization of debts contracted or guaranteed by the state had risen between 1956 and 1963 from 900 million dollars to 3,100 millions. This meant that further credits mostly served merely to cover the payment which fell due. These credits could not assure or even directly promote growth. At best, one creditor was replaced by another, nothing else changed.

It is obvious that no political or social system can afford to renounce

without counter-value such a huge share of its national income unless the growth of the latter is sufficent to assure, in addition, an adequate surplus for consumption. This world problem—one of the most burning of our age—can only be solved if today's high rate of growth in the industrialized countries can be maintained or even increased. This refers to both socialist and capitalist countries.

The growth of the national income of the industrialized countries has gained in impetus since 1950, mainly through the development of industrial production. Economic growth in the leading capitalist countries is shown by the following figures (in percentages):

*Annual rate of growth of total output**

	1870–1913	1913–50	1950–60	1956–61
Belgium	2.7	1.0	2.9	2.5
Denmark	3.2	2.1	3.3	5.0
France	1.6	0.7	4.4	4.2
Germany	2.9	1.2	7.6	5.9
Italy	1.4	1.3	5.9	6.7
Netherlands	2.2	2.1	4.9	3.9
Norway	2.2	2.7	3.5	3.4
Sweden	3.0	2.2	3.3	4.0
Switzerland	2.4	2.0	5.1	5.2
United Kingdom	2.2	1.7	2.6	2.1
Canada	3.8	2.8	3.9	1.8
United States	4.3	2.9	3.2	2.3
Average	2.7	1.9	4.2	3.9

* Angus Maddison: *Economic Growth in the West*. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1964, p. 28.

In recent years too, industrial production has continued to grow vigorously in the countries shown in the table. Between 1960 and 1964 the growth totalled 25 per cent (21 in the USA, 66 in Japan, 27 in the Common Market countries, 14 in the United Kingdom).

The growth of the national income in the Comecon countries (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) was an average of 5.7 per cent annually from 1961 to 1964, that of industrial production 8.2 per cent. (The corresponding average annual increase of industrial production in the west-

ern capitalist countries and in Japan between 1961 and 1964 was 5.5 per cent.) Although these averages are very high, there are no scientific grounds for denying the possibility of a further increase. In this connection I now wish to deal with two factors: the reduction of armaments and the development of the international division of labour.

Both factors may greatly contribute to the intensification of economic growth; but while, as regards the armaments race, only its liquidation could give a powerful impetus to progress, in the case of the international divison of labour—still essentially inadequate today—its great reserve of economic growth lies in its further evolution.

The interrelations between the two problems of assistance to the developing countries and expenditure on armaments have been referred to repeatedly at international forums, scientific conferences and elsewhere. The author of the present essay has dealt with the subject in the columns of this review.* According to estimates cited in the Prebisch report armament expenditures in 1963 amounted to about 120,000 million dollars. (Since then these figures have further increased.) In the industrialized countries this represented 8 to 9 per cent of the national income. The report noted that if a reduction of armaments were to free one per cent of the national income and this amount were placed at the disposal of the developing countries, this alone would permit the developing countries—if they followed an appropriate policy—to raise their general annual growth rate from the 5 per cent foreseen for the developmental decade to 7 per cent. If a further part of the material resources released by additional disarmament measures were devoted to increasing the productive investments of the industrialized countries, this would provide a strong impetus both to the development of the industrialized countries and to the demand for imports on the part of the developing countries.

This interrelation gives added importance to the reduction of armaments and the liquidation of the arms race, the mobilization—on behalf of such an international transfer and of economic growth—of the factors of production (including an immeasurable scientific and research potential) now devoted to military purposes. Nevertheless, we cannot agree with those who make any sizable increase in developmental contributions dependent on the prior achievement of disarmament. In our view, one cannot underestimate the part played by the maintenance—and, in the face of recent tragic experiences, the worsening—of the tension in the international political situation caused by backwardness and the resultant arms race. Though we are well

* Imre Vajda: "Geneva Impressions on the State of East-West Trade." *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, 1961, Vol. II, No. 5.

aware of the opposing view that the tension may be resolved, or at least kept within bounds, through the might of arms, the author maintains his conviction that the vicious circle of the interrelation between backwardness and armament expenditures can more easily be broken through an intensification of economic development than the other way round.

II

Economic growth in countries with a predominantly industrial structure is, for the most part, no longer dependent on the mobilization of latent reserves—as is the case in the less developed countries—although these reserves may temporarily play a very important role in particular instances, e.g., Italy and France, through the exploitation of natural gas sources, and elsewhere, including Hungary, through the exploitation of available uranium ore. The centre of gravity of economic growth has shifted to a more intensive utilization of resources already drawn into the production process, an increase in the productivity of labour and equipment, in other words, the emphasis is on man and on man-made tools. This process is everywhere accompanied by a considerable increase of the capital requirements per unit of man-power and at the same time by a considerable reduction of capital requirements per one unit of product. On the macro-economic level capital requirements also include the input necessary for research, vocational training, training of skilled workers, assuring of services, construction of the social infrastructure, in addition to the buildings, machinery, transport and control equipment directly needed for production. A reduction of capital requirements per unit of product, however, can only be achieved through optimal utilization of equipment. The precondition for this is, almost without exception, the conquest of foreign markets, active participation in the international division of labour.

The growth of capital requirements per unit of manpower in our age is clearly revealed in the figures of Hungarian industrial development—perhaps more strikingly than in the case of the western industrialized countries, where industrial development began much earlier and was spread over a longer period. The trend of capital requirements is shown in the following table:

Investment per unit of manpower in Hungarian industry

Years	Increase in employment	Industrial investments	Per capita rate (in thousands of forints)
1950–57	400,000	44,500 millions	110
1958–60	153,400	38,200 millions	249
1961–63	119,400	49,100 millions	420

As may be seen, the investment quotient, i.e., investments in terms of increases in employment, has almost quadrupled. It is true that while in the first, seven-year period the increase in employment meant a 50 per cent rise in the number of those employed in industry, in the last, three-year period this increase was less than 9 per cent. The former thus took place under conditions characteristic of the extensive stage in industrial development, while the latter is typical of a more intensive development, concentrated on raising productivity.

It can, however, be proved that this tendency is a general one. In the United Kingdom 14 per cent of the GNP (gross national product) was devoted to permanent investments in 1948, whereas it was 18 per cent in 1965. In other western countries this increase is even more pronounced.

*Total gross domestic investment as a proportion of GNP at current prices**

	Average of years cited	
	1914–49	1950–60
Belgium		16.5
Denmark	12.6[a]	18.1
France		19.1
Germany	14.3[b]	24.0
Italy	13.5	20.8
Norway	15.4[c]	26.4
Sweden	15.5	21.3
Canada	16.0[d]	24.8
United States	14.7	19.1

[a]1921–49, [b]1925–37, [c]1914–38, [d]1926–49.

* Angus Maddison, *loc. cit.* p. 76.

Of course, it is more difficult to prove in figures the reduction of capital requirements per unit of product; but the competition over one and a half decades between such sources of energy as coal, oil and nuclear power has led to results that would have been unimaginable previously. "There have been dramatic falls in the cost of coal-fired stations too; tenfold or more increases in the size of generating sets have halved prices." A similar reduction in production costs has taken place in the domain of nuclear power, but here too it is the degree of utilization and the size of the production unit that decides the level of cost per kw. "Unattractive aspects of nuclear power are that it is still economic only on base load, i.e., for power stations operated year-long round the clock, and then only in jumbo-sizes." (*The Economist*, Oct. 9, 1965, p. 178.)

The outstanding role of the international division of labour in accelerating economic growth is proven by several striking phenomena. Industrial development is, without exception, accompanied by a rising share of manufactures in imports, and this growth is most pronounced in the industrialized countries! The following table indicates the change that occurred in this respect between 1957 and 1963:

Imports of manufactures as a percentage of total imports

	UK	Germany	France	Italy	Netherlands	Belgium Lux.	Sweden	US
1957	16.1	20.6	22.4	23.5	41.9	41.4	48.5	27.8
1960	25.4	37.5	33.5	35.3	53.8	49.7	60.3	38.6
1963	27.7	38.3	43.3	44.0	58.6	54.6	62.7	40.7

Further testimony to the strength of this trend is the remarkable fact that the "industrialization" of imports is not limited to the integrationist blocks but extends to the United States as well, despite its high protective tariffs.

In the case of Hungary no noticeable increase can be shown between 1960 and 1963, but the ratio of manufactures in imports (57.5 per cent) placed Hungary in the highest category already in 1960.

These figures justify the deduction that the international division of labour within the sphere of industrial production is constantly expanding; further on, we shall return to the connection between this phenomenon and economic growth.

Equally pertinent is the observation that—in the conditions of our age and

as regards a considerable part of imported goods (mainly machinery, but some consumer goods too)—it is not the price that decides competitiveness but other factors. A 1965 publication of the National Economic Development Council of London, which describes the outcome of an investigation on the factors of growth of British imports and on the international competitiveness of British industry, has this to say on the subject:*

"The principal reason for imports of mechanical engineering products including machine tools, as seen by the people who buy them, is that the imported machine had performance and design characteristics which could not be matched by UK suppliers. The crucial factor is what a machine can do or how economically and reliably it can do it; superiority in this sense outweighs quite large differences in price."

We are faced here with a *qualitative* factor in the international division of labour which is of dual significance: it accelerates technical development and the spread of innovations wherever the preconditions and the readiness for innovations exist; on the other hand, through its qualitative character, it breaks through the barriers erected essentially on quantitative factors, including primarily tariffs and prices. But this is not enough in itself. The point of departure of the above-mentioned investigations serves as a warning; it seeks the reasons for the growth of imports and for the resulting deterioration of the balance of payments and treats them as grounds for anxiety; it worries over the decline in the competitiveness of British industry on the domestic market and seeks a solution in this direction. Yet, if the recommendations incorporated in the report are realized, then, in the case of manufactures, the ratio of imports to exports, which was 24 per cent in 1954 and 50 per cent in 1964, may perhaps be reduced again to the former level! Is this really the solution? We are convinced that it is not. It is not by reducing the international division of labour that economic growth can be accelerated with a simultaneous levelling of the balance of payments, but by reorganizing the export drive on the basis of the phenomena and experiences that may be observed on the domestic market, and by struggling for competitiveness there where it means most, *on the world market*. We are, of course, aware that it would be a vain undertaking for Britain as an exporter to chase after the phantom of free competition on the world market, where she would run up against monopolistic barriers. After all there is no free competition on the British market either. Nevertheless—and in spite of its limitations—it is the world market which provides the most decisive and authentic proof of competitiveness.

* NEDC: *Imported Manufactures. An Inquiry Into Competitiveness.* London. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965, p. 18.

On the world market—and in its various sectors—the secular duel between protectionism and free trade has not yet been decided; integrations and blocs are the latest, contradictory phenomena of this struggle. Their contradictory character is shown by the fact that, while within the integrationist areas the international division of labour is growing, the trend towards substituting domestic production for goods coming from outside into the area is also on the increase. True, this process has its natural limits—although the development of plastics production proves that these limits are not necessarily everlasting. However, in the sphere where modern progress is most important, that of industrial production (processing), the opportunity for such a development is unlimited.

There can be no doubt that every customs union—even one as loosely organized as the EFTA—gives its members certain advantages not enjoyed by outsiders. Nor can it be denied that such economic unions as the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) also have autarchic tendencies by their very character; though these tendencies have been considerably weakened over the years, they have not yet been fully eliminated and their disappearance in an environment of economic blocs is unlikely. But the spokesmen of integration—and no economist in his senses would dispute the undeniable advantages of integration—assert that the effect of integration on the international division of labour is unequivocally positive. This euphemism has to be corrected. Let us avail ourselves here of the evidence provided by figures.

The export trade of the industrialized countries increased considerably during the decade from 1954 to 1964, both in the West and in the East; indeed, it has even to some extent exceeded the growth rate of industrial production. The exports of the industrialized western countries during this period developed as follows:*

Trade of industrial countries

(Total, $ billions)

1954	49.5
1957	68.0
1960	78.5
1962	87.2
1964	107.5

Within these figures, the share of manufactures in exports rose from 60 per cent in 1954 to about 68 per cent in 1964. (The increase in exports of

* National Institute Economic Revue, London, August 1965. Table 25, p. 80.

raw material producing countries was much more modest.) The annual growth rate of the exports of the Comecon countries between 1961 and 1964 was 8.8 per cent, that of industrial production 8.2 per cent.

In spite of this growth, the international division of labour within industrial production is still far below the level it occupied—compared to the volume of production—at the beginning of the century and before the First World War. A. Maizels proved this astonishing fact in his book *Industrial Growth and World Trade,** published in 1963, by elaborating a vast amount of statistical data for the period up to 1959. (Later calculations show that the struggle between the two contradictory trends—the division of labour and substitution—is still going on.) The following table published by Maizels is significant:**

Proportion of production of manufactures[a] exported,

1899–1959 (Percentage[b])

	1899	1913	1929	1937	1950	1955	1957	1959
France	33	26	25	12	23	18	15	18
Germany	31	31	27	15	.	.	.	.
West Germany	.	.	.	17	13	19	23	23
United Kingdom	42	45	37	21	23	19	21	19
Other Western Europe[c]	17	18	23	21	17	18	19	21
Canada	4	4	17	21	13	15	15	14
United States	5	5	6	5	5	4	5	4
Japan	25	40	29	40	29	26	24	23
Total	19	18	15	12	10	10	11	11

[a] Excluding manufactured foods, beverages and tobacco
[b] Based on U.S. dollar values at 1955 prices
[c] Belgium–Luxembourg, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden

* A. Maizels: *Industrial Growth and World Trade.* Cambridge University Press, 1963, p. 223.
** *ibid.* p. 223, Table 8., 11.

The greater the share of the United States—whose *direct* interest in the international division of labour is only marginal (4 to 5 per cent)—in the world's industrial production, the smaller its total index figure is bound to be.

Further calculations,* also extending to the whole domain of manufactures but based on 1913 prices (1913 = 100), offer this picture:

Trade, Production, International Division of Labour

Years	Index of world trade, values at 1913 prices	Index of world production at 1913 prices	Index of international division of labour 1913 = 100
1876–80	32	25	129
1891–95	46	43	107
1896–1900	48	54	89
1901–05	64	67	94
1906–10	78	80	97
1911–13	96	94	102
1913	100	100	100
1921–25	77	102	75
1926–29	104	134	78
1930	100	128	78
1931–35	76	113	67
1936–38	92	154	59
1954–56	216	304	70
1957–59	251	342	73
1960–62	308	407	76
1963	351	450	78

As may be seen from the above figures, the index of the international division of labour in the domain of manufactures in 1963 was far below that of 1913—in fact, it corresponded to the 1929 to 1930 level preceding the great depression; the progress achieved in the course of recent decades has consequently only made up for the decline caused by the depression and by the Second World War as well as by the policy of autarky—a policy deeply rooted in fascist ideology but having proliferated in non-fascist countries too under the disguise of super-protectionism and a beggar-my-neighbour policy. This is borne out by the dates of the lowest level: 1936–38.

* These calculations are from a manuscript put at my disposal by Professor Jürgen Kuczynski of Berlin, and for which I here express my appreciation.

This picture, nevertheless, needs a slight amplification; the author, thinking in terms of a country only recently industrialized, feels called upon—in the name of the late-comers—to champion the cause of industrialization and its inevitable companion: the substitution of imports. Conditions at the turn of the century should not be over-idealized: the high degree of international division of labour at that time was due primarily to the industrial monopoly of a few European countries, with Britain in the lead, followed by France and Germany, and later joined by the United States; this group, in practice, formed a monopoly which excluded from the domain of industrial production the overwhelming majority of nations—an international division of labour that could hardly serve as an engine of growth. Other factors, in addition to those already mentioned, undeniably played a part in distorting the international division of labour in the twentieth century—among them the spreading economic rule of the monopolies, the export of capital, and foreign capital hiding behind a tariff protection that had not been originally created for its benefit. Let us recognize, however, and constantly keep in mind that substitution of imports and industrialization go hand-in-hand, budding, in fact, on one and the same branch! Only by cutting off the entire branch—which would mean a fatal truncation of progress—could the simultaneous flowering of both be avoided. It is all the more essential to be aware of this in view of the fact that the problem of the less industrialized European countries—including Hungary—in the first decades of the twentieth century has become the problem of the developing countries in the last decades of our century; here too industrialization is inconceivable without the substitution of imports, without tariff protection.

So without passing unconditional judgment on the import-substituting role of industrialization, and even emphasizing that it is an inevitable element of economic growth, we still have to return to our original train of thought: the interrelation between the international division of labour and economic growth. This relationship cannot, we believe, be presented convincingly in the shape of a model. So many factors are involved in both processes, among them exogeneous ones, that such a model could be set up only at the cost of excessive abstraction, i.e., far removed from economic reality. Just the same, the contradiction that has developed between the economic requirements of production (developing at incredible speed in the wake of the scientific-technical revolution) and the continued survival of national states can only be mitigated through an increasingly broad-scale realization of an international division of labour that is destined to provide an outlet for modern technology such as will permit it fully to develop

its gigantic—still largely incalculable—capacities and accelerate economic growth. What is more, we think the role played in the increased rate of economic growth during the nineteen-fifties and sixties by the expansion of the international division of labour can hardly be exaggerated; we are, in fact, convinced that in the majority of countries the decisive impetus to growth came from the world market—the scene of the international division of labour.

An analysis of the development of the socialist countries provides support for this view. Economic growth—at a rate which between 1950 and 1960 considerably exceeded that of the western countries—here took place on a broadening foundation of economic interrelations, in which mutual deliveries and coordinated programmes played an important part. There can be no doubt that in countries which before 1945 had been industrialized on a comparatively low level and in an unbalanced way—Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria—industrialization was forcefully assisted by the new forms of the international division of labour resulting from planned economy and mutual cooperation. Unfortunately, the tragic situation that prevailed from 1948 to 1953 prevented Yugoslavia from participating in these advantages, and her development consequently took a different path.

Extensive growth—characteristic of those countries where labour flowed in large numbers from technically backward agriculture into industry, construction and transport—spread to the more highly industrialized countries under the influence of the economic development of the former and accompanied by rapid quantitative growth.*

As a consequence, the extensive growth of industry was "imported" into the more industrialized countries too. Despite the existence of preconditions for an intensive economy and a lack of internal stimuli towards such a development (shortage rather than surplus of labour), a one-sided striving for quantitive increase became dominant, while qualitative advance, the introduction of innovations, technological progress and, above all, input per unit were neglected. This contradictory developmental model was based—aside from the objective economic conditions, the peculiarities of the new markets—on the same rival trends previously spoken of: potential autarky hiding behind import substitution (not country by country but at the Comecon level) on the one hand, and the international division of labour on the other. Since the range of the latter was limited and no effort was made to extend it to the world market, the influence of imported extensivity unavoidably proved strongest.

* Dogmatic theoretical distortions, uncritical imitation of Stalin's economic policy and other political motives also had their share in developing an economy of extensive type.

In sum it may be said that in the majority of the socialist countries the international division of labour has also been an important factor of economic growth; the division of labour has, however, been realized primarily and most successfully in the form of intra-trade within Comecon and only to a limited and inadequate extent on the world market. This has largely been due to mutual tendencies towards isolation, to capitalist discrimination, and to political motives. In the years to come a positive, though gradual, change may be expected through the elimination of some of the obstacles and through impulses deriving from the world market.

The foreign trade turnover of the Comecon countries in recent years was unable to keep pace with the growth of world trade as a whole; its share in world trade was 11.1 per cent in 1962, 11 per cent in 1963 and 10.7 per cent in 1964. After a continuous increase lasting over a decade, the slight reduction in the nineteen-sixties shows that the forces bringing about extensive growth are no longer sufficient internationally. Experience shows, indeed, that they have become an obstacle to further growth and to measures and institutions ripe for realization. The current efforts and reforms will bring economic factors to the fore which, in general, will promote intensive development in the socialist countries. Their aim is to raise the level of the economy, secure a better and more coordinated utilization of resources, encourage individual initiative, introduce the most advanced technologies, the most economical production processes, and bring into being an up-to-date economic structure and system of incentives. This important stage of development calls for the creation of a new international economic mechanism. It may safely be predicted that the realization of these measures will give a fresh impetus to the socialist international division of labour through optimal specialization of individual branches of production extending over several states and through the cooperation of production plants on a strictly economic basis, accompanied by market cooperation. Further steps envision a re-arrangement of the international monetary and credit relations, a price system encouraging an optimal combination of economic resources, and exchange rates that will ensure a clear determination of values. The creation of an institutional system at a higher level of integration will thus probably become due shortly in the development of the Comecon countries. It will be the task of this system to liquidate the extensive economy on an international scale. It follows from the magnitude of this task that a longer period—at least a decade, if not more—will be required to achieve it.

However, the new international socialist system—as already pointed out —will unavoidably operate at an integrational level as well, with all its known and proven advantages, but also with its inherent limitations. Careful

attention must be paid to these limitations well in advance, in order to prevent their becoming rigid and to mitigate their negative effects. They are already being disrupted by modern scientific developments, by the known research and organizational requirements of individual branches of science, by available technologies and the immense amount of capital needed for their application; but wherever, and to the extent that, the barriers should prove insurmountable, the resulting isolation could lead to a fatal lag in technology.

American capital, which today floods the European Common Market and Britain and threatens to upset the carefully thought-out concept of Western integration, derives its power not so much from its dollar millions—for Europe's capitalists can hardly be called poor today—as from what they represent in skills, processes, advantages acquired through research and with which the competitors, to their chagrin, have proved unable to compete. Leading circles in the countries of capitalist integration, which reckoned only with the military and financial strength of the United States, but not with its technological superiority, were unprepared and—in the obsolete dogmatic armour of "a free market economy"—unable to set up any effective resistance. In some branches of industry that are decisive from the point of view of future technical progress, particularly in electronics, in cybernetics and in the automobile industry American capital had by 1965 gained positions in Western Europe of such strength as to amount to an invasion. The higher level of integration of the socialist countries will certainly be able to avert any attempt at economic penetration from whatever quarter and with whatever force it should occur—if for no other reason than that it is based on planned economies; but constant vigilance will be called for to make sure that this is not accompanied by any technological lag. The advantages of the international division of labour must therefore be ensured institutionally, even beyond the integrational borders, both actively and passively, both where the integrated socialist countries possess technological superiority and where they do not.

*

Setting out from the historical circumstances of our age, the future concept of the international division of labour must be based on the existence of the socialist and the capitalist world systems, the peculiarly intricate complex of problems relating to the developing countries, and the perspective of uninterrupted revolutionary changes in the scientific-technical domain. This concept is bound to take into account the continued presence of independent national states and their sometimes divergent interests, as well as of

the acts of integration—an important developmental factor as regards their effects, time span and contradictions—and of the future horizontal links between them. Beyond all these phases, as a long-range objective, a global concept of the international division of labour comprising all spheres of the world market will be necessary, because it is only within such a framework that all the tasks here dealt with can be realized.

We consider it the mission of this century's closing decades to secure a more rational distribution of the resources at the disposal of humanity, and, at the same time, to achieve their utmost development. Assistance to the developing countries, strengthening of the relevent international institutions, disarmament, a purposeful, worldwide intensification of the international division of labour—it is for the present generation to grapple with all these issues, resolutely and without delay. This means peace, but it also means struggle. The perspective would be more promising if all industrialized countries had already achieved a socialist society—a few decades ago this appeared to be the logical sequence. History did not follow this logic. Philosophers may blame history. We, however, do not wish to explain the world, but change it, and so we have to face our tasks and grapple with them in the sequence created by history.

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

THE IRONY OF THOMAS MANN
Péter Rényi

DOSTOIEVSKY AS SEEN BY A PSYCHIATRIST
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THE POETRY OF ISTVÁN VAS
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THE LIMITS OF DESCRIPTIVE MUSIC
Elemér Gyulai

"THE STYLE OF TRUTH" AND THE TRUTH OF STYLE

by

MÁTÉ MAJOR

"In the distant future our century will be famous for having developed a style which is based on obeying the laws of nature and which will not change again unless man renounces the advantages of science."

*"The style of which we may now see the beginnings is the style of truth since the worthy forms of our creations are true in the strictest sense of the word. The form of a large reinforced concrete arch is true if its cross-section corresponds to the tension appearing in it, the form of a large steel support is true if its profile follows the changes of its bending moment."**

Pier Luigi Nervi

I

A lot has already been said and written about architectural styles, and more and more is being said and written about the "style" of modern architecture, but apparently not yet enough about either, nor with sufficient clarity, because two basic misconceptions still exist concerning this topic.

The source of these misconceptions is to be sought in the ambiguity and obscurities of the general concept of style on the one hand, and in its mechanical application to architecture, its vulgar traits, on the other. Here too a tendency towards schematism makes itself felt, which derives from the lack of a unified view of art and which—ignoring the complexity of reality, here the peculiarities of the individual branches of art—holds the assumed or real truths concerning, for instance, aesthetics or the function of art to be equally adaptable to and realizable in literature, painting, sculpture and music, and no less so in architecture (an applied art) as well.

One basic misconception deriving from this is that the architectural forms

* Quotation from the report to the 1961 London Congress of the *Union Internationale des Architectes*, entitled "The influence of reinforced concrete and technical and scientific progress on the architecture of today and tomorrow."

produced by the historic styles of architecture are "eternal"—that they represent the patrimony of forms of every period and society; and that the architects of every period and society may borrow "freely" from these forms, and, by applying the forms selected, may "freely" shape the architecture of their own period or society. The rise and consolidation of this fallacy found support in the fact that in the history of architecture, especially since the Renaissance and even more so in the periods nearer to us—notably the latter part of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth—the new styles of architecture really came into being in this manner.

This first fallacy also affects aspects of conservation of historical monuments. The so-called purism of the second half of the last century asserted that historic works of architecture had to be restored as if they had survived in the original condition of the style of their period. So everything had to be peeled off that styles of later periods had added to them—no matter how great their artistic values were—and the forms of their original, *pure* style had to be restored. This had to apply even when these forms could not be reconstructed, since they could be "freely" replaced by suitable elements taken from the treasure of architectural forms of the given period. Such a view is akin to that other one according to which even the total rebuilding of completely destroyed architectural creations of the past is possible, especially if the drawn or photographed documentation of such buildings has been preserved in the archives, a fact that helps to explain this point of view.

The other basic misconception—which is of course connected with the first—is that modern achitecture has no "style," that it is, at the most, in the initial stage of developing towards a style. Hence, today's architects should have no say as regards the problems of other branches of art (a task devolving, in the first place, on the philosophers, who are experts in both arts and sciences); they should rather concern themselves with their own art, above all with the development of the "style" of "styleless" modern architecture.

The reasons for this fallacy derive from not knowing the peculiarities of architecture, from not understanding its essence, and from the vulgar application to architecture of views that are believed to be—and perhaps really are—now valid for other, perhaps better known and more mature branches of art.

Both misconceptions neglect the peculiarity of architecture—distinguishing it from other branches of art (with the exception of applied art)—that it is subject to material conditions which form it *a priori*, i.e., determine the realization of the aesthetic conditions in the process of creation. These

material conditions, however—building materials, structure, techniques and the material aspects of architectural requirements, which are becoming increasingly differentiated—are not directly linked with types of society and are therefore in permanent motion, change and—most important of all—progress. The aesthetic conditions on the other hand—the general ideas of society that can be expressed in architectural forms—are bound up directly with society and its inner changes, its development, flowering and dissolution, and are therefore to some degree revived again and again through the continuation of traditions. Architecture is thus a peculiar, indissoluble unity of the ever developing and of the newly arising, which basically distinguishes it from every other branch of art. In this unity the material and aesthetic conditions blend, of course, in various proportions: there are buildings in which the predetermined quality is present in all its rawness, and there are works in which the artistic forms break through, as it were, despite it. These two extremes are connected by a number of transitions, some of them revealing the rare case of relative harmony. And architectural style too can only be approached and understood through the discovery and understanding of this peculiarity.

What, then, is the general content of the concept of style in architecture?

2

Style, in a given period, society or stage of social development, is the sum total of forms—those of space, mass and detail. This formal order it represents is recognizable in the whole architecture of the given period, society or stage of social development—in its entirety or in its characteristic features. This formal order, these characteristic features make it possible to identify a building as belonging to its period and society, to the corresponding stage of this society, unless we are faced with a mere imitation of form and thus essentially a falsification of history.

It is also true, however, that as soon as a style is developed in a given period, society or stage of social development, on the basis of its own material and aesthetic conditions, it spreads elsewhere as well, in direct proportion to the state of communications and system of information—and especially to their speed. This spreading includes regions, countries and peoples where the material and aesthetic conditions of architecture differ to a greater or lesser degree, where the analogous stage of social development has not yet been reached, or even where society itself is still of a lower order than the society from which the style emanates. (The opposite of this process is much

rarer.) But as soon as the new style arrives somewhere, it impregnates the earlier, existing style with its characteristic features or its formal order, and in time becomes naturalized, establishing the local variety of the style imbued with local traits.

If, on the basis of what has been said, we examine the important architectural styles of history—say, from the 3rd millenium B.C. to the 19th century A.D.—we find roughly the following. The lifespan of individual styles—their birth, flourishing, decline—becomes shorter and shorter. Egyptian architecture lasted for some three thousand years, baroque architecture only for about one hundred and fifty. In harmony with their essence, the material conditions of the architecture of different styles multiply and become more complex, the materials, structures, techniques, the material aspects of the requirements realized in the building change continuously, progressing from the simple to the more complex, from few to many—in an inverse ratio, one might say, to the reduction of time. Generally speaking, the less time an architectural style has for developing, the more material conditions influence the assertion of its aesthetic conditions, the development of its artistic forms, its style. No doubt, however, that up to the 19th century there had always been sufficient time—and the material conditions were not too numerous—for the aesthetic conditions to assert themselves, for the style to be born, develop and dissolve, and later to give way to the succeeding new.

All this—modified, of course, in detail—applies to the styles following each other up to the 19th century, but hardly to the quickly changing and even overlapping styles of that century. It was then, when capitalist society achieved ascendancy and the industrial revolution unfolded, that the tremendous growth and differentiation of the forces of production began, and with it the powerful growth and differentiation of the productive forces of architecture. The large-scale production of iron and glass and the consequent reduction of their cost, making their use as building material possible, as well as the invention of cement, concrete, reinforced concrete and Bessemer steel, resulted in fundamental qualitative changes in structure; these determine the new form, differing substantially from the preceding one—as the architects should have been the first to notice. The new requirements (need for factories, stores, exhibition halls, railway stations, etc.), which generally precede and provoke the respective changes in materials and in structures, the introduction of new processes, although they still "precede," no longer seem to "provoke," to enforce the application of the already born and developing new. For in architecture the persistent desire to clothe the raw buildings in a historic form continues to assert itself and, as a result,

the retroactive effect of forms becomes intensified to such an extent that the new material means cannot fulfil their role without distortion, and so the new requirements cannot be really satisfied.

The revolutionary bourgeoisie went back to the order of form of puritanic Grecian architecture; the haute bourgeoisie mingling with the aristocracy—to the classical representation of Imperial Rome; the bourgeoisie following the path of nationhood and awakening to national consciousness in a burst of romantic emotion—to the architectural traditions of the national past, of an "embellished" Middle Ages; finally, the increasingly cosmopolitan bourgeoisie of the second half of the century—to the "patrimony" of the universal past, mainly the Renaissance and the baroque, invoking them in part or in their entirety. This kind of realization of a false view of the past may be recognized in the bulk of architectural creations even in the 20th century. But at the same time, as early as the second half of the 18th century and with increasing frequency in the 19th century, the laws of progress shatter the rigid medium of convention and tradition, new requirements arise here and there, and the natural and formal consequences of the slow spreading of new materials, structures and techniques determine the development of a new specific way of creating. These symptoms emerge more and more frequently, and from the natural places of their first appearance—the countries creating the new large-scale industries—they gradually spread to other European countries. It thus became possible as early as the beginning of the 20th century to draw all the theoretical conclusions, and the new, modern architecture could begin its splendid career.

As a last style experiment, the *Art Nouveau* of the turn of the century—seeking entirely new forms and imposing them on architecture—followed a path basically as false as those of the historic styles, since its approach was from the formal side and since it tried to solve the architectural expression of its period and society by means of "invented" forms. Still, through its rejection of the interminably repeated historical forms, through its denial of the past in general, its search for entirely new forms, and its affirmation of the present and even the future, *Art Nouveau* helped to pave the way for the really new and even fathered it.

3

This new architecture—having "returned" to its foundations (freed from all academic mediocrity and speculative extravagance), to its primary laws, to its most ancient traditions—had to meet an increased and continually growing multiplicity of demands with a tremendously increased and con-

tinually growing multiplicity of material conditions. A simple, unadorned, even naked architecture arises at first a bit rigidly and dryly geometrical and cubistic, later becoming looser, more tasteful, richer and more dynamic. In the forms of this architecture you more readily recognize the self-assertive, common atmosphere of a creative method than a style in the old sense of the word, clearly recognizable in a relatively small number of formal elements.

Indeed, in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th, society —and with it architectural requirements and their material conditions (building materials, structures, techniques) as well as their spreading due to the sudden quickening of communications (steam railway, telegraph, telephone)—developed at so fast a rate that there was no longer sufficient time for the maturing and creation of a distinct, independent and firm architectural style. The progressive unfolding of the requirements and of their conditions, on the one hand, and the retrograde "return" to historical forms, on the other, produced such sharp contradictions in architecture that the resulting styles (neo-classicism and especially romanticism and eclecticism, even *Art Nouveau*)—no matter how much they were valued in their own time and whatever our own efforts to recognize their merits—cannot be measured against earlier styles. Since then the pace of general and specialized progress has quickened to such an extent that the increasing multiplicity of architectural requirements and the hitherto unimaginable richness of material conditions, the irresistable growth and development of building materials, structures, techniques—besides the shortness of time—have made the development of an architectural style in the old sense of the word entirely impossible and have virtually imposed the creative method we have mentioned. It now sets out from the requirements and from the principle of satisfying these requirements optimally and (consciously or unconsciously)—on the basis of a dialectical examination of the material and spiritual conditions that call architecture into existence and on the basis of their interrelation—it now seeks to solve every architectural problem on its own conditions and with the most complete detachment and maximum efficiency.

In order to throw full light on my assertion, let me refer only to the fact that the same architectural object can have a number of different solutions; for instance, the most diverse materials can be used—steel, reinforced concrete, glass, plastics, etc.—together with the most diverse structures—frames and panels, placing the loadbearing structures inside (and using cantilevers) or setting them outside; cladding with metal, glass or curtain wall or omitting windows through providing artificial sunlight; constructing with reinforced concrete shells, or closing the space with suspended (cable) or geodetic (lamellar) structures, etc. They all, both the materials and the

structures alike, have their own raw forms derived from their own inner laws and leading to so many kinds of pre-formedness that it becomes impossible to sift out—from their totality or from a group of them—any formal order or style, consisting of some generally repetitive (and elsewhere repeatable) elements. Only a creative method based on a common view of the profession is able to create an atmosphere of coherence in this supremely rich multiplicity, to lift architecture into the sphere of beauty and art, into the sphere of a new style in a wider sense of the word.

With their formal order the historical styles of architecture were bound to their period, their society, its stage of social development. They were entirely dependent on the architectural productive forces—materials, structures, techniques, building knowledge—of their period and, primarily through their material functions, on architectural requirements that represent a stage of progress already obsolete today. They are, moreover, bound by the ideas of the period, still deriving from a lower stage of social progress. Thus, any imitation or "revival" of a historical style, or even of a single form of style, is in reality a thorough falsification of history.

Such an approach to the historical styles—linked with our approach to the "style" of modern architecture—is also decisive as regards the conservation of historical monuments. The relics of the architecture of the past have to be restored in such a way as to avoid even a semblance of falsification, although the range of possible falsifications is very wide. It is a falsification, for instance, if we remove from the building to be restored formal details of styles superimposed in the course of history—unless these spring from the frequently less valuable or even valueless reconstructions of the recent past, such as the 19th century. It is also a falsification to complete a ruined or partly ruined historical building with documented original forms, if the new additions are not clearly separated from the old—either in material, or texture, colour and technique—because this misleads the present and future spectators (mainly non-experts). The extreme case of this sort of falsification is when a completely ruined or destroyed historical building is rebuilt on the basis of drawings or photographic documentation. (There are, of course, many examples of this, but a correct view of history forbids our following them.) Finally, the most conspicuous kind of falsification is the partial or complete restoration of a historical monument without any documentation. This is a revival of purism, a method—generally rejected today—that corrupted and destroyed so many valuable monuments in Europe, including Hungary.

Whenever any major addition to a monument (with or without documentation) is considered—especially in connexion with the utilization of the

building—contemporary practice in architecture and in conservation of historical monuments can be none other than to use the instruments and methods of modern architecture, "the style of truth." By thus consciously asserting its own views, modern architecture really follows the unconscious, natural procedure of the great historical styles, which always superimposed their own style on the buildings inherited from earlier styles.

This also means that contemporary, modern architecture does have a "style," though not in the sense of the style concept that developed in the past and that—basically correctly—was founded on the formal peculiarities of successive architectures. The material conditions of modern architecture, though highly developed, still keep on developing and its spiritual conditions, evolved out of a scientific view and unfolding more and more clearly, have rendered it necessary and inevitable to expand its style concept and make it more elastic. And although, at the moment, the realization in practice of this new style concept is still at an initial stage—as emphasized by Pier Luigi Nervi in the introductory motto to this article—this "style" is, nevertheless, theoretically ready and complete, for it does not mean the maintenance of some final formal order, fixed in diagrams or in reality, or a clinging to inviolable canons of set rules, but involves the intelligent application of a logical and dialectical creative method.

This method is logical because it sets out from the principle of optimal satisfaction of architectural requirements, and in the service of this principle it mobilizes a maximum of the given material possibilities. In other words, it makes use of almost all the inner laws inherent in materials and structures —and this is the principle of conformity to material and to structure. It seeks to secure almost all the material requirements inherent in functions, because it is only together with these that it may realize the requirements inherent in the spiritual conditions (functions) of the work to be constructed —and this, finally, is the principle of functionalism correctly interpreted. This method is dialectical, because—in principle—it never disregards the fact that the material and spiritual conditions of architecture permanently influence each other and that, in the solution of every architectural task, optimal harmony has to be created again and again in the complex multiplicity of interrelations and interactions.

4

The quotation chosen for a motto speaks of "the style of truth," of the fact that Nervi believes he has discovered the truth of style in the truth of forms reflecting exactly the material and structural content. But this does

not complete the truth of style in modern architecture, because it should also include the truth of forms reflecting exactly the content i.e., the functions of the building. This means not only that the form of a large reinforced concrete arch is true if its cross-section corresponds to the tensions arising in it, but that, for instance, a residential building is only true if the solution of its material functions—i.e., the size, shape, arrangement, etc., of its premises—corresponds to the biological requirements of human life.

Consequently, the problem of modern architecture is not, I repeat, its lack of style or its merely starting to develop one. The only problem—and this is natural—is that application of the creative method characteristic of the style of modern architecture is far from easy. Architects—and this is now particularly true of Hungarian architects—are not always able to approach their tasks with the consistency (logic and dialectic) and detachment demanded by this method. Therefore—contrary to the method—they tend to assert formal influences in their works, often without any revaluation. These influences reach them with the speed of aeroplanes from every part of the world, through hundreds of periodicals, books and personal experiences. What architects create in Japan or in South America today, will appear tomorrow in our country (this being still the general direction of the spread of influence), if not in its entirety, at least partially, in individual traits—often in its proper place, but sometimes formally and contradictorily. This then is the problem of style of modern architecture in Hungary (as elsewhere). The struggle with such problems, their continual solution is, however, the only possible road towards progress.

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

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László Gerő

AN EXHIBITION OF EUROPEAN BOOK ILLUMINATIONS
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THE FIRST EUROPEAN HOMO ERECTUS

The Vértesszőllős Excavations

by

LÁSZLÓ VÉRTES

In the neighbourhood of Vértesszőllős, some 30 miles west of Budapest, a porous fresh-water limestone called travertin has been quarried since time immemorial. It provides an excellent, yet cheap building material, weather-proof and well insulating.

Fresh-water limestone is deposited by calcic springs originating in the depths of the earth, and is formed into craters, basins and stalagmites. The lime is secreted by water-plants—mosses and algae—on the surface of which the precipitated chalk crystallizes, covering and ultimately suffocating the plants that created it.

In the distant past, not only animals came to slake their thirst at the pools formed by such springs, but man as well used to settle near these pools or in temporarily dried-up basins. Palaeontologists like to nose about the travertin formations, on the lookout for finds, and the travertin cones are almost inexhaustible treasure-troves for palaeonto-botanists in search of the imprints, frozen into lime, of bygone vegetation.

Not far from the quarries, on the shores of the Tata lake, there is a travertin hill. Several years ago a settlement of Neanderthal man was discovered here, and his living conditions were reconstructed by a group of scientists in a voluminous monograph (see *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 11, July–September 1963). Subsequently we began taking side-glances at the Vértesszőllős travertin too, from which, though we knew it to be older than the one at Tata, we did not expect very much. The Tata discovery was found by the radiation laboratory of Groningen University to be 50,000 years old, and Hungary so far had yielded few earlier traces of man. As early as the beginning of this century our palaeontologists had dug up petrified animal bones at Vértesszőllős, but these were remnants from a past so distant that no human finds had been discovered from this era anywhere in Europe.

When in 1962 a few geographer colleagues of mine brought me some parched bones and crude silica fragments from the Vértesszőllős quarry, where they were studying the glacial layers, I received them with more annoyance than enthusiasm. Some younger material, I thought, must have become deposited between the more ancient travertin strata, and it was from this material that the fragments, which indubitably bore the trace of man's hand, must have been made.

Since the later settlements of prehistoric man—ten to fifty thousand years old—are rather rare in Hungary too, I was on location within a few days, and I soon realized that my colleagues Márton Pécsi and Imre Mészáros had in fact found a prehistoric human settlement. We proceeded with the excavations a few months later, in the summer of 1963.

I travelled to Vértesszőllős with a young girl student. Without any other assistance and armed only with our excavating knives, we began to pry out of the hardly two inches thick, loose material, wedged between the hard limestone rocks, the accessible bone, flint and silica fragments. We considered our work a trial excavation, undertaken reluctantly because my attention was still focussed on the rich material of the Tata find, compared to which these relatively valueless stone fragments...

So my young student did not know what to think when suddenly I began to run up and down excitedly between the rocks of the quarry, clutching a little piece of bone. For what Miss Viola Dobosi had handed me, asking what kind of tooth it might be, was the tooth of a *Trogontherium!*

The *Trogontherium*, a primordial beaver characteristic of the Pleistocene, became extinct about 400 thousand years ago. And its tooth, together with the singed bones and stone implements, meant no less than that I was digging up the biggest, most wonderful find of my life as an archaeologist—a primordial settlement from as far back as the Mindel Glacial.

*

From that moment on the Vértesszőllős find drove everything else from my mind. After the 1963 excavations, lasting a week, I spent a month there in 1964 and nearly three months in 1965, until I almost felt that the unfriendly quarry had become my second home. The news of the find spread like wild-fire—fanned by the paper I wrote together with my closest collaborator, the palaeontologist Miklós Kretzoi, and published in the American periodical *Current Anthropology* (see bibliography). Soon I was inundated by visits from Hungarian and foreign specialists, and there were weeks when I had to choose between devoting myself to the visitors or to the excavations.

We found four cultural strata at Vértesszőllős. In the area of 70–80 m² where we were now carrying on our excavations, groups of prehistoric human beings had settled during the course of four successive periods. At least 40–50 thousand years had elapsed between the first and the last settlement. But this huge span of time greatly contracts if we bear in mind that, according to our present knowledge, the age of the oldest settlement stratum is approximately 450–500 thousand years. The cultural strata, two to four inches thick, are full of partly singed bones, broken into small pieces, as well as quartz, silica and flint pebbles and their fragments. Some fragments bore such faint traces of work by prehistoric man that only an archaeologist's skilled eye could detect them; laymen would have thrown them away as so many broken pebbles. But even I, as an archaeologist, had to look very closely to recognize in these fragments tools made by human hands and designed by human brains. This was no easy task. I had to plough through finds in other countries, which in workmanship, shape and era were similar to ours—partly by studying the illustrations in published articles, partly by travelling abroad and examining the excavated tools themselves.

In China, at the famous site of Choukoutien, tools similar to ours were made of vein-quartz. Essentially they are the same as those from Vértesszőllős but, made as they are of a different kind of rock, their identity is not obvious at first sight. In India, the tools of the Sohan culture in the Punjab correspond to ours. They were made of pebble stones and are much larger than the ones found in Hungary, but their workmanship is similar. In South Africa, at the famous site of *Australopithecus*, in the limestone-breccia of Swartkrans, similar implements belonging to the Oldovan culture were found, together with remains of *Homo erectus*. A few implements were also found at another famous *Australopithecus* site in South Africa, the Sterkfontein Extension Site. As regards the era of origin, all of them correspond to our own finds, at least approximately. Although the shape of the tools is very similar to those found at Vértesszőllős, the famous finds of Bed I of the Olduwa gorge are older. A few similar remnants were discovered in the Sahara and north of it. The most important and oldest among the latter are the strange "bolas"-es of Ain Hanech in Algeria. These are roughly rounded tools made of hard limestone, of the Pleistocene (Villafranchian) period, like the similar bolases found in Bed I of Oldova.

In Europe, a few dispersed remnants of this type have been found, but their era has not been determined with any certainty. The rich finds of the Clacton culture in South England are an exception. There the most characteristic finds are the choppers and chopping tools, just as at the other sites mentioned. But the Clacton implements originated approximately 100 thousand

years later than the others; they come from the long inter-glacial era succeeding the Mindel Glacial, which was the period of the other finds.

At our site traces of man-controlled fire were also found in the shape of singed bones and of little fireplaces built of these bones. Such old evidence of the use of fire had been found previously only at the Choukoutien site near Peking, where the rock debris from the collapsed ceiling of an erstwhile cave and the clay amassed in between formed a layer 60 metres thick. It was within this layer that the fireplaces, animal bones and quartz tools were found, crowned by the skulls and jaws of tool-making man, *Sinanthropus Pekiniensis*. These remnants are of later date than ours, and expert opinion places them at the beginning of the Mindel-Riss Interglacial.

As I have said, at Vértesszőllős the tools and bones are to be found in four thin strata. The two lower ones are in calcareous mud, and are covered by a layer of hard rock. The third stratum is on the surface of this layer. The fourth or upper stratum lies approximately four metres above the lowest stratum on top of a layer of loess formed by dust carried there by the wind.

The great time-intervals separating the cultures brought about considerable changes in the types of life that successively existed at what is now the Vértesszőllős site. Not very "sensitive" species of animals, like the giant beaver, have been found in each stratum. This also applies to the Etruscan rhinoceros, two kinds of bear, the Mosbach wolf, the primordial buffalo, and a type of deer now extinct. From the bottom of the third stratum we dug out another important fossil—the sharp canine of the sabre-toothed tiger; very likely it too lived through all four periods of the Vértesszőllős strata, but being too strong an adversary for weakly armed man, left only a sample tooth in the debris of the settlement.

In contrast, the teeth of the extinct small rodents, a variety of mice and voles, found after carefully sluicing and sieving the material of the Vértesszőllős strata, differed considerably, depending on whether they were found in the two lower or in the two upper strata. Their names, *Microtus arvalidens*, *Pitymys*, *Phaiomys* and *Pliomys*, mean nothing to the layman. What is important is that, according to the palaeontologist Miklós Kretzoi, the bones found in the lower layers belonged to species that liked a warm climate, and those in the upper layers to species that could stand cold. The imprints of leaves and the microscopic examination of the tiny specks of another dust also proved that a considerable change of climate occurred during the era when the successive layers were formed.

This is no surprise to the expert: the rise of man took place in an era of changing climate—the second cold period of the ice age, known as the Mindel Glacial. According to most experts, it was in this period that the

oldest Javanese "ape-man," the *Pithecanthropus* of Modjokerto lived, followed by the *Pithecanthropus* of Trinil and Sangiran, the *Sinanthropus*, the North-African *Athlanthropus* and the South-African *Telanthropus*. All these terms denote remains of man which represent different forms of *Archanthropus*, the oldest human group. Together they are sometimes called *Homo erectus*, as opposed to the later human species, the various sub-species of *Homo sapiens*. *Homo habilis*, who preceded all these, was found in the lowest stratum of the Oldova gorge in East Africa. The place in time and the character of this find are still unclarified; perhaps it represents the first human species, perhaps the most advanced *Australopithecus*—a well-developed creature which preceded man, had a larger brain than any anthropoid ape now living, walked erect, and made tools.

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To sum up, human remains are known from the following sites of an age approximately identical with that of the Vértesszőllős find: two in Java, two in China (including the recent *Lantian* find, whose period has not yet been fully established), one in South Africa *(Swartkrans)*, one in East Africa *(Oldova)*, and one in North Africa *(Ternifine)*. The European *Mauer* jaw should be mentioned here, although it is omitted by most experts, because the circumstances of its discovery are uncertain. Only the first stratum of the East African Oldova find is considerably older than that of Vértesszőllős; its average age, according to isotope analysis, is 1.75 million years. Remains of the bones of *Homo habilis* were discovered there, together with implements and animal bones.

Very few human remains are thus available from the end of the Pleistocene period, the Mindel Glacial (according to the Hungarian palaeonthological classification, the upper stratum of the "Biharian"). No wonder the American anthropologist F. Clark Howell, who visited the Vértesszőllős excavations and finds in 1964, wrote in his book, *Early Man*, published at the beginning of 1965:

"... there is a strong hope that further work at Vértesszőllős will throw some light on the evolution and distribution of the Oldovan industry, about which almost nothing is presently known... Since the types of tools found at Vértesszőllős are much the same as those found at Choukoutien and in East Africa, we can assume that *Homo erectus* was the man who made them although no human fossils have yet been found there... It is certainly the oldest known tool site in Europe..."

Since then Vértesszőllős has proved that it ranks high among the great archaeological sites of the world in providing data on the early history of the

human race. In the course of the 1964 excavations we filled sacks with a great part of the calcareous mud containing the remains of the richest first stratum. We transported it to the laboratory by the hundredweight and selected the relics by passing the mud through a fine sieve. Our primary aim was to collect as many small rodent teeth as possible in order to determine the period more exactly. But imagine our delight when, in addition to the expected rodent teeth, we also found teeth from the left side of the lower jaw of a child: an eye-tooth, a first number two molar, and less significant fragments, probably parts of the molar. We turned over this rare find to the anthropologist Andor Thoma. Here was proof that *Homo erectus* had lived in Europe too, his only known settlement was that at Vértesszőllős, which he had littered with the bones—broken into small pieces—of captured animals; here he made use of fire; here parts of the jaw of a dead child—perhaps the victim of a cannibal feast—lay among the litter!

Other interesting things, even if of lesser importance, were discovered as well. A great number of charred bones were found, and there could no longer be any doubt about the use of fire. The bones formed regular fireplaces, in some spots one bone was in contact with the other. However, we did not find any charcoal, although it too is a time-resisting material. We suspect that Vértesszőllős man used bones for his fire, or at least covered the fire with bones broken into small fragments to keep the embers alive. This is in line with the general opinion that during the period in question (the use of fire at that time was known only from the Choukoutien find) man was not yet able to make fire, but merely to keep burning the embers of trees struck by lightning.

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Of course, we worked at our desks too. In Hungarian archaeological literature we discovered an article, hidden away in a little popular magazine, which provided our finds with a name. Almost thirty years ago the Hungary of those days was preparing for war, and it was decided to convert the natural limestone caves under Buda Castle into air-raid shelters. Since the travertin layers and the gravel below and between them contained a glacial fauna, Ottokár Kadic was commissioned to carry out excavations before the construction work started. In one cave cellar, under the house at Úri Street 72, he found animal bones and pebble fragments. The bones indicated a fauna from the Mindel period, and Kadic identified the roughly broken pebbles as the work of human hands and the earliest archaeological remains in Hungary. Because he mentioned them only in popular articles, the scholars took no notice of these discoveries. The finds from the castle cave are still in the

collection of the Hungarian National Museum, and so it was possible to check them. They proved to be identical with those of Vértesszőllős. Having been discovered thirty years earlier, they were entitled to priority and to the name *Buda-culture*. So this archaeological title is also being applied to the Vértesszőllős tools.

The coincidence—if I may be permitted this little détour—that the site is called Vértesszőllős and its discoverer Vértes has caused something of a muddle and given rise to painful situations. Several times I had to explain that I did not name the site after myself. It was, consequently, a great relief—after finding Kadic's Buda Castle pebbles and establishing their identity—to be able to rid myself of the terrifying thought that I, Vértes, might have to call a new archaeological culture, Vértesszőllős-culture.

Meantime the excavations progressed, and the members of the working party—palaeontologists, palaeo-botanists, geologists and geographers—and the interested foreign and Hungarian colleagues became familiar with the little timber hut on the site. Bit by bit we added to our knowledge, and hardly a day passed without bringing the pleasure of a new find to one expert or another.

Yet our most beautiful day was the 21st of August, 1965. Two workers were labouring with crowbar and twenty-pound hammer amidst the big rocks at the edge of the settlement. In staking out its limits we had blasted apart a few rocks standing in our way at the brim of the one-time limestone basin. The stone blocks broken off by the blast were now being removed by means of these more "delicate" archaeological implements.

I was sitting in the hut with my wife (who had come to Vértesszőllős for a rest) when one of my workers stopped on the threshold with a tense face and said: "Will you please come, Professor, we've found something."

And now I experienced what the word "stress," so popular nowadays, means in the life of an excavating archaeologist. I had been digging on a side of the site where human remains—if any—would be a very important find. I had asked Andor Thoma to cooperate even before the teeth were found. And I had been lucky enough to find human teeth at this particular place, although the earth of Hungary was notoriously niggardly as far as remains of primordial man were concerned. In my twenty years' work as an archaeologist I had found only a single tooth prior to these three—or was it two?—little teeth. This had been at the Istállóskő cave, and it too had belonged to a child. Nor could I forget that throughout the world human remains from this period had been found in fewer places than there were fingers on my two hands. I had less hope of finding human fossils here than of hitting the jackpot in the lottery.

Calcareous mud Containing Some Remains

On preceding page:

Site of the Vértesszőllős Excavations

The Vértesszőllős Find

Yet, in the course of these excavations lasting for months, there was hardly a second when, consciously or subconsciously, I had not expected to find human fossils. The jaw with receding chin, constantly recurring in my dreams, the crude skull with broad eyebrow, the crested napebone were objects that kept my nerves and attention in a constant state of stress.

When my worker came to tell me with a tense expression that they had found something, I jumped as if I had touched a live wire.

My wife ran after me as I dashed up to the rock. My workers, Jenő Futó and Lipót Skoflek, stood there leaning against the crowbar and stared—not at the bone, but at my face. A block of stone, blasted from the rocks and weighing about 200 pounds, lay at their feet, and, embedded in it, there was a piece of yellow bone, the size of half a hand and hollow like a cup. From the surface of the split rock a round bulge, about the size of two fists, protruded—here and there crusted with yellow bone. I sat down on the ground and just looked. Never before had I felt such tension. Before my "inner eye" passed the huge array of bear, deer, lion and buffalo skulls I had excavated or seen in my life. Almost desperately I tried to convince myself that the skull fragments in front of me were those of a bear and not the coveted ones of man, because I was afraid that if I believed this to be a human fossil and it later proved to be otherwise, I would not be able to bear it. The two workers stood silent behind me. After a long pause Futó asked: "Surely we were right, surely this is . . . ?"

". . . a man!" I said, in spite of my torturing doubts. "Yes, this is sure to be a man!" By this time I knew beyond question that what lay in front of me was indeed a human skull; but then I also knew that this was the jackpot I had such ridiculously low chances of winning, and therefore I simply must not believe it. Yet automatically I found myself looking at my watch to mark my finding for the history of science: "1.30 p.m., 21st of August, 1965." A number of disjointed thoughts crossed my mind simultaneously: the bones must be protected against any damage; I have to give Dr. Thoma a ring; ring up Dr. Kretzoi; ring up the museum. How am I going to lift this out of here; how much of the skull is still hidden inside the rock?

Within minutes I improvised a protective covering over the skull fragment. It consisted of paper wadding, earth, the washbowl of the workers, and plastic foil. Within hours the place had a name: Washbowl Sanctuary, as palaeo-botanist Skoflek happily called it. But the find itself got a name too: Samuel.

"Samuel," Futó, the finder, said. "Let us call it Samuel, for I always thought if we found a man we would call him that. That's the name I gave him in my thoughts."

And Samuel he became. Later we even baptized him. And so I learned that I was not the only one for whom the long-awaited human find had been a source of stress.

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Everything else happened fast. Three hours later we already were sitting with Kretzoi in front of the bones and one by one eliminated the various possibilities that the remains could be anything but human. Kretzoi—to needle me—did not exclude the idea that the skull might belong to a whale. The bad state of preservation of the bone also gave me a headache. My friend Skoflek could not help laughing at us as we sat around the skull and took photographs of it. "I would never have thought," he said, "that when an expert's boldest dream came true, he would make such a sour face. I thought this would be an occasion for glee." There was some truth in what he said. But the time for celebrating was not far off: a gay christening in the presence of officials of the Hungarian National Museum and the Academy of Sciences, with Tokay wine; a dinner for the workers and a narrow circle of collaborators, with champagne. But there was more tiresome work and brain-racking to come. The blocks containing the skull-bones had to be sawn out of the rock. After I had put a safety cap of silicone rubber and gypsum on them, the blocks were transported to the Museum. There they waited patiently until the end of October, when I completed my excavations.

In October, we finished the work planned for the year. We had uncovered Site number I. Site number II, close to the former, was a deep limestone crevice, which had been discovered by the quarry workers; I asked the palaeontologist, Dénes Jánossy, to work it over. At the bottom there was a thick layer of animal bones cemented into stone, including a few man-made tools. Its age was approximately the same as that of Site number I; the bones, however, had not been carried there by men, but were probably the remains of animals that had fallen into the crevice. They belonged approximately to the same species as at the first site, except that the proportion of carnivores was different: here they dominated, while at Site number I the majority were herbivorous. It was the selective activity of man that had caused the divergence between the two faunas. We also have a Site number III. On a quiet day I sent Viola Dobosi over there with an excavating knife to have a look at a little hill that was left over after quarrying. There too she found cultural strata with bones, fireplaces and tools. We shall have to explore this site next year.

Finally we packed up, moved to the Hungarian National Museum with our rich material and with an impatience that was hard to bear: the time

had come to pry the skull-bone loose and have it prepared. I was supplied with good advice from abroad, and Professor Oakley, the famous expert of the British Museum, sent a substance suitable for preparing the bone.

Again we lived through weeks filled with tension, but this time because the "great find" was already in our hands. The bone, soft as soap, had to be removed from the hard rock. I had to proceed millimetre by millimetre with dentists' instruments, until finally the napebone lay there in one piece, soaked in the conservation fluid, and could be touched and measured by Andor Thoma. In addition to its name it now also got a number—the next catalogue number of the primordial collection—and one day, the umbilical cord between Samuel and myself was severed: he finally moved into one of the large safes, setting up his abode next to the children's teeth.

The important find, the first European bone-fossil of *Homo erectus,* is not much to look at. Even a layman will notice at first glance that it is unusually thick and much smaller than the skull of today's human being; also that in the back, at the nape, there is a strong, transverse crestbone: the *torus transversus.* Dr. Thoma will be able to tell more about this when he has finished his detailed examination. As for me, who am an archaeologist, but responsible for the entire excavation, I can think of no greater satisfaction than to see proven what we could already "predict" from the age of the finds, the tools, the fauna and, last but not least, the children's teeth: that the inhabitant of the Vértesszőllős settlement was *Homo erectus.*

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Here my story ends—at least for a year. Next year we go back to explore Site number III, and maybe . . . ?

In the meantime, I still have a few things to do in connection with Samuel and the finds that accompanied him. Everybody agrees that this find is not a run-of-the-mill archaeological sensation but a real event of world-wide significance, and that the site is a common treasure of human culture. We are responsible for safeguarding this treasure, making it accessible, and bringing it to the notice of all those who may be interested.

"For this one need not travel to China or to East Africa; it is to be found here close to the great international trans-European motorway, a hundred odd miles from Vienna," one of our visitors, a famous scientist, said about our site. It is up to us to change this site; make it into a pleasant spot for visitors, erect a roof above the ancient settlement to protect the strata where we may explore and exhibit on the spot the most ancient European settlement. To achieve this will not be an easy task.

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GOD IN THE QUAD

I

OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY IN THE *NOUVEAU ROMAN*

by

ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET

I have chosen as subject of my Budapest lecture* *objectivity* and *subjectivity*, because these two words have often given rise to misunderstanding, and indeed still give rise to misunderstanding among certain readers and a good many critics. Objectivity and subjectivity. Let me put the problem squarely in relation to my own work; what has struck me forcibly is that the critics who with one voice ordained my novels objective, as for instance *Le Voyeur*, when *Marienbad* appeared decreed that this film was subjective, and I was somewhat taken aback to be switched from one extreme of observation to the other—objective novelist and subjective film-maker. I am going to try to show that this distinction has no basis as far as I am concerned, and is probably irrelevant to most contemporary narrative, whether novel or film, not only in my own works, but in the work of most of the novelists and film-makers of today. I mean those who talk a modern language.

The word objectivity was first used in connection with *Le Voyeur*, and later about *Gommes*, by Roland Barthes. His article, entitled "Objective Literature," was preceded by a quotation giving a precise definition of the word "objective." The quotation was taken from the *Dictionnaire Littré*—"objective—facing the object." This meaning of the word still exists in modern French, but only in the language of optics. In all optical instruments with two lenses, the "ocular," the one nearer and facing the eye, is distinguished from the "objective"—the one farther and facing the object. The critics seized on this word "objective," and as they had been struck by the multitude of objects in my books, which they found unusual, they seized on it as a convenient word, and settled its future. They resolved that my writing was objective, but unhappily they understood the word in its current sense in ordinary French, which means something entirely different, some-

* Text of a lecture delivered at the *Institut Français* in Budapest, October 1965.

thing neutral, impartial, without emotion. So objective writing became for them the sort of writing in which the presence of the author, of human beings as such, is minimized in favour of objects, of the material elements in the external world which in fact would have existed in any case without man. They, the critics, were further confirmed in their notion by the fact that I am not a writer by profession, but an engineer, and obviously it is only too easy to believe that an engineer writes engineer's literature. There are always categories like that in critics' brains, and it made a very comfortable point of departure for them.

There were moreover ideas in my books which seemed typical of scientific ideas to them, ideas of measure, for instance, and form. There were rectangles and centimetres, there were oblique lines, all of them very common forms; there were even parallelepipeds, a word which is absurd to every literary critic. I have to point out that the parallelepiped, even if it is a little odd as a word, and even perhaps a little ugly, is in any case the most common shape to be found in everyday life. The top of a table is not a rectangle because it is not two-dimensional, it is a parallelepiped. A shoebox is a parallelepiped. The form has no other name, and there's nothing I can do about it if it has a slightly ugly sound.

The critics consequently, confronted with these words, with the profession I used to follow, with the multitude of objects in my books, duly ruled that my aim was to describe the world without the intervention of the human presence. A little later it happened that despite themselves they found themselves casting a glance over some of my novels and promptly discovered it wouldn't do; that there were elements in my novels which were not at all neutral and impartial, elements of feeling, even of passion; they consequently settled that this was not objective writing after all, and brought in the verdict: I was a writer who tried to be objective but failed. Of course it might have helped to read all these books of mine, or let us say a page or two, with a little more attention, and then they might have seen that the subjectivity they attacked as a fault was on the contrary the whole point of the books in question. The new French novel consistently faces towards the object, but it is about man. It is about the subjectivity of the standpoint, not at all about the object itself.

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It is true that I myself have made theoretical pronouncements which may have given rise to certain misunderstandings. In referring to the philosophies of existentialism and of Heidegger, I spoke of "the being there" of things, but "the being there" is by no means a concept from which man is absent.

No, on the contrary, I assert it is "the being there" in the presence of man. In my novels, in my friends' novels, these objects, however numerous they may be, however minutely they may be described, have one particular characteristic which in my opinion is a human characteristic—they are described by a human being. It is a human regard which is cast upon them, a regard which describes things as they are seen in a given place at a given time. There is a specific someone in the novel who is looking at the world. And it seems to me that it is precisely this character which puts this writing in radical opposition to that of the nineteenth century, or let us say of the first half of the nineteenth century. In fact I can put the question thus: in the novels—for instance—of Balzac, who is looking at the world?

You must have all noticed those odd sentences in Balzac, which begin within the mind with some particular detail of which only the character in question could be aware; a mental concept, something he is thinking; and then suddenly in the same sentence, without a break in the continuity, you have a reference to some detail which the character cannot possibly know himself, which can only be observed by someone facing him, a butterfly coming to rest on his hat, or something similar. The same sentence consequently, contains two different points of view: that of the man, the character in question, and that of someone who is looking at him.

This sort of thing, these modes of description, no longer exist in modern literature, but they were the rule in the nineteenth century, or at least in the first half of it. The whole question of the viewpoint did not concern the novelist. The viewpoint was always a viewpoint from above and beyond the novel. There was someone who was not in the novel, who was outside the world, a little above, and who continuously saw everything simultaneously. Someone who saw the insides of minds and the outsides of faces, who knew at one and the same time the present, the past and the future, someone who knew everything and judged everything all the time. If a name is to be given to this narrator it will have to be God. In a novel of the early nineteenth century the viewpoint is exactly the viewpoint of God, and consequently there is absolutely no reason to be surprised that the story continually changes time and situation in space.

It is this novel therefore which is objective. For me the objective novel is in no sense the modern novel (and I mean objective here in the usual sense of the word as neutral, impartial). The novel which gives a view of the world without emotion and distortion which, taken all in all, is objective —in a word—Balzac.

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Today, as I have pointed out, there is on the contrary a person seeing. In the novel itself there is a person seeing the world and describing it as he sees it. The point of view is not only a point of view located in time and place, it is in addition an emotional point of view. And in fact the reproach of having tried and failed to write objective novels is somewhat curious in view of the type of eyewitness I have chosen. Not only has this eyewitness merely a fragmentary view of the world, and one that is constantly subject to doubt, but in addition he is a person who, by his very situation in the story, is inevitably obliged to distort what he sees. If I had wanted to write objective novels I should not have chosen witnesses so subject to the imputation of partiality. In *Le Voyeur* the narrator is a criminal sadist who lies continuously in telling his story, in order to conceal his crime—a somewhat curious form of objectivity, I cannot help thinking. In *Jalousie* a husband spends his time watching his wife like a lynx, his whole attention concentrated on putting her in the wrong. His standpoint is much nearer psychoanalysis than geometry. In *Le Labyrinthe* it is a dying soldier, wounded, starving, who is more than likely to be subject of fantasy and hallucination.

In short, the objects, the subjective objects which are found in my books, are sometimes real objects, but they are also sometimes what science calls mirror-images—they are things that the character distorts, or even things he quite simply imagines. This so-called *"école du regard"* which is the new novel has nonetheless introduced a special sort of "regard"; it is not a passive "regard," it is an active "regard," a "regard" which imposes its own forms on the world, which gives the world its form from minute to minute. In *Jalousie*, for instance, an object which plays an important role in the story, the stain on the wall, changes size in the course of the tale. As it becomes charged with erotic, or at least, emotional power, it changes from a few centimetres, two centimetres, I think, in the second chapter, to twenty centimetres in the last. The word centimetre consequently, contrary to usual belief, can also be subjective: it is even, as I see it, more subjective, since it never admits its own subjectivity. It tries to conceal it under a vocabulary which borrows its neutrality from science.

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Only I don't think subjectivity as such is exactly what I am trying to explain either. If I may take an example, let me take the film *Last Year in Marienbad*. If this film were an objective film, it would be a sort of documentary on the luxury hotels of Central Europe. A somewhat peculiar documentary, since no hotel in Central Europe even slightly resembles the four

Bavarian castles in which we shot the film, plus a studio set which also played an important part in it. It is a hotel with a character which can scarcely be described as objective, and the attitudes of the characters to be met there are scarcely those seen in everyday life. And then again it is a hotel where distinctly preposterous activities are carried on, like revolver shooting in the public rooms and games with matches you have certainly never seen anywhere else. And then no one ever eats, and no dining-room is ever to be seen in this hotel; it is really not at all what one would call a documentary on hotel life. And moreover there are scenes in the film which are quite obviously fantasy: the balustrade for instance, which collapses backward with a loud theatrical crack, or the heroine assassinated by her husband, who fires a revolver at her from a window, although he has just been seen leaving by the door on the other side of the room, the fantasy being emphasized by different positions of the reputedly dead woman on the ground, positions which are successively different and contradictory in themselves.

But this misunderstanding never arose over *Marienbad*, as I have already explained; by common consent it was agreed that the world it dealt with was a subjective world. From this point of view, the second point of view, since it wasn't a documentary on the hotels of Europe, it had to be sort of document on the psychology of the couple. A study from within, a study of the subjectivity of a character at grips with this emotional experience. Where the difficulty starts is when one begins to ask—which character? Obviously the first idea to spring to the mind is that the subjectivity in *Marienbad* is that of the narrator himself. From the very beginning of the film a voice is heard; this is the voice which imposes its forms on the world, this is the voice which in the end finally triumphs, since it convinces the heroine of the truth of its words. So the hotel and the story are as seen by the narrator; so the film is a subjective document dealing with the stranger arriving by chance in the hotel.

But you can see at once that this won't do at all, precisely because the scenes of fantasy referred to a moment ago—the balustrade collapsing or the heroine being assassinated by her husband—simply do not match the narrator's words. And if one has to decide on the subjectivity of one of them, there are whole subjective scenes which belong to the woman and not to the man. Then the whole film must be this adventure as seen by the woman. The words of the narrator are not active words, they are words heard, and it is she who hears these words, and the phantasms she creates are phantasms attempting to escape from these words. By means of her imagination she creates the dramatic elements, deliberately constructed to destroy the adventure which is being imposed on her from without.

Only if the film is to be understood as a whole, if an explanation embracing all the different images, all the different sounds heard, is demanded, it has to be admitted fairly soon that the subjectivity in question is not that of the man, nor of the woman, but of both of them at the same time. It is not therefore a question of the subjectivity of one or the other at all, but a sort of play of subjectivity, an exchange of subjectivities between him and her. There are the subjective images or words he puts forward; there are the others she offers in return. Our dialogues, our most ordinary conversations, are constantly made up of this sort of exchange of images. Someone says to another person, "It's going to be fine tomorrow": that person receives the image of the sunshine in the city tomorrow. And then the second person protests and says, "Suppose it rains?"; and at that very moment, between the two characters talking in the drawing-room, the rain is falling. To the image of fine weather the image of rain is opposed in reply. And what is seen in *Last Year in Marienbad* is just this sort of image play between the one and the other.

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But I must point out that from this angle there is nothing very remarkable in the film. It is not so very new. Perhaps it has chosen to exploit this potentiality of the cinema to its furthest limits. But the fact remains that in many even conventional films the spectator is already accustomed to this subjectivity of the image on the part of the camera. To say that the camera is the ideal instrument for an objective point of view is precisely, I believe, to misconstrue its greatest potentiality, which is to give imaginary images on the screen the same weight of body and presence as if they were real images.

Consider those films without any intellectual pretensions whatever, say, detective films. Imagine a scene where the magistrate is examining a suspect. First you see them on the objective level; the camera shows two men face to face, speaking. You see them, here and now, you hear what they are saying. Suddenly, without warning, the camera substitutes itself for one of them. It looks out, for instance, from the eyes of the magistrate, and on the screen you see the suspected man as seen by the magistrate. A few seconds later, the shot switches and you see in return the magistrate as seen by the suspect. These images can still be considered objective, because there is no distortion in the eye of each of the beholders; but the standpoint adopted already implies a subjectivity.

The spectators in the audience are not in the least perturbed by the change in the standpoint. The two characters in the film continue to talk. The judge asks the suspect: "What were you doing at eight o'clock yesterday evening?"

—and instantaneously you see on the screen what the suspect is telling him. You hear his voice: "Yesterday at eight o'clock I hailed a taxi which took me to . . ." and at that moment you see on the screen what happened yesterday. You see the suspect take a taxi, be driven away, and so on. . . There you have an image which does not belong to the present at all, which belongs to the past. Yet on the screen there is no indication at all that it occured in the past; it is presented in what I may be permitted to call the cinematographical tense. There is no change in the lighting. Modern producers long ago abandoned the custom of using halation or a change in the music to indicate the past. It is the same image, just as objective, or apparently objective, as my centimetres, and yet in point of fact it is showing something which does not belong to the present, which happened yesterday.

The spectators in the audience are still unperturbed. And then suddenly, a few minutes later, it becomes clear that the suspect has lied. So what was seen on the screen was not the present, not even the past, it was simply a lie. He had invented this scene in order to conceal something, and yet there it was, seen on the screen. So now you realize the power of the camera to show something which does not exist, and to show it with exactly the same characteristics, the same immediate presence, as real things. And no one in the audience is the slightest bit perturbed by this transition from objectivity to subjectivity, and from subjectivity to falsehood. A little later the magistrate himself begins to put forward a series of hypotheses, and one, two, even three of his theories of what the suspect was doing at eight o'clock the previous evening pass across the screen, and all of them are presented in the same cinematographical tense, the same lighting, the same centring, and yet have nothing to do with the present, nor the past, nor with falsehoods, they are lies, pure feats of imagination.

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Now I think the fact that the spectator can take all these images in his stride is a very important fact, because it is precisely this fact which establishes the camera as the selective factor, as the factor most naturally disposed to express, not objectivity, but subjectivity. While the language of the novel would have used the present tense for the present, the past tense for the past, the conditional for the hypothesis, the camera for its part knows only one tense; it is the instantaneous present, which belongs to the film and the images seen on the screen.

And it is this instantaneous present which is to be found in our books. In the books of Balzac and his contemporaries the story was told in the his-

toric tense, the tense which means "case closed"; the third person of the historic tense. Nobody talks in the third person historic past. And this tense was the established rule, the absolute rule, in all novel-writing of the nineteenth century. But the literature of the real world seen from a subjective standpoint, which is the literature of today, is on the contrary nearly always written in the present tense. All our novels are written in the present tense, and often in the first person present. Only one of my novels—*Le Voyeur*—is written in the Balzacian tense, the third person past perfect, and there precisely because the hero is lying. And as it is to his profit to speak in the name of history, it is to his profit to put his words in the historic tense, to prevent them being called in question; he avoids the present or the compound tenses; he uses the historic tense because it is the tense of irrefutable events.

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So here we have the standpoint of subjectivity. And yet it seems to me there is a something else, and that in these novels, these films, in all modern literature, in modern writing in general, it is not the purpose of the writer to make a study of human passions as seen from within. I do not regard *La Jalousie* as a study of the passion called jealousy. I do not regard *Marienbad* as a contribution to the study of conjugal psychology. Doubtless these passions and these psychologies can be studied in the films or novels in question by those interested in psychology, but it seems to me that that is not the point; nor am I myself particularly interested in what goes on in the minds of my characters.

There is someone much more important to me than these characters; what is much more important to me is what is going on in that someone's mind, and that someone, I have to admit quite simply and modestly, that someone is myself. What is in my novels is, in the final analysis, what is going on in my mind, and I discovered this when I was writing my first novels through certain experiences I had, what you might call the technical experiences of a working novelist.

I remember that while writing *Le Voyeur* I had to describe seagulls, and at that moment I was in a small room in Paris. You know that there are practically no seagulls in Paris, just occasionally a few are seen on the Isle des Cygnes. But this bird is, on the contrary, very common indeed along the French coast, and I had often watched them for long periods, I think in my childhood, since I was born in Brittany. Consequently I described these birds with great exactitude, and as just at that time I had occasion to return to Brittany, I said to myself, "Aha, I am describing seagulls, I shall describe

them better after looking at them, on the spot, directly, while I am describing them." In short, I proposed to do exactly what an artist does when he places himself before a view in order to paint it. The minute I saw my first seagulls on arrival at the coast I became aware of two important facts: in the first place they were nothing like the birds I had described a few days before, and in the second, I couldn't care less. There were seagulls which were of much greater importance to me than those which I was looking at on the Breton rocks, and those were the seagulls I had in my mind at that time. I felt a need to describe the seagulls which were in my mind, and not the ones on the rocks at all. The seagulls in my mind, you will protest, also came from the external world. It is very probable that because I had watched these birds for long periods that they were within me and that I felt the need to transmit or create them, but the important thing to note is that it was no longer of any importance to me at all whether they resembled the birds one sees everyday or not. The only thing that was important to me was that they should resemble what they had become in my mind. What mattered was simply *my* subjectivity.

You can see from this how much the contemporary novel once again differs from the novel of Balzac's time. I said that the world of Balzac was a world described by God, but it has another essential characteristic, it is a world which resembles, and is meant to resemble, the world we see around us every day. Balzac regarded himself as a sort of transcriber, someone who poured the whole of the activities of the French bourgeoisie at the beginning of the nineteenth century into the *Comédie Humaine*. He put himself forward as a simple intermediary between the real world and the reader.

Now for me, and I believe for every contemporary novelist, there is one thing which is very important, and that is what is going on in my own head. But in that case, you will ask, why should you continue to read or consider my books if they really represent nothing more than myself? I am not really a more interesting person than you, and if I decline to describe the world objectively as it is, if I claim to describe it only as I see it, that is, as I distort it, by what right do I impose my own vision on you?

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And here we undoubtedly come to the paradox of modern art. It is a matter of my own vision. I know it is only my own vision, but it is this vision which I have to communicate to you. I feel, and every modern author will say the same, I feel the need to make of you the new subjectivity which is imagining these things. I have already said that the principal character in

Marienbad was neither the man nor the woman, but me. At the moment, obviously, I was writing the film. But at the moment Resnais was making it, there was another very important person; it was not me any more, it was Alain Resnais. And when you are in the cinema, when you are watching the film unroll on the screen, the principal character of the film, the subjectivity in question is neither mine, nor Resnais's, nor the man's, nor the woman's; it is yours. You yourself are invited to be the place where the story before you happens. The modern novel is a subjective novel, but its particular subjectivity is not that of the characters, it is that of the reader.

Let us define the notion a little further, since it seems to me that it is just here that the modern reader differs from the reader of the nineteenth century, or rather from the reader of the nineteenth century as he imagined himself to be, for to tell the truth Balzac did not in fact transcribe, he invented. He was himself an inventor of a world as powerful, and probably more powerful, than our own. And if he is still readable today it is not at all as the historical witness of this bourgeoisie amongst whom he lived, it is, quite the contrary, as the creator of a purely fantastic personal world. What we read in Balzac is not the description of the bourgeoisie at the period Balzac lived, it is first and foremost Balzac. The subjective matter is Balzac. When Flaubert said, "Madame Bovary is myself," it was not a clever remark, it was cold fact, Madame Bovary was himself; all Flaubert's books are only about Flaubert. Only there was an implicit understanding between the reader and the author which agreed to accept the objectivity of the author. He put himself forward as a simple intermediary; he invented, but he pretended not to invent. It was understood between the public and him that there was no question of invention, but of real things and facts. And there were furthermore novels in the nineteenth century which intermingled historical personages with invented characters. In Tolstoy's *War and Peace* there are generals and dignitaries hobnobbing together who genuinely existed in Russian history at the time of the Napoleonic Wars, and there are characters invented by Tolstoy holding conversations with them. Obviously it appears to us a sort of deception, but at the time it was nothing of the sort, since it was a convention agreed upon between author and reader that the characters invented by the author were historical personages as well. Eugenie Grandet, le Père Goriot, all of Balzac's characters, were accepted as if they had had a historical existence. One and all were what are called historical personages.

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But as I see it, it is quite otherwise with the creatures, the eyewitnesses, the narrators of secondary characters appearing in our films and novels. On occasion the lack of substance in the heroes of modern literature surprises one, but this is something which reaches back well beyond the New Novel; the same thing applied to Kafka's heroes, or indeed happened to those heroes of Proust's at the end of *Temps Perdu*, who in the final volumes became a series of attenuated stereotypes. Already by the beginning of the twentieth century they had lost the character of historical personages. We authors make no pretence of presenting personages who have really existed. What we present on the screen are fictions, and if I may refer to *Marienbad* again, I have to tell you that what you are watching on the screen in *Last Year in Marienbad* is not a second-hand account of something that really occurred, but that actual world itself, the thing itself, in the process of happening. If we take Balzac or Tolstoy as choosing history as the hallmark of their realism, the modern author, on the contrary, has chosen his own words; the words of the writer have themselves become for him the only reality in the world.

To avoid further generalizations, let me return to *Last Year in Marienbad*. We are aften asked two questions about this film. The first is: "Did this man and this woman really meet last year in Marienbad?" It is a question that Balzac could properly be asked if he were the author of the film; but I don't think it is a question we can be asked at all, because neither of the characters have ever been in Marienbad. They have no other existence than the existence they have on the screen. They are non-existent, they are only beginning to be from the moment they are seen on the screen.

People have happily interpreted *Marienbad* as a sort of film on memory, because Resnais had already made other films in which memory played a part. I think the world of *Marienbad* is a world which excludes any suggestion of memory, any suggestion of the past, any suggestion that anything exists in another place or time in connection with what is seen on the screen.

If I had to reply to the embarrassing question "Did they really meet last year in Marienbad?", I should place myself firmly in the position of someone watching the film and say: At the beginning of the film, well, no; they hadn't met. It's clear that if they had met the young woman would have recognized him; her good faith when she asserts she has never seen him before is obvious, seeing that she even categorically declares that she has never been to Marienbad. Note that this does not worry the narrator at all; he has probably never been there himself either, and he has a sort of fixed smile on his face which makes his words warm and throws doubt on them at the same time. And yet, at the end of the film, he takes her away; she agrees to go with him. In short, she accepts the whole story he has told her, she

accepts that he made this rendezvous with her last year in Marienbad, that she came there that day to leave and start a new existence with him. At that moment, therefore, it has to be admitted that everything is happening as if they had really met last year in Marienbad.

But suddenly one becomes aware, I, the spectator, am suddenly made aware, that from the beginning of the film, it is Marienbad, and that from the beginning of the film it is last year. The film is not a subsequent account of a love story which happened earlier; it is a story in the process of happening, it is in the process of happening on the screen the moment you see it.

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When, therefore, I say the story is happening in your mind, I am by no means asserting some theoretical formula; this story is really in the process of being invented in your head and your imagination. It has no existence elsewhere. The writer who has chosen his own words as the only reality in the world has also chosen your sensibility as also being the only reality in the world. I do not claim that the world is as I make it, I claim that the world is as we make it, and as I made it once you will make it again.

So that this form of writing, this method of narration, which can also be seen in the cinema, gives the spectator and the reading public a specially privileged position. The only reality is the work, the only character is the spectator. It is a work which continuously calls upon your sensibility in order to exist. It needs you in order to be. But the world which Balzac described could quite happily dispense with a public; it was a completed world, closed in on itself, finished, delivered to the reader, who could take it home if he wished, but who in any case had nothing to contribute to it; it was a world which needed no public.

I think an essential characteristic of contemporary art, whether it is modern painting, the modern novel, the modern cinema, is to be nothing if it not something for you. A painting of Picasso's is not to be looked at like a painting of Rembrandt's. Picasso's painting needs you, continuously, to make it, to imagine it, and this appeal to your subjectivity, which I spoke of a minute ago, is an appeal to your creative subjectivity.

Of course on this level misunderstandings are liable to arise. Over *Marienbad*, for instance. When the film was finished the distributors, who had paid for it, had no idea what they could do with it, since no cinema owner in Paris was prepared to show it. (It took the Venice Gold Lion and certain enterprising spirits among the critics to impose the film on them.) When the distributors were desperately trying to place the film, they invented a publicity slogan which ran like this. "Come and see a film which the authors

could not manage to finish. They shot different bits of a story and then they tried to put them together to make a film and failed, probably because they did not shoot the bits that were needed, and they have given us the whole lot, just like that, higgledy-piggledy, and now everyone can imagine his own *Marienbad*, each of you can remake the story in your own way."

This is to parody the particular role of inventor I assigned to the public. Because the order of the sequences in *Marienbad*, even if it appears confused, matters enormously to two people, that is, to Resnais and myself. There is no other way of arranging them, from the beginning to the end, as far as we are concerned. *Last Year in Marienbad* is not a jigsaw puzzle in which the bits can be taken up and juggled about.

It is true, of course, that the same sort of misunderstandings occurred between the authors and the technical staff. The script girl, for instance, who had to know the sequences, wanted to date each of the images of the film, this year, or last year. She said: "Oh, you've got your head in the clouds. It's all the same to you. But I have to tell the actress which day she wears this or that dress, and I have to be able to tell her whether it is this year's fashion or last year's." Of course that is probably part of the daily chores of a script girl working on a conventional film; but in any case I was able to reply quite easily that on the contrary it was most important that the two sets of dresses should be mixed up, and that if there really are two fashions which are so different (in point of fact Chanel styles don't differ that much from year to year, the essential Chanel remains) and she was aware of the differences between the two years, none the less it was most important to mix them up, to prevent the public's re-arranging them in order to establish a chronology differing from the succession of film sequences.

The same little game was played by some of the critics over *Jalousie*. This is not a novel where events are presented in chronological order, and certain critics decided that I had written a novel like everyone else, and then mixed the pages up to annoy the Academicians, and the game was for the reader to make up his own story by putting the pages together to suit himself.

Well, it's not so! The creative role I have given the reader is not to put the sequences of the novel or films in another order or find another meaning, it is to re-invent it as it is. And it is at this point perhaps that abstract explanations of this curious transaction—the part actually played by the public —tend to be a little difficult. I ask a creative role of the reader, the viewer, a role of active participation, but in the novel or in the film as it is. I ask them to take part—never attempting to reconstitute any story but that of the novel, living the novel or the film from instant to instant as it is presented.

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And finally there is one other important element in modern writing, about which much has been said and written, and that is Time. As I mentioned previously, time in the novels of Balzac and his contemporaries was time in the historical tense. The order of events presented to the reader took place in chronological succession. Time, it has been said, has become the hero of the modern novel; I think it is just the contrary. In the modern novel, time has ceased to exist. Or rather it is a time without temporality. It is an instantaneous time which never creates a past. It is a present continually in the process of becoming, never accumulating to form either a memory, or things past, to which one can refer back one day; it is a present which has no value save in the present.

And that is precisely the point where the part played by the personal subjectivity of the reader, the viewer, comes in. It is an instantaneous subjectivity which lives from moment to moment in the present tense of these images, which themselves only exist in the present tense. *Marienbad* is not a tale unfolding in one year and eight days, as the script girl thought; not a story unfolding in a month; it is a story which unfolds in exactly one hour and thirty-two minutes—the time taken by the film. Just as the author takes his own words as the only reality, so he has also taken the work itself as the only reality, and consequently the time of the work as the only possible time. If there had been films in Balzac's time, he might easily have conceived a film lasting two hours and relating the life of a person spanning thirty years, just as his novels can cover years or days in a few pages according to his will. But the work of the moderns has only one time, and that is the time of the work itself. There is no external time governing the plot and internal time governing the development of the work; there is only one time, the duration of the work, there is only one chronology, the chronology of the sequences which make up the film, and the succession of sentences which make up the novel.

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And what are we to gather from all this? That one must not expect to find something comparable to what are known as real persons in these books and films. The modern author, quite to the contrary, insists on the fictional character of what he is presenting, that it is this fictional character which is the very life of the work and which is what he has to communicate.

One may say: "But what is the point of it? Why should you force us to invent for ourselves these things which only live in your mind and which, you say yourself, are not real? They are not real men, they are not real objects, since all of them are mirror-images."

Well, for my part I attach great importance to the part played by this invention, this imagination, because to invent, to imagine, is not the role of the novel reader or the film viewer alone. To invent, to imagine the world is in fact the business of every man in the world, and this statement indicates once again the difference which separates us from the nineteenth-century view of man's role on earth. Under the Western bourgeoisie of Balzac's day it was perfectly possible to believe that mankind had been made once and for all, and that man came into the world solely to reproduce a sort of unchanging and eternal human nature, a kind of absolute prototype which could only be renewed again and again in new lives, but which could change man in nothing.

We, on the contrary, believe, and it is a belief which imbues all our daily life, all of us, not only writers and readers, but all those who do not write and do not read, that every day we change the world, and that we are on earth to change the world; we are here to invent man, to invent our own passions, and consequently to invent this earth on which we live. When we live a tale of love we invent love, just as when a novelist writes a novel he invents the novel form. And so every man alive invents life, and these books, these novels which appear so deceptive, so bizarre and fantastic, unrelated to reality, may indeed be of importance, and even of educational importance, to the reader. I believe that in teaching him to invent the work of art they teach him to invent his own life, and consequently to live.

II

CAN THE SICK ANIMAL BE CURED?

by

BÉLA KÖPECZI

Everybody knows that Alain Robbe-Grillet is a highly conscious artist, who is not simply content with producing a work of art but wants to justify it in theory as well. His love of "theorizing" is sometimes criticized. I myself think it is one of his assets. Consciousness—as can be argued from a series of historical examples—never harmed art, despite the contentions of those who believe in intuitive or spontaneous art—in fact it helps many talented writers to perfect their art. I welcomed this "consciousness" in the discussions in Budapest, but I must

admit that there were many points in Alain Robbe-Grillet's theory I could not accept.*

I also appreciate his determination to disassociate himself from the representatives—often appearing hypocritical—of the "tragic consciousness." Alain Robbe-Grillet does not believe the world to be absurd; he emphasizes that Man instinctively rejects the tragic view of life, and he expresses his conviction that Unamuno's "sick animal" can be cured.

I find myself in agreement with his idea that literature should be freed from the influence of all the various mystifications now in vogue. In this indeed he allows a possible merit to socialist realism—which otherwise he rejects: "In taking a stand against metaphysical allegories, and in fighting against verbal delirium devoid of object, or the vague sentimentality of passion, this socialist realism could have a healthy influence." *(Pour un nouveau roman.* Series: *Idées,* p. 44.) But he believes socialist realism could not carry this through because socialist realism itself serves the *arrières-mondes,* because it is the expression of economic and political arguments, and these presented in the most "bourgeois" of forms. This judgement applies not only to socialist realism itself, known to this French author only in its most dogmatic form, but to all literature serving some social purpose.

Here I come to the most questionable point in Alain Robbe-Grillet's approach. The French writer has constantly stressed—and again in the lecture published here—that he is opposed to the old concept of the novel designed to give an objective picture of the world; that he himself is an entirely subjective writer. "What is in my books is, in the last analysis, what is happening in my head," he says in one passage of his lecture, while in another he goes as far as to declare that the world he presents in his novels is the world he sees in his mind *("le monde tel que je le vois").* Balzac, he claims, is readable today *not* because he gives an accurate and aesthetically authentic picture of the bourgeois world of the nineteenth century, but because he is the creator of a purely fantastic personal world. Against his own conscious intention, I might add. The gist of his argument is that whereas novelists of the old school believed the world to be cognizable and wished to present it objectively, wished, in fact, to explain it, the representative of the *nouveau roman* does not believe the world is cognizable, so he assumes a subjective attitude, the most he hopes to discover is his own self. The result of this subjective attitude is that the "new novel" has neither a hero, nor a plot, and time is no more than the time-span of the work itself,

* A number of articles on the "new novel" have appeared in Hungary: "The French Abstract Novel" by György Konrád, *Nagyvilág,* No. 3, 1960; "Why Isn't the 'New Novel' New?" by Béla Köpeczi, *Új Írás,* No. 4, 1962; "The 'Hidden' Reality of the French 'Nouveau Roman'" by Géza Nagy, *Világirodalmi Szemle,* No. 1, 1965.

l'instant de l'oeuvre. And finally, this subjectivity provides an opportunity for the reader to interpret the novel quite individually, thereby closing the creative "circle." In other words, this is how the two sets of subjectivities meet, and in this manner give sense to the work.

This concept of subjectivity derives from subjective idealism, which claims that the objective world does not exist independently of human cognition or human means of cognizance. The most popular form of subjective idealism today is, undoubtedly, phenomenology, which alleges that there is no object without a subject, at the same time refraining from pronouncing any judgement on objective reality which would go beyond the limits of "pure" —that is subjective—experience. This school considers that the subject of cognizance has no real, empiric, social and psycho-physical existence, but only a transcendental consciousness, and has influenced French existentialism and consequently existentialist literature, though, strangely enough, in the literature of existentialism, in so far as subjectivity was concerned, it was rather the psycho-analytical approach which was stressed. The "new novel" which also relies on phenomenology, prefers to describe the outer world as the subject sees it, which means that Alain Robbe-Grillet protests not only against the tragic attitude towards life adopted by existentialism, but also against exaggerated "psychologism." Certainly phenomenology leads to innovation in literature, as compared with the subjective idealists of the old school like Berkeley, Fichte or Mach, but for all its innovation it cannot stand up to criticism based on historical and dialectical materialism, and consequently, a view of the world dependent on phenomenology is, I believe, poor and contradictory.

As to literature, it is not true even in the case of bourgeois literature that the novel that undertakes to "reflect" objective reality is finished. It is true that there was a trend in the novel in the twentieth century represented by Kafka, Joyce and, to a certain extent, by Proust and Gide, to which the writers of the *nouveau roman* refer, but it should be borne in mind that Thomas Mann, Romain Rolland, Roger Martin du Gard and Theodor Dreiser also lived in that period. As for socialist realism, Gorky, Sholokhov or Aragon, for instance, repeatedly demonstrated that—attached as they were to the most progressive social trend of the age—they had many new things to say of the world and of man. The avant-garde revolt, even in its extreme forms, gave something to the novel, but it is not true that the line the avant-garde adopted was the only line for the novel to follow. Indeed, if we consider the literature of the period, we have to admit that the great bourgeois or socialist realistic novels are more universal and likely to be more enduring.

It is in this connection that we must turn to consider the type of man pictured in the "new novel." Alain Robbe-Grillet rightly points out—as he did also in Budapest—that his world is not a dehumanized world. He stresses that man in the form of the writer is present in his works, and also when he describes objects, for it is he himself who sees these objects. Alain Robbe-Grillet reproached the novelists of the nineteenth century with having played the role of "God"—seeing all, hearing all and knowing all. But is this not what Alain Robbe-Grillet is doing himself? He himself says that he presents the world as he sees it. In this respect, then, there is no difference between him and the earlier novelists. The difference lies in how each of them interprets his function. The nineteenth-century novelist wanted to present humanity and the world in all their diversity, while at the same time doing something to improve the world. The representative of the "*nouveau roman*" gives only a very partial picture of them both, and fails to see the social value and task of literature.

This partial description means that, though the writer describes certain psychical processes, he ignores almost completely the role of Reason. The type of man found in Alain Robbe-Grillet's novels is irrational in character. And from this it is fair to infer that the "new novel" does not even try to describe relations between man and society. The contradiction in this is that the writer himself cannot possibly be regarded as a "transcendental entity" of sorts, since he himself is conditioned by his period and the society in which he lives. I consequently consider this concept to be too narrow, in fact self-inhibiting, even if some of the "new novelists" succeed in outgrowing these limitations.

And finally, I cannot in fact agree with Alain Robbe-Grillet in his statements on the social function of literature. He condemns not only socialists for considering that literature should subserve social purposes, but also, among others, existentialists. "The function of art," he writes in one passage, "is never to illustrate a Truth—or even a question—known beforehand, but to give birth to questions (and also perhaps, in time, the replies) which do not as yet recognize themselves for what they are." This is supplemented by statements such as the following: "The work of art, like the world, is a living form; it *is*, it needs no justification." Or, "The work should make itself accepted as necessary, but necessary for nothing." And this is his opinion of the subjective purpose of the writer, that is his "non-alignment": "Instead of being political in character, commitment for the writer is a full awareness of the present problems of his own language, his conviction of their extreme importance, and his determination to resolve them from within." *(Pour un nouveau roman*, pp. 14, 49, 52, 46–47.) To search out what is

new is admirable, but it cannot be conceived in isolation from society. All works have some sort of social significance, whether the author desires it or not. The "reserve" maintained by the representatives of the "nouveau roman" reflects the incertitude over social questions of a part of the French intelligentsia, as well as their reluctance to take a firm and positive stand. That, however, will not increase the value of their art; in fact just the contrary is true.

These, then, are the main points at issue in the debate. I have conducted it in the spirit desired by Alain Robbe-Grillet himself: "It is always useless to engage in polemics, but if a genuine dialogue is possible, we should, on the contrary, seize the occasion. And if a dialogue is not possible, it is important to know why." *(Pour un nouveau roman*, p. 57.)

SOLITARY VOYAGE

Part of a Novel

by

GÁBOR GODA

The principal figure in the novel is Flórián Tóth, the writer, who takes a trip to Italy towards the end of the summer, to a little town on the Ligurian seashore, where he intends to rest and work. On the day of his arrival he makes the acquaintance of a number of different people—Darinetti the real estate agent, Doctor Beltramelli, and Nerina Parodi, who is soon to be married; with her help he soon becomes involved in the life of the small town. A delicate, insubstantial love develops between them, total but unfulfilled. In the last part of the novel, the lively interchange gradually lessens, the new friends quit the town one after the other, and Nerina goes too, leaving with her young husband. The summer sunshine is drowned in autumnal storms, and Flórián Tóth, taking flight from the sudden onset of loneliness, hurries back to the familiarity of home.*

CHAPTER 23

I was surprised to see how quickly Nerina reached the first floor. She obviously took the stairs two at a time. This seemed rather inconsistent with the usual dignity of her behaviour. Well, well, after all I knew practically nothing about her as yet, and yet I had already had a glimpse into the world of her little attitudes.

Without coming out on the balcony, she just hallooed from the hall to tell me, triumphantly, she had arrived with a shopping basket loaded to the brim, and that I should take the trouble to come into the kitchen to assist in the conjuring tricks that were to follow, eggs to be transformed into an omelette, the handful of powder into a soup, and two or three yellowish cubes into fried fish, pancake or heaven knows what. Limpets and oysters rolled loudly to the table from paper-bags. Ruddy oranges and pale grapefruits glowed in the shopping basket. The sunlit kitchen was bright with the varied colours of the different vegetables. Every now and then the refrigerator purred softly. I sat beside it on a kitchen chair, content, full of gratitude, thanking life for presenting me so hopefully with romantic situations of which I could not foresee the outcome.

* Gábor Goda: *Magányos utazás* ("Solitary Voyage"). Szépirodalmi Kiadó, Budapest, 1965. 564 pp.

I heaved a deep sigh of fully justified satisfaction and thought once more to myself what I have already thought several times: I am really on my summer holiday now!

Exceptionally, I had no desire to talk. I considered the situation was quite idyllic. Cabbages, onions and a small headless fish were lying wrapped in a newspaper. The large headlines of the paper told me at once that this somewhat exaggerated idyll was anything but well founded. There was peace in the world, meaning that people were killing each other in not more than seven or eight spots in it. In those particular spots they believed that there was no peace. I noted some pictures on the fourth page of *Corriere della Sera*. A practically undressed woman presented her naked body as though offering milk to the whole of humanity. She was a symbol of life. In another photograph soldiers who had been killed lay crumpled on the rocks of some unknown country. They were a symbol of death. These, however, were only momentary reflections, and in a second I was right back in the peace of that summer house, looking at Nerina, whom I believed was at that moment encountering the feeling of being looked at. All my experience would have gone for nothing had I not seen that her behaviour changed under my glance. Unconsciously, Nerina proceeded to launch an offensive with all her best points, which I must say Doctor Beltramelli had not overestimated in the least. At that moment the associations of ideas in my head were far from being sufficiently decent for publication. But I was less interested in all that than in the presumably agreeable secret thoughts likely to be going on in Nerina's pretty head. She was certainly a little coquettish, but I was unable to discover what limits she put to it; how much of it might be regarded as the normal adjuncts of her nature, and how much was meant exclusively for me.

She moved lightly, almost unnoticeably. Those graceful movements of hers hardly gave an impression of work. The manner in which she took down the pepper and the salt, looked into the spice-box, or pirouetted around the kitchen from the electric stove to the dish washer, reminded me rather of a ballet with the choreography expressing the art of cookery in fluttering dance movements than real kitchen life with raw meat and garlic. It cannot be denied, if life is once overlaid with the delicate and rosy glaze of romance, everything is transformed. Feelings melt to sweetness and even pain and distress are tamed to an agreeably purring melancholy. The euphoria of romance even translated bad odours into perfumes: the smell of onions dissolved in the air like the memory of the scent left by a ball-dress flashing past. The odour of the orange entered into alliance with that of the lemon, only to be finally absorbed by the smell of pepper, fish fried in oil,

onion and scrambled eggs. At that very moment I certainly felt it was all extremely delightful.

But romance cannot tolerate more than a certain amount of common sense. Faced with reality, it disappears. There was no help for it; tough-minded commonsense burst into the heart of the idyll, like an elephant in the porcelain shop, whisking its coarse trunk along the delicately-laden shelves. It did not help to sit admiring the different roles of Nerina, now recalling a cook, now a careful mistress, now a tightrope walker or again a trapeze artiste, nor the delight she forced me to take in her curves, perfectly conscious as she appeared to be of their harmonious proportions and social value—the commonsense of the questions I put to myself bounced this culinary idyll back as well-balanced springs bounce back newly-wed couples on their honeymoon.

Needless to say that I was not above a little farce either. I have learnt not only to bring about romantic situations but to keep them within the bounds of possibility. So I wouldn't have dreamed of venturing even the faintest allusion to accounting for those ten thousand lire which, according to my swift and efficient arithmetic, Nerina's purchases could hardly have diminished by more than three thousand. So the questions which I preferred to put to myself while sitting on the kitchen chair were not perhaps exactly high-minded, but not without some justification. Was she going to settle the accounts on the spot? Or only at the end? And what a lot depended on her accounts. Would they be reasonable, or would she put a little something on the prices, no matter how little, and send my romance with a flick of the finger into the air?

There was no denying it: I was being made to feel very uncomfortable by the nasty questions I was asking myself. I daresay it was a pity they ever crossed my mind, but one couldn't be held responsible for what flashed through the convolutions of one's brain. I knew very well that this exaggerated commonsense of everyday life did not fit very well into the onion smell intensified almost up to erotics, although I knew perfectly well that at some possible stage in the future all such things could be re-transmuted into part of a delightful idyll in the relationship of two human beings. But for the time being I was embarrassed by these particularly inappropriate questions.

However, the outrageously gratuitous nature of these questions became crystal clear when Nerina herself brought up the subject. It had really been a pity to mortify myself and to expose the culinary atmosphere to unthinking commonsense.

"I spent two thousand and three hundred lire and there's seven thousand and seven hundred left. Please count them."

The crumpled bank-notes and the silver five hundred lire coin with the boat sailing on the sea were emptied out on to the kitchen table.

I felt ashamed of my doubts and the tough-mindedness which had intruded on my idyll; all the more since the demon of rapid calculation again got hold of me. I felt all the more uncomfortable since it was not at all like me. I had to admit that Nerina had shopped very cheaply. In fact, so cheaply that I could not understand it. And she had bought quite a lot of things. And, just as if she were intent on completing my defeat and shame, and making me realize the absolute uselessness of any financial questions about my household, Nerina started to speak again:

"You've got to economize. One needn't eat much. It won't do you any harm to lose a few kilos. You wouldn't believe me how long we can eat on ten thousand lire, my mother and I. Don't waste your money!"

So Nerina had given a precise answer to everything I thought but hadn't asked, as though replying to my unspoken questions. And as I took up the money to put it in my pocket, she started again:

"Always count the money before putting it in your pocket!"

She radiated practical experience and commonsense. She was probably well-read in the bible of poverty. In spite of her little kitchen harlequinade, this frail young creature did not seem to be suspended in the air on delicate threads as in a kind of puppet-show, but to be firmly attached to the realities of life. She wasn't afraid of anything. Not even of shattering the framework of an atmosphere with figures, practical warnings and the daily experience of poverty.

I have to admit that I was more of a coward. I had to make a considerable effort before managing to formulate the question I proceeded to ask her, and before choosing the following out of a number of variants:

"What shall I pay you for your services?"

Putting the breakfast on the tray, Nerina flashed a glance at me and, without further fuss, replied simply:

"I haven't got any fixed rates. I'm not used to doing this kind of work. I've told you already, I'm only doing it just because at the moment before the wedding, every penny counts. I leave it to you. I know you haven't got much foreign currency, so I haven't any illusions. And by the way, you're paying much too much for this flat. Only fools and Englishmen pay sixty thousand lire in the late season. You just pay as much as you can afford."

I clutched my knees in confusion. It was simply intolerable that little monetary tricks should insinuate themselves between us. It was no good, I had to tell Nerina the truth. The great illusion requires the elimination of

all irrelevant illusions. Remorsefully I confessed to her that I was not paying sixty thousand lire for the flat at all but only thirty thousand, which was a very reasonable price even in view of the fact that the season was nearly over. "Almost painfully reasonable," I explained to Nerina, "for I had realized in the heat of bargaining that Darinetti was a rather weak opponent and not too good at arguing."

"He's a queer man, but you mustn't be afraid for him," Nerina said; "if he's had a drop too much, he is likely to be overcome with emotion. Only you can't be sure. Here he reduces the price to thirty thousand, and at home he says sixty. He's always like this. Weak and strong. Poor old Darinetti!"

Both of us sighed deeply. The gathering tragedy of the Darinettis was the solid bond in our budding friendship. Margherita's illness provided the moral foundation for the contact between us, while the rent provided the economic basis which smuggled the necessary amount of commonsense into it. So my acquaintance with Nerina had a solid groundwork; it did not hover between heaven and earth with no support. There was no more need to fear that our friendship would suddenly take wings and fly, like thistle-down in the air for lack of substance. It was bound together and deepened by the hard facts of life.

Whatever the fate of Margherita was to be, the life-and-death struggle she was waging was for us too. We were linked in a common concern; a wealth of material had been provided for discussion and conversation; and however this struggle ended, it could only strengthen the friendship between us. If she were to recover, she would strengthen our friendship accordingly; and if, poor woman, she died, her last act would do our friendship a service.

We were already sitting on the balcony. The gold rim of the china dish glittered on the blue table-cloth, and the yellow colour of the grapefruit juice sparkled in the gleaming glass. Reposing in salt sea-water, the oyster shells caught and threw back the sunlight. Only the scrambled eggs powdered with red paprika recalled memories of home. Nerina cut a blood-orange in two and squeezed its juice into her upturned mouth. During this operation the sun shone through her open mouth onto the rosy palate, the regular teeth and the slender flickering tongue. In the end she swallowed the whole contents of the orange, pips included. I couldn't stop myself asking her:

"What do you do with the pips?"

"I just chew them and swallow them."

I was surprised at the reply, but I noted it, as so many other things.

In the meantime I invited her to help herself to this or that, but she didn't want to eat. Cupping her chin in her palms, she rested her elbows on the

table and watched me. She took obvious pleasure in my excellent appetite. She disagreed with my way of eating oysters; she said you shouldn't use knives or forks; more out of goodwill than greed, she showed me how oysters are eaten by those who know how. We did not talk much during breakfast. Apart from her gratification as the hostess and her pleasure as a good friend, I imagined I saw some other kind of undefinable joy radiating from her eyes, as she watched me eating with a will. I should have been sorry if she had drawn any wrong conclusions from it, but she certainly was delighted with my appetite and the way the meals disappeared.

Glancing at the heap of manuscripts on the table, she asked me:

"Did you write all that?"

"I did."

"What's it about?"

"Oh, all sorts of things."

"About Hungary?"

"Well, of course."

"Why of course?" she asked.

"Well, what is a writer supposed to write about? I certainly couldn't write a novel about Liguza!"

She looked at me wonderingly, as if at a loss to understand why it was precisely about his own country that a writer had to write.

"I can't see why you should only write about Hungary," she said.

"Because it's the country I think I know best. Like most of my fellow-writers I deceive myself by pretending to be the only one who knows its inhabitants well enough to write about them; most of my memories are connected with its countryside. I believe that I know the thoughts, the hopes, desires and disappointments of those people with the honesty which is needed for the trade of writing. What could I write about Italy? Or about you? I could describe the way you look, or how you prepare breakfast, but I know hardly any more about you than about that palm-tree on the esplanade or about the sea, which will remain foreign to me for ever, with all its infinities and peculiar sublimities, which only reveal themselves to those who have known it so familiarly from childhood that to them it is as solid as mother earth."

"But the sea is also mother earth," she interrupted.

It was enough for me to understand what her attentive eyes had already revealed, that she marked all my words and tried to understand everything I said. But I also noticed she was about to contradict me; the movements of her hand showed her firm intention of protesting.

"I don't quite understand," she went on, "what's the difference between

me and a Hungarian girl? Why should my desires be any different from those of any other normal person in the world? And then, what do you think about this palm-tree or the sea? Do you think that the palm-tree is different from your trees? It certainly has a different shape, but nonetheless it grows from the earth towards the sky and not the other way. It's just as true for the palm-tree that no one but a fool will stand beneath it when there's thunder and lightning. I don't know what sorts of trees grow in your country, but I do know that they don't touch the sky either. And why do you think that the sea is so mysterious? Nature is just as it always used to be. The essence is always the same; its only the incidents which are different."

"But the incidents aren't non-essential at all!"

Nerina reflected for a moment.

"Yes, maybe you're right," she said at last. "But for all that the small sheet of water is no less cruel than the great waters, and it wasn't unimportant to me after all that my elder brother got drowned in Lago Maggiore during the war. It was because of the war. And you see, Lago Maggiore is much smaller than the Ligurian Sea—but this makes no difference at all to the one who gets drowned in it. And my father, he got drowned in that water, in that wretched damned sea there. But was it the sea's fault? My father was fond of this water; it had no trouble whatsoever with him for a good many years. There was a fishing cooperative here and he was one of its members. They'd been going to sea from their earliest years. There were storms which carried them miles out of their way. There was sunshine which tanned their skin. There was rainy weather, and it was nothing to them. There was everything that happens at sea, just as on the fields where the peasants are working. They were on good terms with each other, my father and the sea, as my grandfather was for seventy years. It's not the fault of the sea if somebody deserts it. You can't blame these waters either because my father abandoned them. But then, he lost his head, like so many others along this coast. He wanted me to be a lady. And you know, the one who is fishing is never the one who makes money from the fish... Only the one who sends the others out. So one day he opened a bar here on Via Roma. He hired an orchestra on credit. He engaged four waiters; he kept the bar open till six o'clock in the morning, he built a dancing-floor; he borrowed money, and turned his back on the sea. And then came the day when he felt that money was piling up all right, but too slowly. So he started to go to San Remo; and he kept on going by car to San Remo until the day he returned by train, without a penny. He wanted to live like the rich, and he died as unfaithful fishermen die. There is no mys-

tery at all about the sea here, it is just like any other great force of nature. It doesn't like to be let down. And sometimes it meditates revenge. The married life of my parents was happy as long as they were as poor as we became again afterwards. They went to meetings, and they went to church too, because man's soul is rich and even able to serve two masters for a while. And then my father lost everything on roulette—his money, his hopes, and both masters. My mother didn't lose anything, not even her poverty. So she continued to be rich in her soul. One morning, in August, my father sailed out again, not with other men of the cooperative, but alone. They only saw him from afar as he killed himself in the way men do who know this kind of death. Although my uncle warned him more than once. When my father used to laugh and show him his thick wallet: 'You have never been as poor as that!' that's what my uncle used to say . . .

"He was called Alberto, wasn't he?"

Nerina suddenly lifted her chin from her hands and stared at me.

"How do you know?"

"I've spent nearly a whole day here in Italy; and wherever man comes to rest, even for a moment, life closes round him as the waters close round him in the sea."

"But really, how do you know?"

"I just know it, Nerina, isn't that enough?"

"No," said Nerina. "Of course it's not enough. I hate secrets."

"So do I," I said, "I also hate secrets and I don't even believe in them; but there aren't any secrets. There are only coherent stories, and you don't realize they are coherent because you only get to know one particle of the story here and another there. Sometimes we recognize the coherency and sometimes we don't. In short, I know Alberto from Ventimiglia. It was he who recommended Liguza."

"Alberto!" said Nerina, as though she were uttering the name of a great man. Her voice was reverential and respectful, and her eyes showed that even she, who hated secrets, was for a moment amazed by the mysterious pattern in the convolutions of life. In order to release the unexpected tension I put my hand on Nerina's and said:

"Come on, let's go and bathe in the sea!"

She jumped to her feet and made a gesture of denial.

"Never! I never bathe in this sea! From the day my father drowned himself in it, I don't go into this water."

AUTHENTICITY OF ACTION ON THE MODERN STAGE*

by

MIKLÓS HUBAY

I

> *"L'histoire du théâtre serait ainsi une vaste expérience humaine où la réflexion philosophique découvre les catégories dramatiques en action."*
> *Henri Gouhier: "Le Théâtre et l'existence."*

Let me begin with a question: can dramatic literature be limited to any one period or country? It would appear at first sight that dramatic ideas and innovations in dramatic form are more readily "naturalized" in distant periods and countries than other literary genres. Plautus and Terence came to life more easily by way of Molière in the France of Louis XIV than did Horace by way of Boileau. Victor Hugo felt that Shakespeare was more a blood-brother, a comrade, than the French dramatists of his day. And Sophocles? After the sack of Buda by the Turks in the sixteenth century, and the occupation of Hungary, a Hungarian Protestant minister, Peter Bornemissza, re-wrote "Electra" in a Hungarian setting, in the Hungarian language, speaking in words that reached every Hungarian heart of the day—and still do—of the doom of tyrants and usurpers, and the restoration of the law and justice of the land. Who was nearer Bornemissza's heart—Sophocles, or his friends among the Protestant clergy of the time, wrangling over dogmatic points of religion?

Recent literary examples also show that dramas of the remotest times and nations have in no way lost their vitality through transplantation. The *punta de honor* of Spain's golden age appears not only in the contemporary Corneille, but also in our own contemporary, Montherlant. The Italian *commedia*

* The abbreviated text of a lecture delivered to the Association of Friends of the *Piccolo Teatro* of Milan, on February 8, 1965.

dell'arte not only helped to turn Jean-Baptiste Poquelin into Molière, but also Ghelderode, Cocteau, Achard and Ionesco into themselves—not to speak of the film which owes one of its most memorable moments to the *commedia dell'arte*, "The City of Love."

To recall how much dramatists in the United States today, above all Tennessee Williams, owe to Chekhov in their presentation of the peculiarly American way of life, is practically a platitude. And this despite the fact that Chekhov lived in a quite different world and that the dramatic form he employed excluded direct action and brutality. And yet...

The impact of dramatic effects is such that they are liable to be transformed into their opposites. In the Middle Ages the chant of the Bacchantes in Euripides becomes the lamentation of the Holy Virgin over her son. And the oppressively grotesque tortures of medieval plays return today in the works of the followers of Antonin Artaudin, in the Theatre of Cruelty—as, for example, in the play *La Storia di Sawney Bean* by Roberto Lerici of Milan. For, as Marx said in connection with the Greek drama, "We can witness the death of the same gods twice, the first time as tragedy, the second as farce."

The first dramatist in history had only the Greek epics to draw on, but he found a well-laid table—the table Homer spread for him. Two thousand years later, when Molière boldly announced: *Je prends mon bien où je le trouve*, he had already a rich choice of comedies from Menander to Cyrano de Bergerac at his disposal.

And the situation is the same today. No special analysis is needed to discover that Brecht also borrows what he needs wherever he can. Since Thespis, whatever there has been on a stage, in whichever country, may be topical for us at any moment. That is to say, the dramatist of any nation today can be in just as lively contact with any living or dead dramatist of any other nation as with his compatriot working in the neighbouring theatre and belonging to his own generation.

This small introduction is only a way of saying that all of us dramatists with Molière recognize and take our property where we find it; our property is the universal treasure of dramatic art, and we take it from every country, from every age, to return it renewed.

When I was asked to deliver a lecture to this illustrious society on the Hungarian drama and my own professional experiences, my main anxiety was to discover a question common to both our dramas which we could discuss together, for in my experience as a dramatist I found that the problems which confronted me personally were likely to develop into universal questions.

The most personal problem that presents itself to me is how, in the process of writing a play, I can bring my characters to the point of action; and once they have reached that point, whether or not their actions seem authentic and natural. A recently published collection of my newer plays was criticized by one of my critics precisely from this aspect, and his criticism was well worth taking into consideration.

It does not help my personal anxiety to realise that every dramatist throughout the centuries has been pursued by the same anxiety. And it pursues modern playwrights to an even greater extent.

We may regard it as a symbol that in Ugo Betti's "The Island of Goats" the only man who really takes any action disappears into a well during the last act; only his voice can be heard, off and on, from the depth, or his hand appears now and then, clutching at the well-curb, as if to express his desire to climb back to this world of ours, which, after all, has been created by human action. But just as symbolic are the quicksands which in Beckett's "Happy Days" finally cover Madeleine Renaud.

Or shall I take a play by our own Imre Sarkadi, cut off before his time, the very title of which implies complete inaction and immobility—"Simeon Stylites"?

And yet—again—did not dramatic literature begin with Prometheus chained to a rock by violence and tyranny at the very beginning of a tragedy, and remaining bound to immobility throughout the tragedy? Or more exactly, chained in immobility to the achievement of a great and heroic act?

II

Tatiana: "I shall hardly go to the theatre at all this season. I am bored with it. All these dramas annoy and exasperate me. Nothing but shooting and screaming... Lies, lies! Life breaks a man imperceptibly, casually, making no noise about it, causing no tears."

Gorky: "The Petty Bourgeois."

No one can deny that the dramatist's obsession, right from the outset, is to make his hero take action, but at the same time we can observe, also right from the outset, that he likes to treat these acts with a certain reserve, at one remove, as it were. We do not see the love of Oedipus for Jocasta in Sophocles' play presented on the stage, just as little as we see their doom—

suicide and self-mutilation. The stage only presents what is between the two—the investigation. We do not see the sin itself, and we do not see the atonement. Just as we do not see Medea murdering her child, or Orestes murdering his mother...

In Shakespeare, Gloucester's eyes are put out on the stage in full view of the audience, as in a medieval comedy. And yet it is to Shakespeare we owe the doubt in the justifiability of action, Hamlet's doubts, which lie heavy on the shoulders of the whole modern stage.

In his first play, "The Eye of the Needle," 1944, Gyula Illyés inherits the mantle of Hamlet. His plebeian hero, now in possession of power, is tormented by the same doubts:

> "I've nothing to my credit; I have nothing,
> Why, less than that, for even nothingness
> Can be disguised. There only is a lie,
> A lie, a blatant lie, naught but a lie!
> For I must ask whether I still am living
> As living as I was when first I came,
> There's nothing tangible sprung from my life!
> Others sow seeds and harvest, fell a tree,
> An oak of which they carve a girder beam.
> But what have I achieved for all my pains?
> Each year unrolled from me, a silk cocoon,
> No, not a silk cocoon, but paper, for I am
> Not flesh and blood but words put down on paper.
> Words teem in me, a dead vocabulary,
> A human effigy in paper pulp.
> My work is paper, and my past, my life;
> I turn black in the sun, I crumple up,
> Am tattered, frayed, like papers five weeks old
> Lying in windows of suburban shops,
> Covered with fly-specks and with rancid lies..."

Is there any action the hero could take to free himself from such doubts about his own identity? In Hungary before 1945—for then the play was written and is set in that period—there was no opportunity for such action. (Even with Shakespeare, the recognition that "Denmark" is a prison is not unconnected with Hamlet's doubts. It is not only doubt which can be inherited, but countries which are prisons as well.) "The lack of authentici-

ty" by which Illyés's hero is tormented thus becomes an accusation against an entire society. The following is the end of the tirade:

> "Cannot you see there's nothing here alive?
> That everything is false—the voice, the word,
> The gestures, you and I—a dreadful dream,
> A tale of ghosts, for we are only ghosts
> Haunting the Wonder-Castle of the Spirits,
> Just ghosts that frighten passers-by."

Let us now place Hamlet here, beside Illyés's hero; Hamlet, whom in fact a ghost has driven to the act of revenge. Is this not reason enough for a Hamlet-like hesitation? Could not Hamlet himself have said quite justly on the morning after he had seen his father's ghost: "A tale of ghosts, for we are only ghosts, haunting the Wonder-Castle of the Spirits?" And yet how differently Hamlet hastens to commit the act of revenge when, instead of the ghost's eerie words, an almost scientific "experiment" gives him the guarantee of truth—a carefully elaborated psychological test—the play within the play.

Viewed from this standpoint, the murder of Claudius is no longer medieval blood-and-thunder, nor a false act, but a personal act decided on by Prince Hamlet, with which he can satisfactorily identify himself, and feel authentically himself.

Has not the same desire for authentic action with which the writer can identify himself been experienced by every dramatist when working, a formless torment waiting for expression? Was Fellini's "8 1/2" not born out of such a vain longing for the "redeeming, authentic deed"; for a play to materialize in which there are no indecisions, no conventional compromises, but with which the author can identify himself because he himself is the work?

Fellini's film is also the story of Hamlet's doubts.

We should remember that the most contemptuous epithet for acts which are not credible or authentic is the word theatrical. And we have now got to a point where there is nothing a dramatist fears worse than that his heroes might behave theatrically.

It was the recourse to the unreal, the implausible, which compromised drama as a whole. The drama itself even more than the dramatist. Gorky denounces the stage on the stage itself.

At the turn of the century, the need to take action became one of the central themes of the drama. Ibsen's heroes long for some significant or heroic

gesture—and that is why Hedda Gabler blows out her brains. Chekhov's Uncle Vanya boldly and theatrically whips out his revolver. The revolver fails to go off, Uncle Vanya shrugs and says "boom." But the desire and need to act are there—the irony only betrays that the act has misfired.

Since when? And why?

*

Long ago the pledge of authenticity in Greek drama was the myth itself, which to a Greek dramatist probably meant that "that is how it happened and it could not have happened any other way." Just as to the Christian the events described in the Bible are authentic because "it is written." Any one who ever made a film knows how much easier it is to adapt a finished novel to the screen—even if one departs from the original on many points—than to deal with a story written expressly for the screen. That story, we feel, is full of other possibilities: "it could be done this way—what about doing it that way?"

In addition to the myth music has always helped to throw an aura of authenticity over action on the stage. It was no accident, I believe, that the Italian opera was born when the reviving dramatic literature suddenly lacked the faith—and often the themes—of the myth and the Bible.

The fact is that in musical plays, opera, and where music is used in conjunction with drama, the authenticity of the action is not questioned, or at least not so sharply. It may be the critical sense of the audience is lulled by music. But it is still more probable that, since a *singing hero* is himself an unusual and rather implausible phenomenon, in accepting him we agree to accept his unusual and implausible acts. Alain says: *Il n'y a point d'invraisemblance dès que la vraisemblance n'est point cherchée. (Système des Beaux-Arts.)*

But how have we reached the point where, in prose drama, action has become "impossible" for any self-respecting dramatist?

Cause No. 1 was psychology.

La psychologie est le tombeau du héros, wrote Cioran *(Précis de décomposition)*. And, of course, psychology helps to put the intellect itself in the dock. The usual quotation from Hamlet might be adduced here, or Madách's words in "The Tragedy of Man," which have passed into a proverb in Hungary: "Reasoning is the death of action."

The hero of one of László Németh's plays ("Lit by Lightning," written in the late 'thirties), faced by the relentless denunciation of his wife, says: "Psychology is the most terrible science." In the olden days, says Németh's hero, the insane were regarded as holy; a man lost in contemplation was not to be spoken to or approached. To-day psychology is a commodity—like

aspirin. You can take it for everything. Delilah cuts Samson's hair with psychological explanations, and binds him to a pole with psychological interpretations. "Don't move, or I'll give you a psychological analysis!"

Németh's hero surmounts his difficulties, and he does it by resorting to *action*. So did Hamlet, so did Madách's Adam. Dramatists like to face their heroes with the modern Gorgon's head, beauty itself, but which freezes the capacity for action.

But action, passionate action—which is identical with ourselves—can be found only when we have probed into the deepest depths of consciousness. Németh's hero protests that the privileges of insanity are lost under psychological analysis. I, for one, believe that psychological analysis may lead to even fiercer outbursts of passion. I side with Baudelaire: *Nous avons psychologuisé comme des fous qui augmentent leur folie en s'efforçant de comprendre.*

Or was this not preccisely the method Shakespeare used? Psychology, which seemed to have eliminated the dramatic hero, now finds in him a worthy adversary and provokes him to action. In May 1935, Camus wrote in his notebook: *La psychologie est action.*

I think we are nearer the truth if we look for the worm that gnaws belief in the authenticity of action in the attitude of the dramatists themselves, from Molière to Pirandello. This is perhaps the greatest achievement of modern dramatic literature—the exposure of false or inauthentic action. What in the way of an authentic act which is neither a play within a play or madness has remained valid since Pirandello? Hardly anything. And it is on this 'hardly anything' that we must build.

Last but not least we must lay some of the responsibility on society which, in the course of its development in modern times, has inserted objects between man and man, and made direct human relations—and conflicts—impossible.

III

> *"You old people are all like that. Black coffee, rum, a lot of talk, and no action. It is six o'clock. The dustman will be coming soon."*
>
> *Gábor Thurzó: "Back Door."*

Let us make it clear that these words are not some critic's attack on an aging dramatist, but the reproach of a little ragamuffin of a girl to a university professor at dawn. But we may also accept them as the reproach of the Muse to the dramatist.

The Greek dramatist treats action with a certain reserve. Action "off," this reserve which accompanies the action, is typical of the classics. Later we see the emergence of direct action upon the stage, and then the modern paradox springing from Hamlet—direct action on the stage which carries with it its own criticism.

I would like to quote a few examples from modern Hungarian drama on this point.

I am aware that telling the stories of plays is not a very popular procedure. Indeed, modern drama seems to resist any such attempt. Pierre Missac is quite right in saying: *A la limite on pourrait dire que, pour être moderne, une pièce ne doit ni raconter, ni se laisser raconter.* However, if one is to discuss or try to analyse an unknown dramatic literature—until one can read it or see it on the stage—this remains the only method.

I must begin by saying that the following examples do not give us an all-round picture of modern Hungarian drama; they only help us to get a little nearer to the problems we are discussing, so that, while examining the problems, we may take a look at the works themselves at the same time.

Let me begin with László Németh's play, "Lit by Lightning," which he wrote in the inter-war years, and which was presented just before the Second World War, at the time of the *Anschluss* and Munich. The state of the country at that time was important. The approaching danger, and the growing betrayal of the nation by the ruling classes, awoke a sense of national consciousness and a renewal of the humanist ideal among the best spirits of the country. Greater interest was shown in politics, and a feeling about the responsibility of literature towards the people grew among writers, as did their involvement in public matters. It was at that period that the poetry of Attila József reached its last and most pellucid form. It was then that Babits and Móricz (the best poet and the best novelist of the age), prompted by the thought that they were living in the 'final period', wrote their most tragic works. And it was also in this period that a movement arose, both literary and political, to study and reveal the inhuman conditions in which the Hungarian peasant lived. This movement produced a number of works in poetry and descriptive prose which rank among Hungarian classics at the present time. The young men of this movement—now grey at the temples—are today among the most outstanding figures of Hungarian literature—Gyula Illyés, Péter Veres, József Darvas and, of course, László Németh, whose play I want to discuss here.

László Németh's "Lit by Lightning" is the story of a provincial doctor with a good practice who revolts against his own way of life. He cannot tolerate the prosperous life society agrees to accord him, nor the wealth of

his wife. He would like to invest all he has in treating the sick. The admiration and enthusiasm of a young girl encourage him to this revolt. As was to be expected, the doctor encounters opposition from his own wife, from the village leaders, from the girl's father. And because gossip and psychological speculation might question the purity of his motives, he also rejects the young girl who might well have become his companion and fellow-worker in this apostolic mission. Only thus, he believes, will he clear his act of any shadow of suspicion.

It is a demonstrably moral drama. It stands for rebellion, and for the realization of rebellion, asceticism. (Tolstoy and Ghandi had much in common with László Németh.) No wonder it exerted such a great influence on our youth. I also, in my young days, sat through every performance. It was not played very often. But we were there every night, violently applauding. Our young hearts took delight in the young heart of the hero, disguised behind an adult mask. And what could have better demonstrated the selfish indifference of society than this sensitive assumption of responsibility by one of its innocent members?

At a recent revival I saw the play again and tried to reviev my early enthusiasm. Was the performance itself worse, or have I become more captious and critical? But the fact is that the reserves I felt were over the very part in the play about which I had once felt such enthusiasm—the aspiration to the aesthetic beauty of a moral act—the Cyrano-like gesture with which the doctor flings his purse to the actors. László Németh sees the hero gambling for higher stakes. His hero—he says so himself—contends with God, it is to God that he flings back the gift of life.

This remains true even when the grey duffle cloak of a Tolstoyan love of the people is donned by a man of Spanish pride. And to such a man a psychological interpretation of his act is anathema. Hence the outburst of Németh's hero against psychoanalysis. But Németh, like a born playwright, cannot refrain from making his own use of it; it helps to speed the plot. The act and the criticism of the act present themselves again as an inevitable conflict in the play. Németh's hero surmounts it by piling Pelion on Ossa, transcending one act by another, one sacrifice by another, and by invoking the purity of asceticism forces psychoanalysis—seeking human motives everywhere—to retire.

The noblest of human and humanitarian motives force a hero to sever all ties that bind him to his fellow-men—this is the theme of Németh's play. The act of the hero is the same to-day as when the play was first performed, his motives are still moving, even now, the heroic devotion still admirable, but the tragic pride of ascetic seclusion rings less convincingly in our ears.

László Németh, in his play, provided no punishment for the *hubris* that tarnished the moral perfection of the hero. He is allowed to be consistently right throughout the drama. One more reason for us to have taken him to our hearts at that time; and one more reason for us today to see on the stage not so much the hero responsible for his own actions, as the beautiful and personal passion of the playwright himself for providing all the conditions for heroism, as a lesson in challengingly exacting moral standards.

Let us move onwards twenty years, from the end of the 'thirties to the end of the 'fifties.

The next play I am going to discuss was written after the events of 1956. It is "The Eleventh Commandment," the work of a Communist playwright, Lajos Mesterházi. This, too, as can be seen by the title, is a play with a moral theme. A play in the 'first person singular', we might add. The chief character is a writer who apparently acts as a mouthpiece for the thoughts of the playwright. It is not the most promising choice for a hero.

Having once quoted Cioran, we may as well quote him again. In his opinion, a writer or playwright, that is, an intellectual artist, can never go to the final extreme in action. *(Ne tirent les dernières conséquences que ceux qui vivent hors de l'art. Le suicide, la sainteté, le vice — autant de formes de manque de talent . . . La véritable existence tragique ne se rencontre presque jamais parmi ceux qui savent manier les puissances secrètes qui les harassent; à force d'amoindrir leur âme par leur œuvre, où puiseraient-ils l'énergie d'atteindre l'extrémité des actes?")*

As we can see, we still have not progressed beyond Hamlet's realization of the contradiction which exists between the thought and the act.

Mesterházi tries to solve this contradiction in a structure based on a Socialist attitude to life.

The hero of his play, a writer, lives in a home torn with strife, and is in no position to restore family harmony. So he leaves home—only to run into a similar crisis in another family in the country. Through his efforts to help restore the happiness of *another* family, he suddenly becomes aware that he has solved the crisis in his own.

It may be worth while comparing László Németh's district doctor and Mesterházi's writer. The former abandons his family, his happiness, to do something for mankind. The latter, doing something for his fellow-man, finds harmony in himself and his surroundings.

But is the creative mind and its intellectual approach really an obstacle to dramatic action, to the truly tragic dénouement, as Cioran claims?

I believe that the task of the modern drama—and its greatest chance of success—is to integrate this conflict between thought and action in the play

itself. Is there, after all, any real reason why an intellectual man cannot be the hero of a tragic situation? He is the man who is capable of living through the world in both its complexity and its simplicity. The most exact definition of an intellectual was given by Camus in one of his notes: *Intellectuel? Oui. Et ne jamais renier. Intellectuel—celui qui se dédouble. Ça me plaît. Je suis content d'être les deux...* The real point is whether the action that redeems at once ourselves and the world is to be achieved with such evangelical simplicity as described in "The Eleventh Commandment"?

Let me turn to Endre Vészi, and his play "The Last Adventure of Don Quixote."*

This play—or rather the concept of this play, because the finished play does not always measure up to the brilliant conception—might well represent in the twentieth century what Gogol's "The Government Inspector" represented in the nineteenth.

I know of few such brilliant themes, and few which provide an actor with such opportunities.

Don Quixote is already old, and still poor. He learns of a rich Prince who is so enthusiastic over Cervantes' book that he desires to invite Don Quixote to come and live at his court. He would indeed be willing to find Dulcinea for him and bring her to his court as well, so that Don Quixote might marry her.

The old knight sets out happily and knocks at the gate of the Prince's castle.

"What do you want?" he is asked from inside.

"I am Don Quixote."

"You are mistaken. Don Quixote arrived yesterday."

For a man impersonating Don Quixote has indeed usurped the favour of the Prince. Who is to decide? The two Don Quixotes are as alike as two peas. (Naturally, one actor plays both roles.) Whatever Don Quixote does to prove his identity, the pseudo-Don proceeds to imitate, and thus remains his exact replica. There is no difference between them on sight; but one great difference exists: one represents Truth, the other Falsehood. And the true Don Quixote is worsted.

The real point of the play is whether the Prince has chosen the pseudo-Don in preference to the real Don Quixote because the false is always more agreeable to the powers that be than the truth?

With this question in his heart the true Don Quixote leaves the castle and retires again to seclusion and death.

This play is concerned with the difficulty experienced by the authentic

* In the following pages we print a scene from the play, preceded by "Observations of the Author."

hero of having his authenticity recognized. This difficulty follows every act of his. But it is not difficult for us to observe the connexion between Vészi's Don Quixote, who finds it hard to prove that he is identical with himself, and László Németh's doctor, who finds it hard to prove that his altruism is true altruism and not a disguise to screen his adultery.

Since the moralists and the writers of comedies have taught us to doubt the authenticity of any act—for is not all the world a stage?—we discover that minor or major dissimulations are used on the stage to test the genuine human attitudes of others.

With her two hypocritical sisters Cordelia, too, 'dissembles', pretending to be indifferent. Beside the hypocritical Edmund, his brother also dissembles, pretending to be a fool. This type of dissimulation is the "Mouse-Trap," —they test, they reject, all falsities of conduct.

The springs of authentic human action are often found in such forms of dissimulation, half-mocking tests or heroic deceptions—and we find them echoed on the stage.

And finally we come to the heroic act which disintegrates into nothingness. István Csurka wrote its story in his "The Braggart," 'a most lamentable comedy', as he describes it. (Csurka belongs to the youngest generation of Hungarian writers.) Its hero has the soul of a Hamlet, but his fate is that of Georges Dandin. This hero, too, has difficulties in his family life, as László Németh's district doctor. He feels ill at ease in his own home because he, the working-class boy, owes all his prosperity to his wife's parents. The moment for this Hamlet comes when, at the beginning of the play, a blackmailing journalist exposes to him the dirty business deals of his father-in-law: his father-in-law not only keeps him, but keeps him on stolen money. The hero decides to report his father-in-law to the authorities. He is going to *act*. When he first talks about it, the family is horrified. When he talks about it for the second time, the family takes steps... And our hero does nothing, only continues to talk about the impending prosecution —while the family insures itself against trouble. The father-in-law continues to steal; the family continues to live in comfort, but it gradually isolates itself from the swaggering son-in-law, who has proved to be an idle talker. In Act III of the frightening, rather than lamentable comedy, the young man, an apron round his waist, is cleaning the rooms and doing the cooking. He is now no more than the housewife, and while awaiting the return of his wife from work, he tells a skeleton about having to accuse his father-in-law one day after all. This skeleton is his only human company at home. At the same time, according to a mad scheme of his, he plans to

destroy his father-in-law after all with the help of the skeleton. For he will push the skeleton half out of the window of the W.C., someone will notice it and will, of course, call a policeman, and when the policeman comes he will tell him all about his father-in-law's affairs. Madness—but method in it.

And that is exactly what happens.

Németh's hero is entangled in the net of bourgeois family interests; so is Csurka's, but comically. Németh's hero takes action with increasingly challenging gestures; he does not admit even to himself that his act, however unselfish, is somehow a vain gesture. Csurka's hero only *talks* about action, and devises a *caricature* of it when he plans the hour of the exposure with the aid of the skeleton. It is his "Mouse-Trap," as the play within the play was Hamlet's.

Németh's and Csurka's heroes are connected. The difference between them (which amounts to the difference between the tragic and the comic approach) comes from the social changes that have occurred in the meantime; the opponent of Németh's hero opposed a whole social system, Csurka's a small and isolated little group of businessmen working on their own.

The *sense of the act* today may be put in the following question: is a man who isolates himself able to break through to the main current of history?

In "The Tragedy of Man"—where the question is really to be or not to be, since it is raised by our forefather Adam himself, who in this play foresees in a vision a picture of the remnants of humanity facing total annihilation—in this classical drama, written a hundred years ago but containing many ideas of our century, Adam dreams through the history of mankind, and breaks from each Age to the next, with—deeds. He himself incarnates the course of history.

With a series of authentic acts.

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THE LAST ADVENTURE OF DON QUIXOTE

Scene from a play

by

ENDRE VÉSZI

Observations of the Author

I did not go back to Don Quixote and put this well-loved eccentric of mine on the stage just for my own amusement. The Last Adventure of Don Quixote is not just another stage adaptation of Cervantes' work, nor is it intended as a sort of skeleton key to pick all sorts of complicated locks. The basic philosophical theme was suggested by Thomas Mann. *When that great German went into exile, he picked up his old favourite, Don Quixote, on the long sea voyage between Europe and America, and in a mixture of diary form and essay dealt at length with the tragic aspects of Cervantes' fate. The fortunes of the author of Don Quixote are just as tragi-comical as those of the creature he conceived. After the favourable reception of the first volume of the book an impostor came forward and wrote a sequel which earned him at least as great a success as Cervantes had had with his own creation. Literary historians are inclined to lay responsibility for the cruel fraud at the door of the malicious Lope de Vega.*

Meditating on the tragic incident, so cruel an example of the narrow and misleading frontier separating the genuine masterpiece from its worthless imitation, Thomas Mann proceeded to reflect on its long-term significance for the relationship of the true and the false, and the chances of each achieving success in any particular era or environment.

The Last Adventure of Don Quixote, therefore, I repeat, is not a stage version of Cervantes' classic: it is a fictitious adventure invented to express a social and philosophical truth.

The play is set in the age of Cervantes and the action takes place at the time the first volume of Don Quixote is published, but it is deliberately designed to carry modern implications in every word and passage of the text.

An eccentric duke, reading the story of the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, is roused to indignation by the tragedy of outraged justice it reveals, and decides to offer a haven of refuge to the Knight. The Don and the mistress of his dreams, Dulcinea, shall be welcomed to his castle and rewarded with life-long happiness. An impostor, however, presents himself, a cynical adventurer, exactly resembling the Knight in every way, who, in the hope of achieving wealth, success and recognition, spares no effort to become word-perfect in his part and to study the language and department of knights errant, and all from no other source than the work of Cervantes, the ill-fated progenitor of Don Quixote himself.

The two men, the true and the false Don Quixote, engage in a life and death struggle, and the genuine, simple eccentric Don has the almost insuperable task of proving his own identity. He nearly succeeds, but since he has only the truth and no craft to aid him, it is he who is finally thrown into the subterranean dungeon by the Duke, while the impostor receives his crown. The true Don Quixote is betrayed by everyone; even by Dulcinea, the creation of his own fancy, set on high as the ideal of woman-

hood by his own fevered imagination. He can only free himself from his prison—tortured in body and mind—by admitting himself the impostor before all the people. For the Duke, who is determined that public opinion and posterity should be correctly informed, is insistent on a public confession. The Knight is consequently forced to expose himself to the obloquy of those for whom he has lived and fought in his own pitifully naive and single-hearted fashion.

In The Last Adventure of Don Quixote, therefore, the struggle between the true and the false is of essential importance. This was the kernel of the idea that I wanted to develop, to show how desperately difficult it may become at times for truth to assert its moral and spiritual prerogatives, and how almost impossible it might become at times of "man's inhumanity to man."

Those, therefore, who see the intellectual and moral climate of Hungary in the early 'fifties as the underlying experience which inspired it, are not wrong. In this play, situated four hundred years ago, I wished to bear witness to the things that have happened in my time, but so that the implications should transcend the immediate reference to today. I did not, therefore, simply mean to express the personality cult and the atmosphere that surrounded it, but to demonstrate how human and humanitarian values are negated when tyranny interprets the truth of man and his actions, and intimidation dictates his steps.

This trend in the play, the purpose I had in writing it, hindered, I believe, a proper and unbiased interpretation being given to it. I did not for a moment try to conceal that such a contemporary slant and purpose truly existed, but I always hoped that in the end it would be judged not as a piece of allegorical dissent and reaction, but as a work which advanced the march of progress. This hope has now been fulfilled and The Last Adventure of Don Quixote has finally been performed in public.

It is not merely a theatrical trick that Don Quixote and the pickpocket of Seville are played by one and the same actor. I wanted to emphasize my essential point: it is not the external appearance, it is the unmistakable, distinctive and unique qualities of character which reveal the difference between truth and falsehood.

The language of Cervantes presented a special fascination and challenge by demanding a mixture of naturalism and fantasy in the creation of a contemporary dramatic language. And just because I was attempting such a synthesis I did not hesitate to use anachronistic words and phrases. It is, I believe, by the mixture of such elements that dramatic speech can be rejuvenated and brought up to date.

Of all my plays, this is the one I like best, because in it I tried to combine the poetic and the dramatic, and to break a lance for justice in the teeth of its defeat. And so by the side of the two Don Quixotes, the genuine and the false, there stands a third: the author.

ACT II, Scene II

The hanging gardens on the battlements. Late morning. Faint autumn sunshine.—Two men, the PSEUDO-DON QUIXOTE and VIVALDO, in excited talk, come up the narrow stairs cut in the wall of the bastion. Reaching the terrace, they lower their voices. They look round and, satisfied they are alone, begin to talk freely again.

VIVALDO: This one hour will decide it: life or death. Now, Gines, brace yourself and remember what you have learnt: the time is ripe.

PSEUDO-DON QUIXOTE: You need have no fear, Vivaldo. *(He sits; his companion follows suit).* If I may be allowed to say so, I have followed the courses of both an academy and a university, and I have obtained my degree in not a few highly specialized branches of knowledge as well.

VIVALDO: I don't follow you, Gines. What are you getting at?

PSEUDO-DON QUIXOTE *(grandiloquently):* Scene: Seville. A Thieves' Academy under the rectorship of Sir Monkey-leg. A University for cutthroats under the provostship of Sir Snip. Besides a degree in pimping with an exclusive eye on plump and well-born ladies; another in bigamy, with the help of respectable, pleasure-seeking widows, and, let me modestly add, also in forging documents—with all existing and non-existing royal seals.

VIVALDO *(abashed):* My dear Gines, who would have the impudence to question your qualifications? None the less, even with all the authority of that mass of wax, why do you think you in particular have been chosen?

PSEUDO-DON QUIXOTE: Because the begetting knife of destiny has made us the spit of each other, me and that fool of a Don. Come to think of it, we ought to love each other like twin brothers, intertwining our dear little fingers, and happily singing 'Round and round the mulberry bush' in the soft sunshine together, shouldn't we? Not me! I learnt something else from my very reverend teachers in the Schools of Seville. To twist a man's guts, to skewer the eyeballs of everyone standing in my way! My dear Vivaldo, you chose me because you knew there was nothing unreliable in my moral education. I've no use for soft soap. Straight to the heart of the matter, as I was taught by Master Snip, that's me. *(Draws a knife)* Brandish—not blandish!

VIVALDO: You have it, Ginesillo! If you were not the incarnation of all the humanist teachings of your school of Seville, how could you be the proper choice to sever such spiritual bonds as the ties between soul and body! If, for instance, you had not been branded by the Holy Inquisition on your noble skin; if your throat had not been tickled by the top Toledo headsman in full view in the market-place, if you had gone rowing, not chained to the galley bench, but only for your own pleasure, and as far as the shores of New Mexico, only driven there by your thirst for knowledge—how, I ask, could you possibly be suitable to act the part of that hope of mankind, that accoladed champion of justice, Don Quixote? But my dear Ginesillo, now you are playing for the final stake. This time it's win or lose. The Duke is one of those humanitarian people who have no misgivings about frying people they think guilty in boiling oil. Therefore I say unto you: Gird up your loins, Gines, old boy! The joust will be on horseback—his old hack, which he calls Roxinante, can hardly stand on its own knock-kneed legs. Look, I'll show you the place of the tournament. *(Takes him to the balustrade)* There, by that cesspool, that's the point where the crunch comes. One minute, and you'll have thrown the old fool, and the best archaeologist in the world will have a job to put him together again.

PSEUDO-DON QUIXOTE: Don't

talk so much, Vivaldo. I don't deny my backside is pretty sore from that saddle, but I think I've got the trick of it. I shall just jab the old cock in the side and he'll find himself in the next world on the rebound! Right?

VIVALDO: That's the way to talk! And now you'd better go, for his idiot Highness is coming—what a collection of fools under one roof!—and I've still got to grease his wheels... Go and have a rest, and get ready!

(PSEUDO-DON QUIXOTE, after waving airily, disappears through the door of his apartment.)

DUKE *(lumbering up the stairs):* It takes all your breath to climb these stairs!

VIVALDO *(goes to him briskly):* How is Your Highness's health—and especially Your Highness's patience? Has it not been tried by all these knightly ordeals, I mean, by the obstinacy of the impostor?

DUKE *(sits down):* This pretender, or humbug, as we call him, is quite frankly giving me reason to think again, and to turn everything that has happened over and over in my mind.

VIVALDO: I most humbly beg Your Highness's pardon, but what can there be to think about in that wretched fellow? Could he improvise one well-turned sonnet, or neatly turn a single compliment in verse, which everyone knows is one of the duties of a knight? Didn't he hem and haw and stammer and hesitate on those occasions?

DUKE: Moses stammered. Demosthenes stammered. I myself stammered in my youth.

VIVALDO: And what about the knightly ordeals of skill? That trembling hand? Those blinking eyes? That pitiful awkwardness in paying his addresses and in the rites of courtship? And what settles it more than anything else: the word of Dulcinea?

DUKE: Dulcinea could have been enchanted by sorcery.

VIVALDO: That's the whole wonder of love, my lord, that it breaks the spell, dissolves it and makes it vanish like quicksilver, and then love's natural state, that is, this kingly state, shines truly forth.

DUKE: I'm not saying that old bag of rag and bones is the real Don—but I keep thinking and brooding about it. I still think the decisive ordeal will be the joust after all.

VIVALDO: And what if magic is used to intervene again?

DUKE: Even then. The way in which the knight gets the upper hand, or is worsted by his opponent, will be decisive to prove which is Don Quixote. I say: whether he wins, or is thrown to the ground, in either case we shall have the evidence for one of them.

VIVALDO *(relieved):* Your Highness is fully in the right.

DUKE: The hallmark of the knight, that is what counts.

VIVALDO: Absolutely!

DUKE: Which shows through like the secret message of the master in the page of a folio.

VIVALDO: Without a shadow of a doubt!

(Blaring of bugles from below.)

DUKE: It looks as if it is about to begin. Come, Vivaldo.

(They go to the balustrade and seat themselves comfortably; meanwhile the terrace fills with members of the court, DULCINEA and DOLOROSA among them. The bugles stop, the general noise ceases. People lean over the balustrade. The voices of the combatants from below.)

DON QUIXOTE: Help, oh peerless Dulcinea!

(DULCINEA gestures angrily.)

PSEUDO-DON QUIXOTE: Dulcinea! Now—with your whole heart—give your voice for the true and lawful knight!

(DULCINEA waves a scarf.)

(The murmur, gestures, excitement of the spectators follow the sounds from below. The clatter of hooves, the clashing of armour, shouts, then a resounding thud.)

LUCINDA *(exultant):* He's thrown him from the saddle! May every liar meet the same fate!

DUKE: Heavens and earth! It's incredible! However he has done it, the old vagabond has won!

PSEUDO-DON QUIXOTE *(below):* You god-damned son of a bitch! You pimp for worn-out whores!

VIVALDO: Black magic! The sorcerers have taken a hand here, that's clear.

(They all move away from the balustrade and come downstage. They take seats. Servants bring refreshments.)

DUKE: He got him on the shoulder-blade. If they had not separated them, he would have cut his head off.

VIVALDO: I hope Your Highness noticed that the old vagabond started forward without waiting for the signal?

DUKE: Interesting. It seemed to me our man was trying to get an unlawful start. I mean the one, Vivaldo, you so often call "our man," on my behalf as well.

VIVALDO: But this is not decisive at all. Your Highness expressed it so well; a man can prove himself a knight in his defeat and a fraud in his victory. It's the hallmark.

DUKE: Quite. The hallmark. Did you hear what the loser shouted? Thrown from his saddle, trampled in the dust, under his opponent's heel? What was it? *(mincingly)* Pimp...?

VIVALDO *(reluctantly):* 'Son of a bitch.' *(Under his breath)* The damn fool!

DUKE *(claps his hand; a page comes running):* Send for the knight.

(Page starts off.)

VIVALDO: Wait, you don't know which.

DUKE: The one whose garments are shabby, whose eyes burn with a feverish ardour, whose lance is unbroken! Yes, Vivaldo. The hallmark.

VIVALDO: I believe Your Highness sees quite clearly that further knightly ordeals are needed. After all, Your Highness is supplying the workshop of history with raw material, and we must take all precautions that old goats should not profit from such a noble enterprise to trample everything that is honoured and respected, glorious and shining, in the dust! Yes, my lord, the discovery of the truth demands a few more knightly ordeals.

DUKE: As far as I am concerned, I am almost completely satisfied.

VIVALDO: I cannot forbear warning Your Highness!

(DON QUIXOTE appears at the top of the stairs. Applause and cheering. The DUKE goes to meet him, takes him by the hand and leads him to the little table.)

DUKE: Noble Knight, be pleased to repose in this chair from the burden of your exertions, as the branch of a storm-tossed tree comes to rest.

DON QUIXOTE: With all the trust in my heart. *(Sits down.)*

(The DUKE indicates that he would like to be left alone with the knight. The courtiers go out severally. VIVALDO, as usual, hides himself behind a pillar.)

DUKE: I do not know how I may begin... I am ashamed, sir.

DON QUIXOTE: My loyal Sancho would say there's a use for a cloak after the rain: you can dry yourself with it.

DUKE: That turn of phrase! That was just like Don Quixote! *(Listens)* Your stomach rumbles? Are you hungry, sir?

DON QUIXOTE: I am a-hungered—but only for love; not a-hungered, but a-thirst. The whole of my throat in its lymphatic aridity cries out: where is my Dulcinea?

DUKE: She who disowned you, sir?

DON QUIXOTE: Scales on her eyes; foreign clots in her blood stream! All wrought by sorcery! She is the only, the angelic being who is intent on no other vision than her Don Quixote, his lance couched, winning his victorious battle against the diurnal and nocturnal hosts. I live in the apple of her eye, in the quickening of her loins; everything else that happens or is done is deception, trickery, mockery, sleight of hand!

DUKE: I cannot but bend the knee before such spotless faith!

(A figure, covered, lying on a stretcher and moaning, is carried in in the background.)

FIRST SERVANT: He's had it all right! Was he sent flying!

SECOND SERVANT: Like a fish gasping!

DUKE: Carry him to his bed-chamber and send for the surgeon.

DON QUIXOTE *(springing to his feet):* Stop! *(The SERVANTS put down the stretcher.)* It is my obligation and duty as a knight to order you to take this personal message to the first lady of the kitchen... *(everybody is listening to him)*... to come to the aid of this wretched creature who dared to usurp our life and honour, as I am in duty bound under Article thirty-two of the Order of Knights Errant! Let the duenna of the hearths compound for him the potion which nourisheth the body, saveth the soul, and moveth the heart.

DUKE: There! Magnanimity. The unmistakable hallmark of a knight.

DON QUIXOTE: A drop of oil, a trickle of wine, a pinch of salt and a touch of dried rosemary.

DUKE: The magic potion of Fierabras!

DON QUIXOTE: As Your Highness rightly says.

DUKE: It may be that he is not a knight at all.

DON QUIXOTE: He must undergo the test. At the worst, as with all interlopers, he will respond by vomiting. But that is the pleasure of the belly. Because the agonies of the belly express to all the consciousness of guilt which paves the road of knights and impostors alike to heaven.—Can you remember the recipe?

SERVANT: We can, and it will be made.

DON QUIXOTE: And administered.

SERVANT: So help us God!

(They lift the stretcher and carry the impostor away.)

DUKE: Honourable knight, with this act you have written and engraved your name in my heart in letters of gold. I deeply regret what has happened.

DON QUIXOTE: Lift your head, Your Highness, from the dust of regret. It is satisfaction enough to us knights errant to see our ideals triumph. A little sooner, a little later... it makes small difference. I might indeed say that a satisfaction too soon achieved is like a bowstring unstretched. The bolt of justice needs a string strained to the full, twanging like brass—that is, a bowstring of suffering.

DUKE *(bowing his head low):* Thank you for your magnanimity.

DON QUIXOTE *(now completely in his element):* It is now Your Highness's duty to promulgate in the astrology of daily life that knightly virtue which is such a rare star in the universe. *(Lays his hand on the DUKE's shoulder.)* I greet and welcome you, who will turn all your life, your great power, your dazzling wealth to account as the guardian of the orphan and the destitute, the patron of the poor!

DUKE: So be it.

(Long pause)

DON QUIXOTE: Now I see a strange star on Your Highness's brow; the star of compassion.

(Stanzas from the romance celebrating DON QUIXOTE can be heard in the distance.)

DUKE: What is life? What is riches? All those piles of gold and platinum are to what purpose?

DON QUIXOTE: Your Highness can be assured and take for truth what I, the last of the knights errant, say to you: I have ever had faith in the great co-radiation point of the goodness, sympathy, loving kindness expressed in your person! And I knew, when the pretender usurped the throne of my chivalry, that finally the triumphant conclusion could be no other than the summation of honesty on the mathematical and the philosophical level.

DUKE *(kneeling before DON QUIXOTE*

and putting his arms around his knees): O, pillars of Hercules!

DON QUIXOTE: I beseech Your Highness, do not exaggerate.

VIVALDO *(comes running):* Your Highness...

DUKE *(rising to his feet):* What? Why do you disturb me?

VIVALDO: There is a message from the gates that a group of low-born peasants are asking for audience.

DUKE: They must be seeking to be given my blessing as their lord: send them back to their fields.

VIVALDO: No, Your Highness, there's certainly no question of blessing! Their faces are flushed with some inner smart, their voices sound harsh with some unknown passion: they insist on speaking to Your Highness, come life or death!

DUKE: Life or death? That is the way equals speak to each other!

DON QUIXOTE *(to VIVALDO, firmly):* Tell them we shall receive them! *(VIVALDO goes off reluctantly.)*

DUKE: Was this, in your judgment, Sir Knight, the right thing to do?

DON QUIXOTE: We have nothing to hide, Your Highness, have we? As far as I am informed from literature, the people are always given audience.

DUKE: If you, Sir Knight, think so, it must be so!

(A file of Castilian PEASANTS emerges from the stairs leading to the terrace; seven or eight of them, wearing rags and sandals. Behind them come the vinegar-faced VIVALDO and two SERVANTS.)

DUKE: What a stink of sheep!

LEADER OF PEASANTS *(bending his knees):* Yes, our most worshipful Lord, the odour of sheep and sheepfold follows the miserable poor like us, especially when the autumn season begins and the cattle of the fields return to the fold. Why not the fragrance of oranges instead—though these are also grown by man—who can tell?

(They all go down on their knees.)

DUKE: If all the taxes you pay balanced all the stink you make, I still could not open my mouth to utter a word, or at least prudence would advise it to be abstemious in speech. What do you want? Why cannot you remain quiet? What unruly temper brings you before me?

FIRST PEASANT: Mercy!

(DON QUIXOTE rises from his seat; slowly, with composure but yet with the movements of one who is obsessed, he approaches the PEASANTS.)

LEADER OF PEASANTS: The mesta, Your Highness! On my knees I say: the mesta!

DON QUIXOTE: It's like something buzzing in my ear... the mesta?

(A SERVANT runs in and reports.)

SERVANT: We made him drink the potion, and he is now vomiting his soul out!

DON QUIXOTE: All it proves is that he has never been dubbed knight. You may go, boy. *(SERVANT off)*

(DOLOROSA, slightly tipsy, flits across the stage for a second or so.)

DOLOROSA:

Oh lion, oh hero, oh Don without boast,
I'd cling like an ivy if you were a post.
I'd lay down my life without shedding a tear
For you, noble Don, for you, without peer!

DUKE: Away with you! Out!

DON QUIXOTE *(with childish surprise):* But why?

DUKE: Sir Knight, you are too innocent. You cannot imagine what a sink of iniquity is the court!

(Complete silence, then the LEADER OF PEASANTS begins, painfully, to cry.)

LEADER OF PEASANTS: Your Highness, the mesta! Have mercy upon us!

DON QUIXOTE: What is this mesta? I seem to have heard something about it, as if a fly were buzzing in my ear, but what is it?

LEADER OF PEASANTS: Oh, my merciful lord...

DON QUIXOTE *(sternly):* That is not my rank! I am a member of the Order of Knights Errant.

LEADER OF PEASANTS: Then—my merciful lord who is a member of the Order of Knights Errant! The mesta... everyone who has ever been afraid for his crops, for his young trees, for his flowering shrubs because of the lord's flocks knows about the mesta! When his flocks are driven from the north to the south, it is like the sea when the storm strikes it, only it is a woolly sea and it smells; when all the green pastures are eaten in the north, then the duke and the count and the hundreds of other lords with royal permission let their sheep and lambs sweep down on the south, and this ocean comes rolling down to graze on our fields, where they find young shrubs and fruit—orange, lemon, olive—the food of our children, the scanty portion of a long year, the frugal necessities of our misery! And the flocks of His Highness sweep down by right of the mesta, by permission, a whole multitude of jaws only created to nibble and chew come rolling down, and all the green crops sown by the sweat of our brow disappear and are lost in a breath of time, the whole meaning of the year is ruined before it has borne fruit; ten thousand munching jaws are devouring the meaning of our life, the marriage portion of our daughters, the small provision for the haversack of our sons! Oh, merciful lord, spare us the mesta for this one lean year, at least if for no other, waive your divine right so that the wretched poor who are born to bear children in their turn, to work and to weep on this wide earth, may live a year or two, or at least have time to raise their heads again.

DUKE: Gabble, gabble, gabble. Can't understand a word!

DON QUIXOTE *(rising to his full height, standing before the deputation): I* have understood your feeble words, poor peasant folk, the gleams of meaning here and there. *(A few of the petitioners sob loudly.)* The finite intelligence, like a lightning rod, has thrust its silver lance through the storm of your words. *(Again a few sob loudly.)* Let me warn you to clear your minds of the thistleheads of confusion caught in your brains! I, Don Quixote de la Mancha, called Knight of the Rueful Countenance and now a Lion, affirm and declare: I declare null and void, I forbid and abolish the scourge of the poor, the mesta, throughout the whole territory of Spain, including Seville, Madrid, Burgos, Valladolid and all other towns and cities! From this day no authority or privilege exists to force you to yield your tender and fragrant orange trees, your young olive groves, your cabbage or onion beds to a ravaging tyranny appearing in the form of thousands of sheep! I hereby order and decree that you shall henceforward be happy and well-fed; and that you shall enjoy the fruits of your labour. And should any of the brutish shepherds dare infringe this my decree, take up your cudgels, draw your bows, take up goodly stones, and striking them wherever you can, drive the usurpers away! This is decreed, in the month of Pisces, by me, Don Quixote de la Mancha—take my name into your memory and remembrance for ever—the name of the Knight of Deliverance.

(The PEASANTS throng to him, kissing his hand, face and hair.)

DON QUIXOTE: And now go your ways in the knowledge of justice recovered!

(The deputation leaves cheering tumultuously; the noise of their joyful satisfaction can be heard for a time.)

DUKE *(after a long pause—bewildered):* Gabble, gabble, gabble... I don't understand a word!

DON QUIXOTE: Your Highness, I have no doubt, now feels as one who has fulfilled the will of the human race.

DUKE *(still slightly bewildered, rises slowly):* Because you repealed the mesta by decree?

DON QUIXOTE: In the very spirit which Your Highness expresses in body and soul.

DUKE: That they should lay hands on cudgels, sticks and stones when my shepherds appear?

DON QUIXOTE: By George, that will

raise a good laugh. Some of those chaps will certainly get their noses broken!

DUKE: That ten thousand of my sheep, lambs, and wethers, and two thousand of my cattle are to be forbidden to graze on the fields of the peasants?

DON QUIXOTE: As the Lord God sent Adam and Eve packing from Paradise!

DUKE *(recovering)*: How dared Your Madmanship usurp the commands of my lips, how dared you decree it? Does not Your Crackbrainship realize that you are violating sacred, undisputed and eternal rights by this irresponsible talk? Perhaps Your Dunceship does not realize that by this puerile order of yours you have dug for yourself a cold and sodden grave? *(Shouting)* How dared you?

DON QUIXOTE: You waste your breath! *(Thundering)* You evidently forget that the last of the wandering knights, who is the only recognized protector of the weak and poor, has the right and duty of ordering that robbery of the poor, oppression and sordid self-interest cease, despite all petty and brainless little dukes. You may yelp as much as you like, you born and imbecile aristocrats, you may abuse man, at last rising to his feet; you may continue to stare, decrepit and asthmatic brigands that you are; there shall be no more mesta—I forbid it! *(Flicks the DUKE's nose.)* What do you say to that, my good man?

DUKE *(claps his hands; thereupon armed men come running in; VIVALDO is among them)*: The man's an impostor, a usurper, a cheat! Put him in chains!

(They run at DON QUIXOTE who is struggling madly.)

VIVALDO: Aha, justice triumphs at last!

(DON QUIXOTE is dragged away; DULCINEA, who has just entered, gives a loud, shrill laugh.)

(CURTAIN)

THE SOLUTION OF THE INSOLUBLE

by

GYÖRGY SOMLYÓ

"Why are you surprised at others passing by you unknowingly, when you yourself pass by so many people disinterestedly, knowing nothing of the secret pain or cancer that gnaws at their souls?"

Cesare Pavese

In the works of writers of unusual, that is, tragic destiny—for in a strange way it is the unusual that we call tragic, though tragic is indeed the way of all flesh—we infallibly come across a passage pregnant with awesome premonitions of the evil to come.

The heroine of Imre Sarkadi's short novel "The Coward" provokes an instinctive shudder in us when she says, "It's not quite the same—a snakebite, a knife thrust into me, a hundred miles an hour or, if need be, my jumping from the second floor..." In this sentence, the author's mentioning the 'snake', the 'knife', or the speed of 'a hundred miles an hour' unequivocally refers to previous events in the novel. But the last seemingly random remark about jumping from the second floor has no antecedents, and has no connection with the story; it only forecasts, in a most uncanny way, the fatal step the writer took in the very year he put down this sentence.

The antecedents, the haunting vision of Sarkadi's suicide can be traced back not only in his works but also in his life. His friends were often the unsuspecting—or only slightly prescient—witnesses of the disguised rehearsals of this act. How many times—on bright summer days, as we were standing on the balcony of the Rest-house for Hungarian Writers at Lake Balaton—did we see him perform his baffling and quite unaccountable stunts, balancing himself on a narrow ledge at the height of the second floor or clambering up and down the drain pipe and the stonework. He did all these stunts to prove what was unprovable and, in fact, needed no proving—some test the stake of which he alone knew. It was a gambling with death—though for the time being only a gamble—and, no matter with what shuddering nausea we watched it, we felt that it could not be taken seriously, for if we did it might turn serious... On such occasions Sarkadi ducked his prematurely bald head between his stooping shoulders, and his unschooled hands and legs moved and twitched uncontrollably. Incidentally, he was not a member of the Rest-house, his nomadic nature would not permit him to spend much time in a sitting posture, engaged in calm work. He mostly arrived on his favourite sailing boat from the opposite shore, tossed down a couple of glassfuls of wine in our company, then, slightly intoxicated, drew one of us aside because he always had some very important things to impart to his friends. At times, he would take a few friends with him and lift anchor. The wind

would catch his coarse canvas jacket together with the sail.

Did he, I wonder, merely intend his last and fatal balcony-walking as a bolder challenge, this time at night, on the window-sill of the fifth-floor of his Budapest flat, in the spring of 1961, while his guests—like the company of artists he had described in "The Coward"—were walking down the stairs, safe and only slightly befuddled? Who could tell? But what of it—were not all of his similar acts attempts at suicide?

No farewell letter, no suicide note was left behind. So we can seek the secret of his death only in his life and his works.

*

Our generation—the first Hungarian draftees of World War II—had had not only its casualties but also its martyrs, earlier. It was a youth that lived in close vicinity to death. Indeed, at the age of twenty, I had to compose elegies about twenty-year-old suicides. But then those were times of war, exceptional times, and as Cesare Pavese wrote in his diary, "The reality of war implants in our minds the simple thought that it is not painful to die when so many of our friends have to die." Yes, people died uncounted in those times, God himself would not have been able to tell a hero from a martyr, a martyr from a victim. Who would have tried to find some special meaning behind each death? The suicide—or casual accident, for unfortunately it was pretty immaterial in this case—of forty-year-old Sarkadi was something different: it was a tragedy of peace, which shocked our generation into the realization—one that every generation must once be shocked into, collectively as well—that we were mortals, that we had entered the age at which a man can imagine even his own death, not only that of others.

"My friends, oh my friends, unbelievably forty years old even to ourselves..." I wrote in a poem on his death. For it was his death that made us realize our own age, which we had reached so suddenly, so unprepared and so unnoticed. Imre Sarkadi had important things to say even about this realization: "I feel," he wrote in one of his brilliant short stories, "that my adolescence is over. From today on I am getting old without ever having been a grown-up. Is it the Age that makes us so, or am I alone like that in it?"

It was the Age that made us so; it gave us a long adolescence and then suddenly made us grow old. Within it, each of us played his small part, but he more than all of us together.

It was his death that made us grown-ups—though he himself could not be one. He made us all cast up an account of our lives; he became our conscience, an eternal reminder of opportunities missed and duties neglected towards one another, reminding us that henceforth all such neglect would be irreparable.

His life was part of our life; and we experienced his death as if it had been our own death.

*

His unfinished lifework ends with an unfinished simile. The simile is of a phantom-like wolf which the hero of the story kills in the snow-clad forest, then pities because, after all, it revealed something noble by taking up the challenge, by fighting face to face, instead of running away like—like who? Or like what? We can no more complete the simile than we can ever make a whole of his truncated life-work.

Running away and facing dangers, challenging and accepting the challenge, cowardice and courage—more and more these became the dramatic alternatives of Sarkadi's last writings. These conflicting frames of mind are engaged in an endless general post at a horrible moral carnival where the intertwined dancers keep tearing off each other's mask, appropriating each other's meaning, grabbing, or denying, each other's

existence. The hero of "The Wolf Story" fights his own wolf—as is apparent from his statement that he would never have believed there were still wolves in Hungary—then he himself behaves like a wolf and finally he takes pity on his victim. The author seems to have conjured up this wolf, from the lights playing on the snow of the peaceful winter forest, reflecting his own doubts, so that he may be afraid of the wolf, force him to a desperate fight, then kill him brutally, only—in the end—to regret the act and feel himself the moral loser in his victory, a coward in his bravery. A nonsensical bravery that makes one face imaginary dangers when one is too cowardly for genuine deeds; a senseless victory when it is won, however bravely, over non-existent adversaries.

For Sarkadi's generation the human victories represented by the collapse of fascism and the building of socialism masked, for some time, the defeats which ran side by side with these victories, but later on the defeats began to mask the enduring victories. The moment came when Sarkadi no longer knew what to do with the victories, and could not become resigned to the defeats, no matter whether he suffered the latter in his political convictions or his author's career. To walk along the parapet above the precipice, to eat up a live caterpillar, to jump from the fifth floor, to fight with a wolf that does not want to attack—symbols all of the formidable correspondences between life and art. In these tormentingly spurious symbols it is not just the lack of individual courage, the author's erroneous goal that is revealed; what they reflect is rather a critical phase in Hungary's history, a critical moment, in fact, of the international communist movement as a whole.

The heroes of Sarkadi's short stories, incapable of changing their own derailed lives and the seemingly derailed course of history, are such absurd daredevils—like Eva in "The Coward"—only to prove that they have the courage to act. And to be able to hear words of recognition from those they would most like to hear them from; as in the case of Eva, who delights in hearing Pista say: "You darling little fool. You and cowardice!" Sarkadi's heroes escape from the semblance of cowardice into a semblance of courage. To the nausea of defeat they prefer the nausea of senseless victories.

They never give up the hope of meaningful victories, a hope which in Sarkadi's last works is always kindled by the spark of incipient love. These situations—again so characteristic of Sarkadi—always arise in the wake of some nonsensical feat of daredevilry which corrodes the love from the very start. The happy and relaxed planning of Eva and Pista in the Visegrád restaurant takes place after the snakebite; the ephemeral idyll between the woman and her rescuer —after a storm on Lake Balaton ("In the Storm"); the hopeless love between Zoltán and Myra—after the doctor's tragic sin ("Paradise Lost").

In following the chance meeting of these hapless heroes with each other or with their own selves, and their mutual confessions, inspired by the ecstasy of their encounter, about the ruined past and the future to be rebuilt together, the reader knows in advance that even now there will be no redemption. These heroes are courageous only towards themselves, but they must infallibly be cowardly towards each other and the circumstances—mainly because they have lost the thing a man can truly fight for: faith in the possibility of changing the world. The future which, in their passing mutual intoxication, they seek to visualize, has no foundation in the world they are capable of imagining.

And letting good opportunities go by can only lead to worse opportunities. In the end even Pista, the somewhat idealized antipode, fails because he cannot redeem Eva. And Eva, after a flash of hope, can no longer return to the evil life she has led, and we see her fatally driven to choose the third, the worst possibility—Tibor, from whom so far she has had the strength to protect herself.

After a clumsy attempt at rebellion, she becomes resigned to the idea that nothing will change until she grows old and dies. There is only one thing she refuses to renounce even then—the vain justification of senseless courage. Yes, she refuses to renounce this ultimate and typically Sarkadian daydream of solving the unsolvable when she declares "...I do not fear the elements, I do not fear man or beast... I am not afraid of anything..." But then what was she afraid of throughout a story of nearly a hundred pages? Sarkadi's heroes are afraid of not knowing what to do with their own courage...

In his last works he tears himself to shreds. Was this self-defence against suicide, or was this final showdown with himself the first step towards suicide? "Let us see, God, what the two of us can do." This line from János Arany's poem of the proud farmer, himself helping to complete the destruction of his crops by the storm, expressing one of the tragic traits in the Hungarian character, appears in the subtitle of Sarkadi's drama "Simeon the Pillar." That, of all people, this verse should have been quoted by Sarkadi, who wanted to oppose the age-old Hungarian errors in a spirit of enlightenment! "I want to increase the evil, I can do no other," says another hero of his in "Paradise Lost." In this awesome bidding for the worse, the very worst, the heroes of Sarkadi's last works utter almost the same words: "I have fallen on evil days... I must continue to do evil..." Such then, is Sarkadi's ultimate formulation of insensate heroism which takes the place of reasonable heroism ever opposed to evil. Even if statements to the contrary crop up here and there in his work, they are too weak to resist the torrent. "It is folly to go on doing ill..." is swept away by "We must always side with Destiny, side with the stronger party, the party of evil." Against this, the empty protest of "I can't do anything about evil if I assist in making things worse" loses all significance. In the end, there remains nothing for him, in life and art, but to meet the crisis by encouraging suicidal tendencies as against sound human reason...

*

The "crisis" provoking suicidal thoughts which seemed to have become linked with Sarkadi's inherent leanings was a crisis in Hungary's political and intellectual life and in his and his contemporaries' "Weltanschauung" and artistic views. Youthful hopes and an ambition that refused to see the obstacles accumulating before him with the passage of time—an attitude that he shared with his generation—found themselves suddenly face to face with obstacles that loomed even bigger than they really were. In the last paragraph of his peasant drama "September," which he wrote in 1955, Sipos, an aged representative of the peasant world of old, takes leave of life in these words: "Each of us must do his own job. I did the farm, they (the young generation) must do something bigger. I only hope they will succeed."

"Something bigger" implied also literature, Sarkadi's literature. And the words, "I only hope they will succeed," already bear the mark of disappointed hope.

That was the time when many of us—each according to his own circumstances—had to wake to the truth that the stream of our literary efforts was so swollen by outside currents discharging into it that it could no longer find its bed.

The autocratic "realism" into which the dogmatic literary approach wanted to compress our entire literary development, was imbued with complicated and irresolvable contradictions. It was parochial and, at the same time, aped foreign examples. It demanded modernism in words, and yet it essentially hampered modern literary expression. Politics and a public imbued with politics wanted the authors to write about nothing but "modern" themes of socialist "content." The corresponding ideal of style, built on tradition and bearing the cover

names of "intelligibility" and "national form," ultimately served the purpose of preventing our literature from taking note of the truly new conflicts of our revolutionary transformation, and of confining it to the basic conflicts of the social conditions of the pre-Liberation period.

Sarkadi, following his own propensities, started out as a disciple of Zsigmond Móricz. However, just when he was about to find his own path, gradually and all unknowing he began to imitate Móricz, though he did so as the best of his generation, and drawing on his own resources and background. Indeed in his story "The Fugitive," written in 1948, his methods, though originating with Móricz, became his own and were adequate to the object. The collapse of the world Móricz depicted could yet be described with Móricz's style. But hardly the period that followed. It is to Sarkadi's credit that later, when the organic links between subject and method became increasingly frayed, he was still capable of interlacing these flimsy threads with the live fibres of language and composition, thus often saving his material from falling apart. Through his youthful memories and his journalistic trips he was as well acquainted with the life of the peasantry as with that of the intelligentsia; he understood and could use the peasant vernacular with the same sureness as the new cant of the young artists and intellectuals of Budapest. His faith in a revolutionary change, in a transformation of the Hungarian peasantry inspired many of his writings. Noteworthy in this respect are the above-mentioned drama "September" and the short story "In the Well," which in a screen adaptation known as "Merry-go-round" attracted attention at Cannes.

*

It was not only as an introduction that I chose a quotation from Cesare Pavese's famous diary "The Craft of Life"; I cited him also in the preceding text and shall return to him again and again. For thinking of Sarkadi involuntarily makes me draw a parallel between him and that most outstanding Italian writer of the postwar decade who also met with a tragic fate. Not only because from this diary I learned a lot about Sarkadi's suicide, so staggering to all of us. Nor because the underlying reasons for their deed had so much in common—disappointment in love (or impossibility of love), political maladjustment and the organic weaknesses of their art at the very time of its flowering. I have compared these two writers mainly because of the affinity of their literary development.

In the majority of their short stories they live through the conflicts of the young intellectuals after the collapse of fascism and in contact with the revolution, expressing themselves in a terse and well balanced prose that confines itself to the essence and does not go to extremes of formal virtuosity, in a prose grafted with new wealth from the spoken language. Their seemingly simple stories—especially their last ones—are made more diversified by what Pavese calls symbolic realism when characterizing his last stories, "The Devil's Castle" and "Moon and Bonfire." The themes of both acquire an inner tension by the unsolved conflict between provincial and town life, which again expresses other hidden conflicts. The environment that Pista offers Eva in "The Coward" does not only mean the temptation of society based on work, more humane though monotonous, but also Nature with its seemingly vaster latent possibilities, just as among the Piemontese hills of "The Devil's Castle." Still more manifest is the connection between Nature, even at its wildest, and human solidarity—one of the means of conquering solitude—in "The Storm." Here, on the turbulent lake, there glides along the sailing boat that during the last years of Sarkadi's life was his only joy and haven. And, to draw another parallel between Sarkadi and Pavese, it should be pointed out that the painters' company at Turin in Pavese's "A Fine Summer"—both in its

representation and its symbolism—is reminiscent of a Budapest sculptor's milieu, while Gina, a sitter who becomes wife, and Éva, the wife who turns sitter, have much in common, as if they were sisters.

What is most important, however, is that both Sarkadi and Pavese can depict only young people truly. Pavese often returns in his diary to this problem of his art, the gist of it being that one can describe only a closed period of one's life—in the case of a young author only youth. "It is clear," he writes of himself in his diary, "that only the portrayals of young people are successful in your stories, this being the only deeper and unselfish experience you have had in life. You may describe the 'big' when you grow old." The explanation in this case seems less essential than the posing of the question; for in this generalization it ought to refer to all writers. Perhaps in Pavese's case, too, and certainly in Sarkadi's, the explanation lies deeper. Since both felt the necessity of changing their way of life, of setting out on a new road—though they did not have the strength to do so—they looked for heroes who still had a chance to choose, to change their lives. It was from this pliable material that they wanted to shape, also for their own selves, the decisive turning-point of which their own life substance was, unfortunately, incapable. Sarkadi and Pavese belonged among those who—according to Pavese's keen-sighted self-observation—"looked younger than their growing years."

*

And now Sarkadi will be growing younger and younger, compared with his contemporaries who will grow older and older.

His lifework, however, will gain not only in importance with the passage of time; in a strange way it will be continued in the works of his best contemporaries. By having wilfully prolonged their temporary pursuit of the wrong track, he ultimately helped them —with fatal logic, up to the brink of the abyss—to see the light and retrace their steps, again to search for their own paths. Without his tragedy, the most important works of the middle generation of Hungarian writers, who for the past few years have found their true voice, would not have come into being—or, at least, not in the way they did. The results of his struggle, the lessons taught by his fall are evident—to mention but a few names from among Sarkadi's closest friends—in Miklós Hubay's dramas, which have already aroused interest abroad; in Tibor Tardos's series of prose-poems published in French by Gallimard; in Ferenc Karinthy's new short stories; in Tibor Cseres's novel, "Cold Days."

Sarkadi's lifework, so tragically cut short, will surely take its place in world literature close to that of Pavese and their elder, but kindred fellow-writer, the American Scott Fitzgerald, whose lifework also ended with the same tragic suddenness.

It was not because for some time he lacked success in his career that he committed suicide, in fact fortune was smiling upon him when he did so: "The Coward" appeared in *Kortárs*, the most important Hungarian literary review, on the very day of his suicide. And it was perhaps on that same day that the directors of a Budapest theatre decided to start rehearsing Sarkadi's play "Paradise Lost", the first night of which thus became a painful posthumous celebration. All this could not check the impetus of the fatal leap; its roots went farther back into the past. Shall we comfort ourselves with the thought that thus, and thus alone, could his lifework become unique and consistent and thus alone through his self-sought death he has come to mean much more to us than had he lived on? We all owe him a great deal. Like his Oedipus, he avenged his blemished honour and ignominy on his own frail body. Not only his ignominy but ours too. From a distance of scarcely five years we unwittingly look back at his receding figure with the same thought with which he bade farewell to his Oedipus gone blind: "Now you may admire the departing king and even envy him..."

THREE SHORT STORIES

by

IMRE SARKADI

OEDIPUS BLINDED

Oedipus restlessly watched things taking their course. Restlessly, because they were composing themselves into a more orderly pattern, still swirling, but unambiguously now—just as the thoughts in the head of Oedipus were swirling. It seemed (it could no longer be denied) that although by no means purposely or mirthfully he had perpetrated something—well—improper. Which as a matter of fact was his own misfortune—yet everyone, it seemed, would soon be hearing about it.

He looked at Jocasta. She was just now standing up and starting for the exit with uncertain steps. Eyewitnesses said later that she had screamed too. She's old... Oedipus glanced after her with the circumspection and unfathomable expression of a diplomat. Now, in this moment, he credited the fact that she was really his mother. He felt neither romantic nor filial love for her—the one washed away the other. Old, he mused, and he thought of his wasted youth, of the years which had gone relentlessly by, and always at Jocasta's side. Oedipus felt those years weighing down on him like so many nightmares—as nightmares they had been while he lived them. I was a faithful husband, he thought gloomily, and now look what it all turns out to be... In front of the palace one of the guardsmen good-naturedly spanked the behind of a slave girl who was just passing. They were well off...

Jocasta went out, the elders and messengers trickled after her; the hall stood empty. The attendant kept adjusting the drapes at the entrance, like one who cannot decide whether to go or stay. The attendant was divided by various inclinations—to leave because the atmosphere was thickening, and a king living in such an atmosphere might easily order a slave beheaded; to stay, because fundamentally the slave was a sensitive soul and

thought it would be impolite to go after everyone else had left the king, sneaked off, fled from him. There was one more fold at the bottom of the drapes; he smoothed it, arranged it into another, more masterly pleat.

Oedipus gradually became aware of the servant.

"And you. . . ?" he asked quite superfluously, in the truly kingly manner, so that it was impossible to answer him.

"Yes, my lord," replied the servant, faithful to the tradition according to which the answers of servants should have no meaning but humility.

They were silent, looking at one another, when the Parcae appeared.

"The three Fates," Oedipus noted, and at once sized up the situation. The servant was calm; he knew it was not his fate they were spinning—it was the king's and the queen's, he thought, and looking at the Parcae he deemed them suitable for the noble role of escorts to this peripeteia. He glanced at the eyes, lips and forehead of Oedipus: Did the king blink, did his lips tremble, did he frown? Disappointed, the servant saw that no such thing was likely. Oedipus watched the Parcae serenely, at once finding Clotho the most prepossessing of them.

He addressed himself to her.

"This thread," he indicated that certain thread, "they say it is the thread of life."

They nodded almost in unison, and kept spinning. Atropos gave her scissors a trial snap. Oedipus drew nearer, interested to watch what would develop.

"Will you cut it?" he asked.

There was no answer. Oedipus pondered and could find no solution. Why cut? Was it not simpler just to stop spinning? "Clotho, you have the youngest and therefore the most attractive eyes of the three, won't you tell me why things must be ended as if the present were going to come to a halt while the future is still being worked on? Although it is undoubtedly more theatrical this way?"

Clotho gave him a somewhat friendlier glance, and out of gratitude disclosed what Oedipus knew anyway.

"It's Jocasta's thread and yours."

"When are you going to cut it?" he asked curiously. The scissors reassured him. If they cut one of the threads the incest would be done with, the city would be spared the anger of the gods, and he would be freed of his obligatory remorse—and of Jocasta. . . Oedipus was selfish; he was sure he would be the survivor. So he would be freed. . . He thought it unbecoming to complete this line of argument. Yet he urged the one with the scissors: "Go ahead! Cut it!"

The scissors teased at the thread, gently, as a cat carries its young in its mouth without biting. Oedipus felt dizzy. What if the thread was his after all? But uncertainty was worst of all; he urged them on anew.

Another servant entered the hall, fearfully; he hardly dared show himself before the king.

"My lord," he said.

The scissors snapped and the Parcae slowly vanished. One of the threads had apparently been cut. "I am alive," thought Oedipus, "so it wasn't mine."

"The queen," began the servant with the appropriate humility, and Oedipus nodded; he already knew.

"Dead?"

"Yes, my lord."

"And the manner of her dying?" he enquired objectively, meanwhile rejoicing at the realization that although his heart was beating somewhat more irregularly than usual because of all the excitement, it was beating nevertheless. "Was it an ugly death?"

Then with a wave of the hand he dismissed the messenger and turned to his attendant. "Did you see that?" he asked; and the other nodded. In that case they had really been here. On his way out of the hall Oedipus began to think precisely and meticulously. She must have died the moment they cut it. But when the scissors were teasing at the thread, Jocasta had obviously hanged herself with her sash already. Yes, it takes only minutes to die by hanging.

"I am relieved," he thought. He felt absolved from whatever might follow.

"What a tragedy," thought the servant with the humility of one whom years of servitude have made the beggar of another's joy or sorrow. He was sad for the king, but glad for himself that he was only a servant; not even incest would be such a terrible crime in his case—it would certainly not reach Mt. Olympus. Even when it comes to sins, only those of the rich are worthy of attention—but this was only an afterthought, and it shamed him.

"I am calmed," said Oedipus.

"You are strong, my lord," replied the servant with reverence and appreciation, impressed by the king's ability to master himself, even though the effort was visible. If *my* wife and mother should die at the same time...

Tears rushed to his eyes at the thought, yet he could not really feel it. He had no wife, and he had last seen his mother when he was three, at the slave-market, where she sold him to a one-eyed merchant. That's just why, that's just why—he argued with himself—why I can imagine the happiness of having a wife and a mother so much more.

But Oedipus could not. Walking slowly towards the temple with the servant at his side, he was meditating on the dubious value of happiness and the transient stupidities of human life; on dependencies, morals and freedom. Life and morality rarely coincided, he mused, stroking his greying temple. Twenty years with Jocasta had been not only immoral but tedious as well. No, I mustn't. Good taste—he raised his head at last—certainly has a great deal to do with these things. He did not feel nearly as well as during his wanderings when he had clubbed an old man to death who later—very much later—turned out to be his father.

I have grown old meanwhile, thought Oedipus, and he regretted that he had ever guessed those riddles. Had he not attempted them, then oracle or no oracle he would still be roaming the endless highroads today, or he could have been learning about love with another woman. Jocasta had not really been a good teacher, and at this moment Oedipus was feeling rather angry with her for having wasted his youth. The feeling seemed justified, so his anger mounted.

In front of the temple and on the steps a large crowd had gathered and was waiting excitedly—a drama, this time with the envied ones as the fallen heroes—but even in the excitement of suspense remembering the obligatory and cautious reverence and respect: a wide path opened before the approaching king. As yet it was impossible to fathom the consequences of what had happened. The queen had died but the king remained king even if he was scourged by the wrath of the gods... But the gods are far away, and it is the king, although sunk in thought and looking less bloodthirsty than the immortals, who is ominously near. The gods strike after years have passed; the king can strike instantly, and it is small consolation when it turns out later that he struck sinfully and illegally. The crowd divided and Oedipus walked up to the entrance; he kept his eyes on the ground, as the occasion demanded—perhaps only for the sake of propriety, perhaps because curiosity and a baleful terror were still fighting within him. Curiosity finally triumphed. He turned to Jocasta, went near, and gazed at her for a long time. A very long time, perhaps rather too long, but this crude violation of the etiquette of grief was not so conspicuous just now; partly because he was unobserved—no one dared follow him into the temple—and partly because, even if anyone had seen him, his objective inspection could have been interpreted as a last prayerful farewell.

Jocasta was still hanging from the sash. No one had dared to touch her. There was something humorous about the way she hung there, something derisive—a peculiarity of the hanged, it seemed. Oedipus had seen hanged people many times before, as well as people who had died other deaths—

broken on the wheel, impaled, crucified, beheaded—all the usual deaths. The faces of those who had been hurled down from cliffs wore an expression of wonder and fright, the freshly severed head rolled on for a short distance making grotesque grimaces—but those who were hanged, it seemed, must have been the world's most malicious mockers; all the ridicule in them came up to stick out an ironic tongue (a long, swollen tongue that obviously had some connection with choking), but by then it's all the same... It seems... Jocasta's feet turned inward now as they dangled, her dress permitting a view of her limp, flabby arms (most blatant irony of all that those arms, despite everything, made him think of an embrace—no, don't think of it, don't think of it), and more horrible still, the sash, due to its fatal function, now encircled her throat, not her waist, so that the dress, like a rag flung over a scarecrow, exposed quite a lot of Jocasta. A breeze blew gently through the temple; even more of her showed now, a vivid denial of the charge that it was once possible to sin with this woman. Even though it was not exactly yesterday—Oedipus looked thoughtfully at his mother—still... The mere memory of the last heroically endured night together two years ago made him actually shudder—proof enough that crimes do carry their punishments within themselves. And surely the gods knew it... ?

He cast a last glance at Jocasta and turned around; Antigone was standing beside him. She must have been standing there for a long moment, a precocious child with the stubborn, slightly stupid look of a thoroughbred horse—the most stubborn possible resemblance. Antigone moved slowly, like conscience crowned by anger, full of dignity, as one whose self-pity has a greater role to play at the moment than that of a mere crying child. Destiny, it seemed, had its own compulsion, the worse the more; the daughter of the tragic hero was wedded to a mad and tragic role at the moment of the peculiar disintegration of her peculiar family. What awful sounds would soon be erupting here!—Oedipus tried to frighten himself well in advance. What sounds indeed would be adequate to Jocasta's pale precipitate departure, to the shriek she gave (so they said) and to the deeply humble, consternated, beseeching face of the attendant. Oedipus went to gaze through the temple's exquisitely ground glass windows at the setting sun, like one who meditates on the tragic mysteries of life. At the moment, however, in gradually unfolding contours, he was entertaining visions of further wanderings, of highroads and shepherd lasses—but either train of thought looked the same outwardly. The presence of Antigone perturbed him far more than Jocasta hanging from the sash. Ah well, the dead can only perturb those with bad nerves...

What would have happened if all this had only come to light ten years

hence? It just goes to show the advantage of getting involved in a scandal at the right moment, and what a mess it is when the scandal is delayed precisely to a time when taste and morals so unanimously condemn the events of past years.

"Sire," said Antigone.

These ceremonies, it seemed, were inevitable; Oedipus resigned himself in despair. "Sire"—a terrible word, and the way it was stressed made it even more terrible. There was something menacing and sinister about gaining one's freedom at such an indecent price—the crowd behaved as if it were anticipating serious consequences, but Antigone behaved as if she wanted to bring them about at once. He shook his head, barely concealing his inner anguish: Things were always done in too much of a hurry; were that not so, why wasn't it possible to let the dead woman rest in peace?—removed, of course, from that loathsome sash; she was a queen, after all; and then... Then Creon could lead the city in discussing the question of succession.

And why not? It was all so simple—and then Antigone comes in... my daughter (and sister), saying "Sire", her voice saturated with secret reproaches, as in childhood, when the rules of a game demanded that we act strictly in a certain way. But how long ago we were children! (How long ago—unfortunately!)

He did not answer.

"Sorrow!... Anger of the Gods!" (And she said 'Gods' so solemnly, with a capital 'g'. Why was this necessary in speech, when no one could possibly correct the spelling?) "In the temple of our ancestors our mother has ended her sinful life, she who was most innocent of crime. We must do penance... we must do penance..."

"Penance?" Oedipus asked, weighing the word. He nodded and did not feel at all inclined that way. The past twenty years had been penance enough, he felt; only two of Antigone's words penetrated his consciousness: "Our mother." She was now referring to Jocasta as their mutual relation. He approved. Undeniable facts do exist, so we may as well assimilate them and try to forget the rest—the correlations which compel us to realize that facts are not always pleasant, so why keep harping on them.

"Wait," he said then.

But Antigone had no intention of waiting; instead she began to speak theatrically. As soon as she said "Sire," Oedipus had guessed that this was coming, yet he attempted to listen with dignity and a great tranquillity, as if viewing some dull, abortive drama that could not possibly affect his emotions. He had had more than enough experience in this, he had been hardened by the eloquence of delegates, priests and court dignitaries. Which

proves that one can always learn something, even from such a worthless and burdensome occupation as that of king.

Antigone was now speaking of the gods and of fate—all merciless in their own ways. She was speaking of the servitude of humanity, despite the fact that she had started out with no philosophical pretensions; she was speaking of the moral compulsion that binds us forever, of the city and of the people (who were breathing freely again, for within the city walls the monstrous crime had ended); she was even dropping a few words about atonement, all far more exhaustively than her listener's enthusiasm warranted.—Jocasta's contorted face and livid body were the first symbolic episode of something that had been started behind the scenes of history and that neither she nor Oedipus nor perhaps even the immortal gods themselves had strength enough to oppose any more.

Oedipus remained silent and smiled. He smiled at the stubborn persistence with which Antigone went on speaking, with that fixed gaze that seemed now pathological, now idiotic, riveted to him the whole time. Pathological and idiotic, definitely... there we have it—morality is sometimes justified by physiology—scientists could account for Antigone's idiocy by the degenerative effects of inbreeding.

Antigone spoke further, but louder now and more suggestively (pseudo-suggestively, of course, Oedipus corrected himself, meticulously careful of his classifications); she was tearing her garments, dishevelling her hair, and her lips were quivering as she spoke. Her speech was continuously gaining momentum and now she was beginning to interpolate personal references into it. About Jocasta and Oedipus, even about herself, even about the "abomination," calling a spade a spade, which took him aback coming from the mouth of a cultivated princess of good family, barely sixteen years old. She had been brought up in this filth; she was saying—or rather panting and screaming—that there was no escape except through the redemption of penance, through renunciation of all that was worldly, all that was pleasurable, for surely pleasure must be wicked and must sooner or later lead to the all-consuming swamp of moral turpitude.

"How do you know what pleasure must be?" asked Oedipus curiously. He knew nothing whatever about his daughter's life, but now he suddenly wanted to know whether Antigone had ever made love, and if so, what had gone so wrong that another person's misfortune could elicit such a bitter harangue.

Antigone did not reply, however, but with a furious, distorted face began to berate the gods, Oedipus, her mother, herself, the sphinx, the city, the people and the surrounding trees—practically repudiating her own self,

for she surely remembered that the Greeks loved nature and that for a Greek princess the love of nature must be her first principle—wishing to immolate them all in the flames of the underworld, to drown them in the waters of Lethe, to wipe them off the face of the earth, leaving no trace behind... because there was no end to disaster, no end to everlasting unrest, if she could not tear out of herself everything that had led to her bane—sight, hearing, vanity (as related to the former), desire (as related to all the aforesaid), beauty, and ease.

Oedipus maintained his silence and continued smiling. Antigone went on cursing, but now she was speaking of Oedipus himself. "I know, Oedipus, that your life has been nothing but boredom and revulsion, I know that our mother's death means freedom for you." (Oedipus was embarrassed: Even if she knows, one doesn't refer to such things.) "I know that you want to escape, Oedipus, through forests, through meadows, over the highroads, seeking solace; but is there escape and can you find solace when two bloodstained shadows of the past follow you down every road?" (Oedipus failed to see why not.) "Oedipus, Oedipus!" (Antigone was beside herself) "you have always done what circumstances dictated, you can never be free, even though you are rid of Jocasta, even if you get rid of me, you will always be looking for something you will never find, and the search will become ever more arduous."

Oedipus replied only after a long, a very long pause, it seemed—measuring its length for the effect rather than for formulating his idea.

"Antigone, you still always take a far too tragic tone. Get over it. I could give you some sage advice which I was taught by long years of lean experience. Kings have real experience only with human vileness, and this may be the reason why they are more foolish than others. Experiences grow out of movement and life; boredom and revulsion can only beget them half-heartedly. The years fly by, Antigone, and mark my words, they take vengeance mercilessly; they will wipe out all trace of what you were, Antigone. Looking at our actions in the perspective of time, all urgency and even sense of duty become meaningless. Only one thing remains meaningful—to do everything possible to give more and better meaning to our hellishly envious present."

The frown of fury on Antigone's face smoothed out, and she asked in a calmer tone: "So you want to live?" Oedipus, also calmer, was answering yes, when he sensed that Clotho had appeared again in the temple; she was cautioning him. She pointed at Antigone in a way that might have been interpreted as a gesture of protection, but might also have meant that Antigone had been selected as the next victim. Divine warning has special

significance, but the Parcae don't count as gods, and Clotho's unusual assiduity was certainly explained by his compliment on her eyes—though all in all, the entire scene was a puzzle. The least Clotho might have done was to communicate what she knew a trifle more intelligibly. Oedipus became annoyed and decided to ignore the whole thing. A man who knew women could do nothing else.

"Then let's talk about it," said Antigone. "Let's talk and let's admit, Oedipus, that you're like an old thief just released from prison. Not one of those simple old souls with a kindly smile and childlike eyes, but the pot-bellied sort who go in for stealing polenta and milk because they're too clumsy for jewels and they can't digest meat any more... who would think it nicest of all to steal a goat so as to play with it by a brook... You are coming out of the prison, where your own stupidity sent you; your eyes are bedazzled by the spring sunshine and your mouth is puckering for the taste of wine—old lecher, you're a thief who pulls in his belly when walking on the promenade because he would like to look five years younger. The thief looks about him, thinking of juicy meats, wines, women, and long wassails. He forgets he has spent twenty years under the ground, that he has lost his teeth. He gets sleepy so easily nowadays—he forgets this too—he coughs at night, in the morning he gasps for breath going uphill, if he drinks wine he soon has to go round the corner to relieve himself, and he hasn't been a man for a long time... You too, Oedipus... you wake up after twenty years and see Jocasta's old body swinging from a sash; the sunlight shines into your eyes and you think the world is yours for the asking. Those days are long over, Oedipus... The servants used to tell each other what a faithful king you were... you never ordered any slave girls to the palace... Evidently you were never tormented at night by the desire to embrace anyone... And now you are?"

"Now, yes," Oedipus said defensively; there was nothing wrong about it, after all. "And anyway that's quite another thing... If a man..."

"It's not another thing at all, Oedipus. We can start anything over again except what we have renounced after a lot of sleepless nights, belly-aches, giddiness and beslobbered pillows. But wait one minute, Oedipus, and I'll show you whether it's another thing."

"Oh no," thought Oedipus, "she's not going to send me a slave girl to prove her point..."

From here on things began to happen fast. Antigone was as brazen as one who is truly the daughter of her father: "Oedipus, what's bothering you is not that you committed incest but that the woman you did it with was old and boring. That's what's bothering you, Oedipus, so let's talk about it.

Look at me, I'm not old or boring... Look, Oedipus, modesty shouldn't make you shrink now any more than it did before. I'm not your mother, I'm only your daughter..."

Oedipus became anxious and furtively looked round to see whether anyone was observing them. For now there was something to see—Antigone undressing. No one saw her, except perhaps Jocasta (if possible still more mocking now, still more insolent) or the walls, the carvings, the colourful mosaics in the temple—and these watched with infinite serenity; possibly they had even seen some of the gods, so why pay special attention to a disrobing Antigone, who was neither beautiful nor very desirable, although undeniably younger than her mother... Oedipus was flustered. At first he would not admit it, but it was hard to deny, since the semi-nude Antigone was coming nearer, then the nude Antigone, and now Antigone was offering herself with outstretched arms. "Other people also do these things," Oedipus consoled himself, unconvincingly enough, for on the spur of the moment he could think of no historical example of anyone else having done it.

Antigone was not flustered (it makes a difference, of course, whether one begins as an adult or is born right into it). "Adventure, Oedipus," she whispered, and breathed quite close to him. "Think of the adventure—with people standing outside on the temple steps—they could walk in, they could see us... Novelty, Oedipus! If you like I'll go into the woods with you and you can prove that you're really the man you like to think yourself now that you're freed of Jocasta.—Well, aren't you coming, Oedipus?"

"These things are not only decided by..." he began, but Antigone interrupted.

"Don't talk, Oedipus, talking won't get us anywhere..." The accursed girl's eyes were gleaming, and she was already caressing him. Oedipus just stood there, while Antigone's whole body crept against him. All of her; and she was on fire; when this exhibition was over she would be able to earn her gold at night this way. Oedipus knew precisely that the next move was up to him...

"Let us think logically"—and he began to.

To think. And to analyse. He studied his own raging desperation. (To blame anyone else would be stupid, for only time could be blamed for the passage of youth.) There was hate in him, too, and he analysed that, while he felt the palms of Antigone's moist, hot, caressing hands on him (he felt them only as a fact, and this was just what made him so desperate). His hatred burned most bitterly against Jocasta and the gods: Why not sooner...? They swindled me, he realized, and was resigned, as one who had rejoiced

too soon, who had rejoiced like the old thief in the sunshine... but the wines of Cyprus had become too strong... I've been had, the game is over, the curtain will not rise again, not only Jocasta has died, and not only her body has been released... Well then?

He stepped over to Jocasta—probably continuing to curse as he did so—stripped away the buckle from her dress, and slowly, sadly, proceeded to gouge out his eyes; thus must old Priam have gone out to meet the sword of Pyrrhus, when it was already certain that Troy could no longer be saved from the flames. The pain was slight compared with the far greater pain of knowing he had had to do this. Darkness fell, and silence. For a long while they said nothing. Oedipus felt how the blood trickling from his ravaged eyes made a path to the corner of his mouth and from there, drop by drop, to the floor. Then he began to speak, began to defend himself, forgetting that he had only just been blinded.

"Whatever people may think, you saw it. You know why I did it. It was not my love for Jocasta that made me follow her into eternal darkness, nor the pangs of conscience either. It was the realization that I went through all this (he waved his hand as if pointing after the vanished years) and lost everything worth living for..."

They were silent, and then it was Oedipus again who spoke: "It hurts more and more where my eyes were. It hurts more and it upsets me to know that today an account was closed forever."

Antigone still made no answer. He who can keep silent has the upper hand. But how can one keep silent who has just been blinded?

Oedipus then said:

"I hear the voices in front of the temple, their murmur is rising, they are looking for me. They find too long these minutes of piety that we have spent so impiously. I beg you, do something for your poor, blind father."

Antigone took Oedipus by the hand, helped him to his feet, and guided him towards the exit. They were coming into the light, but Oedipus did not sense it at all. He kept talking.

"And yet I feel I have done the wrong thing. It was not I who made the decision but a being higher than we."

Antigone now replied for the first time.

"Not a being higher than we. It was I."

"You?"

"I."

"I don't understand."

"There's a lot you don't understand. You had to be humiliated, not convinced, to make you humble. Now you are humble. And to make you

repentant, you have to be driven to despair, not persuaded. So now despair: I did what made you blind yourself, so that you should believe life was no longer worth living. As if any other old man would go and blind himself!"

Where his eyes had been Oedipus now felt the lightning of a horrible pain—the pain in the lost eyes. Swindled, moaned the gouged-out eyes almost audibly behind him on the mosaic floor of the temple.

"And now you have also felt despair," said Antigone. "Soon you will repent too. With me. You out of despair, repenting for your eyes, for your own stupidity, and I..."

"And you?"

"This is what I want. There are some who are born to repent."

Oedipus began to bellow. He was surrounded by people; they must have reached the entrance to the temple. He bellowed for all to hear, and stinging, bloody tears ran from his gaping eye-sockets.

"Don't believe anyone," he bellowed, "don't believe anyone who tries to talk you out of your life! Barely ten minutes ago I did violence to myself and already I am cloven by regret, that monstrous Erinys of rash acts that can never be revoked! To have done this to myself, to my own unique precious self... oh, oh... Resist and hold on to your wretched lives with terrible determination. Otherwise you may go the way I did..."

He would have continued bellowing, but Antigone took him by the hand and led him further on. His bellowing grew fainter; less and less of it reached the crowd, carrying less and less meaning. The crowd divided in respectful, holy dread; the blind king and his daughter, with her head high, passed between them like the Jews crossing the Red Sea... Antigone walked in front, her idiotic head turned towards the sky, her face transfigured; for she had realized that it is cheaper and more impressive to care for and guide a blind incestuous amateur than to embrace him. Especially when one is better adapted physically for the former. Oedipus stumbled along behind her, blood dripping from his blind sockets into the dust. His blindness and his despair were full of dignity, like an oil-painting; he himself was helpless, like the offspring of a cat. And he felt that this was so, that dignity and heldlessness went together, a lesson the throne had taught him long ago. And what went with the blind, shut-in world of repentance? What else was there to go with it, he meditated, while murmuring subdued curses, and he pondered over rational substitutes for his lost vision. Instead of nerves that reacted to light, others would react now, nerves of touch and taste, nerves for sweetness, warmth, softness. His interest in the central nervous system was suddenly awakened—and after all, why not? The pleasure of those nerves would be replaced by the pleasure

of other nerves... with the appropriate parasympathetic ascendancy, of course. His hopes revived, and he clutched his daughter convulsively as she dragged him towards the invisible towers of Colonus.

On the main square of Cadmus the attendant was whispering to the people standing around him: "The king has lost his reason. He has seen the Moirai, he has met his fate, the flood of tribulations was too much for him to bear... He is a great soul, who has thus requited the disgrace that befell his honour and integrity. He took revenge on himself, on his feeble mortal body, and his soul is fluttering above his greying head as he leaves us. Only see...!"

They looked, and they saw the fluttering soul of Oedipus. It was already much easier now to look and to conjecture; it was possible to admire, even to envy the departing king.

INTIMATION

"Oh—" I said.

But I had only said it—for no good reason. It was the infinitesimal reaction of a moment, like a drop of scalding water. The whole thing happened in less time than it takes to realize it. "Hot." You can say this in a second, you can think it in a thousandth of a second. It took even less time than that. But I realized it had happened because I broke into a sweat.

Idiotic.

Klára looked at me: "What's the matter?"

"Nothing," I said, and that was true. That is... As her beautiful hand anxiously stroked my face I was afraid, I had been afraid, that her palm would become sweaty, wet, from the perspiration on my forehead.

"What are you thinking about?"

"God knows. About you."

This was a lie, of course, I had not been thinking about anything.

"Now you're lying."

"Hm. Possible. I don't generally lie."

But I didn't get out of it that way, because she replied, something like this:

"That's sort of ambiguous. Because either it means you just told a big lie, though you don't generally lie—and that isn't true either—or else it

means, why bother answering, she won't understand anyway. So—'hm. Possible. But you subtly suggest that it isn't possible, that I'm a moron."

We were silent. In a curious way, as I sat there letting my hands lie in my lap, I became conscious that in another moment my arms could become dislocated. In a word, I was no longer master of my hands, of my legs, of my muscles, which had served me so obediently all these years up to now. This also lasted only a moment, but still it prompted the thought that it would be good to escape from myself and thus to view from the outside, from a few steps away, what I, the other I, was actually doing, that is, my arms, my legs, my neck, my head, in short my physical body, while...

And now I was really not thinking about anything else, only about myself.

I began to be afraid.

I looked at the clock. In five minutes it would be a quarter to eleven. In exactly five minutes. I emphasize this because the minute hand was gracefully poised on the number eight and because I felt that every minute was important. I had not accomplished anything in my life, it occurred to me. It was not I who discovered the theory of relativity, it was not I who composed the *Psalmus Hungaricus*, and it was not I who first announced that reflexes could be artificially conditioned; in a word, it was not I who had done away with the numbskulled, obstinate, biblical belief in free will.

As I looked at Klára, there must have been horror in my eyes, because she was frightened. I did not see it in her face but in her eyes. "Wait," she said, and went out. At the worst time. When her physical presence ceased for an instant, I kept count: in one minute she would come back. From here on I measured time only in seconds, until she should return. Yet there was nothing the matter with me except that I dared not raise my hand, I was afraid it would begin to function by itself, make a sudden spring and fly away like a bird. I dared not stand up either.

"What are you afraid of?" I wanted to ask myself, but I had enough sense not to ask, seeing the futility of it.

And then suddenly—five seconds must have elapsed since Klára left the room—I felt that some force was trying to turn me inside out—like a glove—not me myself, but my body. It would have been good to watch the whole thing from the outside, but it was impossible because I was inside of myself and already drenched with perspiration; by now I would have clutched at the edge of the table if my hands had obeyed me—although this wouldn't have meant anything at the moment. The edge of the table is such an insignificant part of objective reality that it meant nothing when such complex and difficult—and unfamiliar—things were going on. Umfamiliar.

What was it?

I knew, but I dared not state it. I was still waiting for the narrowly calculated seconds to run out. I had been born. I had been young and then no longer young, I had been a lover and later a father, I had been afraid, had had success, and failure, sometimes money and other times no money... What was left for me to be curious about?

I dared not state it inside myself.

Meanwhile the objects were losing their objective reality. The chair trapped me, not perceptibly, yet with a hundred hands; I could not stir a finger. "If I can move, I'll jump, I'll run, at worst I'll fall": It flashed on me that the last chance for struggle was—flight. But there was no place to go. The room shut me in, and in less than a fragment of an instant there was no one left in the world—only myself. In that moment, this was the whole world. Myself. In myself were embodied mankind, knowledge, power, art, beauty, goodness—if I had had the time and the mind for it, I would have scorned and disdained everything and everyone that still existed outside of myself... but I had neither the time nor the belief that anything outside myself existed.

Slowly I let the stars run through my fingers, the nebulae of Andromeda spread over my palm, and I also heard Klára's soft footsteps; she was certainly coming and bringing a glass of water. Unfortunately she was already a million light-years away.

I wanted to cry out, but I had no voice. I had had no hands or feet for a long time. And now, in less than an instant, I succeeded in my desire: I got outside of myself. I caught sight of myself lying slumped on the chair; Klára was holding the glass to my mouth. "What's the matter, my dear?" But her soft, caressing voice was no longer soft, or caressing, it was not a voice either, only something like integral calculus which means nothing at all to the brain of man but is there nevertheless. The voice and the sentence were a mathematical formula, and I did not understand it. Every word had its place and its meaning in the dictionary, but the words suddenly defected, crawled away, like bugs, and for one moment everything closed.

After that it never opened again.

THE WOLF

It was one of the last days of my stay at Mount Galya, and although I was aware that sooner or later something would drive me from here too, for the time being I looked about with the tranquillity of a man who belongs to the landscape. The sun was about to set.

I brushed the snow from a tree stump and sat down. What beautiful weather! There was a splendid view on all sides, I could name all the mountains from memory and was tempted not to return but to set out on a long hike, just as I was, leaving behind my job, pay, clothes and other encumbrances and just ringing up Erzsi or writing her a card, say from Eger. I felt quite capable of covering thirty or forty miles before morning. I was watching the sun, and suddenly I sensed that someone was watching me. There was no one in front of me, but when I turned sideways, I noticed a fairly large dog behind me.

As I turned toward it, we stared at each other, the dog letting its head droop slightly. It could not have been farther than some fifteen or twenty steps, peering at me from behind a hazelnut bush which partially hid it. And as I looked at it and whistled and saw that it did not move even when I snapped my fingers, I realized that it was not a dog but a wolf.

I have no idea how this occurred to me. I still could not see the body, only the head and shoulder—shaggy, grey-brown, lean and mangy. The creature was smaller than an Alsatian and yet heavier set. The neck—yes, it was the thick neck emerging from the shoulders practically without transition that had given me the idea it was a wolf.

We went on staring at each other.

I had not really believed one could come across a wolf in Hungary, although without a doubt there were occasional wolves in the foothills of the Carpathians, as any textbook on natural history would tell us, and from there they could easily cross over. I looked at it with curiosity: a strange beast.

There was something unpleasant in its eyes, or did this only come from thinking of the consequences of meeting it in the wilds?

It suddenly flashed through my mind that this wolf was lying in wait for me. Perhaps it had been in ambush for several minutes already.

I had never heard of a lone wolf's attacking someone in daylight. Or if so, it was probably a matter of boasting or story-telling. But my wolf just stood there and looked at me, sometimes shifting its glance to one side—evidently it was not much good at outstaring the other fellow—and then again fixing its eyes on me.

Was the beast afraid of me? It did not seem so.

Turning a little on the stump, I rolled a snowball and aimed. The wolf watched each of my motions. As I threw the ball in its direction, it crouched without jumping aside. It seemed to have calculated in advance that I would miss aim. It did not even bother to look at the foot of the shrubs where the snowball fell, but just stared at me rigidly and let out a hoarse growl.

Suddenly I got to my feet, because all at once I had the feeling that the wolf might leap at me. My movement made it retreat about two feet.

I could not make out whether or not it was frightened. I was somewhat above the beast, and nonchalantly began to approach it. There was no clear intention in my mind, I simply took for granted that it would back away. True, it did back away, it did change its position—but just a few slithered paces. As I stopped short in front of the bush from which it had previously emerged, we were separated by no more than five steps.

And suddenly I no longer felt like having another try at scaring it. I was irked by its stubborn stare, I now saw its full figure, it wagged its tail like a cat on the prowl—just a slight swing to left and to right—and, stretching out its front paws, flattened itself a little against the ground and kept its eyes on me.

I glanced at the sun: in quarter of an hour it would be gone, and half an hour from now it would be dark. And five steps from me the wolf. It would take me about an hour to reach the nearest habitation. If I were to fall, the wolf would leap at me, but it might do so, from behind or from the side, even while I was moving along.

All this went through my mind in a second, and then I started to laugh. What was the matter? Was I afraid? Afraid of a dog-sized beast of prey whose weight could only be about half of mine? Afraid on a snow-covered slope and with skis on my feet, making me nimbler than my opponent? The wolf's legs would sink inches deep into the snow, and it had no other weapon than its fangs.

I laughed. So it's me this creature is hunting? Well, let's see who'll run from whom!

I lit a cigarette, looked at the wolf and even spoke to it: "Well, my good fellow, what's the idea of prowling about all by yourself? Haven't you got a better place to go to on a snowy night like this? I don't envy you this night. You'll freeze."

And I pushed off. The beast only jumped aside when the skis had already reached its feet; as I slid by, I swung my ski-stick at it, without touching it. When I stopped, it stopped, but now I no longer left it in peace. Again I went at it, again it jumped aside, once more to the left, but this time

I anticipated the move, and I too turned and struck with my left. I missed, it grabbed at the stick with gnashing teeth, but then dashed away. And as I followed close behind, it let off a furious howl and with occasional backward glances began to sprint down the incline with leaps and bounds. I laughed at it, I could catch up with it wherever I wanted to, however it tried to avoid me, I was steadily at its heels, scaring it with my loud yells, which were always acknowledged with a short growl.

Then the beast must have come to its senses, for at the next turn it dodged me by running uphill. After some twenty steps, it stopped and looked back.

No, I'm not going to follow you there.

I headed down the slope, but had to watch my bearings a little, for in pursuing the wolf I had lost my own up-hill tracks; I tried to find them again, but those dwarf bushes obstructed one's view and I could not see the tracks anywhere. For a good minute I was not able to keep an eye on the wolf, and only caught sight of it again as I was gliding down a steep slope—there to the right, that elongated grey body, none other than my wolf. Bounding along with tremendous leaps, it tried to keep up with me, making a slight detour onto an easier stretch.

So you are trailing me? You haven't given me up? It was already clear that I could do the creature little harm. Going up hill, it could run away from me, and this it had already caught onto. Going down hill, though occasionally I would leave it behind, it could catch up with me. So that between the two of us the wolf was better off, if only because I could not keep looking back in the midst of the race.

I began to wonder what it wanted of me and when it would make up its mind to attack. Most likely it would waylay me on the road when darkness fell. I did not have a lamp with me, only a lighter and matches, and that would not help much.

While I was figuring this out, I realized that actually I was afraid. Whatever I might call it, this was fear, I grew more nervous, and, my eyes constantly on the wolf, I stumbled several times.

If I fell, would it leap at me?

I directed my course in such a way that with a sudden turn I got ahead of it, and stopped. The wolf could not stop as fast as I, its own impact made it stumble over my skis, and as, with legs sprawled, it tried to break its speed, I had time to strike its nose with my stick. It groaned—the blow must have hurt a sensitive spot—and caught at the stick, but immediately released it and jumped away before I could strike with the other stick. There it stood, two steps from me, turning toward me with a snarl. Growling incessantly, it crouched down ready to leap.

In my childhood I had had a similar experience with a dog. First it would bark, and by bending down or stamping my foot I would make it slink back, but ever less, and it would come closer and closer; in the end it would no longer recoil but attack and try to grab the foot that was kicking at it. This wolf too must have been gathering courage and would no longer back away.

My stick was of aluminium, it would not make a very good club. How was I going to start the bout? And if I started, would the wolf leap at me?

I started, it also swung out—towards me. I held the stick in front of it, and, as the beast grabbed the stick, I hit it with the other one. It fell, jumped up again and now caught the stick, so near to my hand that at the next try it would have succeeded in catching it. Now the beast was so close that I could not even hit it, so I plunged the other stick into its belly. It rolled over on its side, and then suddenly—to this day I don't know what made me do it—before it got to its feet again, I stepped on it with one ski. The ski pressed it a little into the snow, and now I stepped on it with the other ski too. It wriggled under the skis, wriggled in my direction, and tried to catch my foot, I pushed its head back with the stick, it bit into the point and the ring pushed down its head.

I stood on the wolf and trembled with fear; in fact, I was paralysed, my actions had been completely instinctive and compulsive and now I had no idea how to continue. With one stick, then with both, I pressed down on its head, squeezing it into the snow, the skis too were on top of the creature, embedding it in the snow and keeping it from exerting any force, for luckily the snow was deep and soft, the wolf merely thrashed about in it with its legs, but could get no hold enabling it to brace itself and creep out from under.

But what if it did get out, what if this should happen and I could do nothing about it? The end of the stick, though pointed, was not sharp enough to inflict serious injury. Sooner or later the wolf would crawl out of the snow and renew its attack. If I fell with my skis on I could not even wrestle with it, and anyway what would such wrestling amount to? The wolf would bite, and I would try to strangle it. Not nice at all.

I had a few seconds in which to think, and it even occurred to me to push away for all I was worth and try to dash down the slope as fast as I could, in other words, the instinct of flight was getting the better of me. Perhaps I would not even be followed! But no, I could not risk that, I would never find myself at such an advantage again.

I had to kill the wolf then and there. After all for the time being it was immobile, and I had two pointed sticks.

Under the ears there was a sensitive soft spot: I pierced that with one stick and put my full weight on it. The wolf howled, and in its agony it writhed so hard that it almost slipped out from under the skis. I now saw its blood spreading on the snow, one red smudge after another. Well, I would have to aim at its eyes too, if I could.

It was unspeakable cruelty to an animal that I was about to commit in my fear, and I did it, sweating, trembling and obsessed. I pierced one eye, I plunged the point of the stick into its neck in three or four places to hit the jugular artery, until I realized that it was hopeless, for such an essentially blunt instrument could not penetrate the walls of the artery, which would slither away elastically, even if I aimed correctly.

The snow was now soaked with blood, and the wolf's angry groaning changed into a rattling howl, and when its front paws got above the skis, I shattered the wrist joint with a single stab. It was my good luck that the left stick, which it had snatched, must have penetrated the upper jaw, for I could keep the head pinned down all the time.

Then I must have pierced the medulla oblongata under the ear, for the wolf gave a violent jerk and then turned rigid. I did not want to believe it, I did not dare to believe it. Some time passed before I clambered off the body: it did not move.

I was trembling, I had to sit down. I lit a cigarette and looked at the churned up, blood-soaked snow around me. The wolf had thrashed about and dragged itself around in a narrow circle. What a miracle that I had been able to maintain my stand on the beast all the time. Suppose I had slipped off it in the middle of our struggle, when it was already bleeding, wouldn't it have attacked me again?

Never will I know the answer, but the thought kept on chafing me, because I was really sorry for that wolf. I was sorry that it had died such an ugly and painful death and also that it was no longer alive. There had been something noble about this crazy animal: it had nobly accepted the challenge, it had nobly fought eye to eye and had not run away like. . .

SURVEYS

FROM FAIRY TALES TO SCIENCE FICTION

by

ROGER CAILLOIS

Fairy stories, the fantastic tales in vogue in the nineteenth century, and the present development of science fiction—all of them appear to be forms of creation open to the most arbitrary workings of fantasy. No obstacle, no limit seems to be set to the vagaries of the imagination. One is left with the impression each time that imagination has reserved for itself a domain where it will flinch at nothing.

And yet, it is quite clear that fairy stories resemble one another, and that they differ from tales of fantasy; these, in turn, have a certain kinship in common distinguishing them from both fairy story and science fiction; and the adventures of science fiction, again, take after each other. In each case we find the supernatural and the marvellous. But the wonders are not identical, nor the miracles interchangeable. So the freedom of invention is perhaps not so wide as we at first supposed.

Without China and Japan, I should have been ready to maintain that the fantastic tale of terror appeared as the undoubted and relatively late invention of civilized literature. And even in China and Japan, although terror stories are there habitually presented as traditional, of popular origin, they have been so worked over and rewritten by authors in full possession of all the resources of their art that it is unlikely that much remains of their primitive simplicity or their ancient atmosphere. And in addition, the *dramatis personae* are ghosts and vampires, not gnomes or fairies. Here I see a major distinction, so strong that I begin to wonder whether the contrast does not in itself help to reveal the limits of the fantastic. For, after all, it could be considered strange that a ghost should be felt as forming part of the world of fantasy, while an ogre or goblin—creatures no less supernatural—belong exclusively to fairyland.

It is important to distinguish without further delay between these concepts, linked indeed, but often indiscriminately confused. Fairyland is a

marvellous universe superadded to the real world without affecting it or destroying its coherence; the world of fantasy, on the contrary, reveals an affront, a tear in the fabric, an abnormal intrusion, which is almost unendurable, into the real world. In other words, the world of enchantment and the real world mingle and intermix without clash or conflict. No doubt they are governed by different laws. The beings that inhabit them are far from being endowed with the same powers; the ones are all powerful, the others defenceless. But they meet almost unsurprised and certainly with no other fear than the very natural dismay that grips the pigmy before the giant. The point is that a brave man can fight and conquer a flame-breathing dragon or a monstrous giant. He can destroy them. But all his bravery is vain before a spectre, however benevolent a spectre it be. For the spectre comes from beyond the grave. So with the fantastic appears a new confusion, an unknown panic. We must proceed to distinguish its characteristics and consequences from those of the fairy story.

The fairy story takes place in a world where enchantment is taken for granted and magic is the rule. The supernatural in it is not terrifying, nor even astonishing, for it constitutes the very substance of the universe, its laws, its climate. None of the rules of existence are violated; it is part of the order of things.

The world of the marvellous is peopled with dragons, unicorns and fairies; miracles and transformations succeed one another: the magic wand is in common use; talismans, genies, elfs and kindly disposed animals abound; fairy godmothers grant forthwith the wishes of deserving orphans. This enchanted world is harmonious, consistent in itself, yet rich in the vicissitudes of life, for this world also knows the struggle between good and evil; there are bad genies and bad fairies. But once the rules peculiar to this supernatural world are accepted, everything in it remains remarkably stable and homogeneous.

In the world of the fantastic, on the contrary, the supernatural appears as a breach in the coherence of the universe. The prodigious becomes a forbidden aggression, a threat, cracking the stability of a world whose laws have been held as rigorous and immutable up to the moment. This is the Impossible, unexpectedly bursting into a world where the impossible is banished by definition.

Whilst fairy stories consequently of their own choice incline to a happy ending, tales of the fantastic unfold in an atmosphere of terror and almost inevitably end with a sinister event leading to the death, disappearance or damnation of the hero. Then the regular order of the world resumes its sway. This is why the fantastic tale is later than the fairy story and, so to

say, replaces it. It could not come into existence until the scientific concept of a rational and necessary order of phenomena, the recognition of a strict determinism in the connection of cause and effect had triumphed. In short, it comes into being when everyone is more or less convinced of the impossibility of miracles. If from that time on the marvellous gives rise to fear, it is because science has banished it and we know it to be inadmissible and terrifying. And mysterious; not enough attention has been paid to the fact that the world of fairy, precisely because it is a world of fairy, excluded mystery.

We must in fact remember that the fantastic has no sense in a world of marvels. It is even inconceivable. In a world of miracles, the extraordinary loses its power. It can terrify only if it breaks and discredits an immutable, inflexible order of law, which nothing can change under any circumstance, and which seems the guarantee of reason itself. A single example bears this out immediately and decisively. The short story by W. W. Jacobs, "The Monkey's Paw," might at first sight appear as a tragic variant of the tale of "The Three Wishes" which is found all over Europe and is known in France in the classical version of Perrault. A woodcutter helps a fairy, who in reward offers the immediate fulfilment of three wishes of his choice. Lost in amazement, he, together with his wife, begins to look for the three most profitable wishes he could make. In front of the frugal fare set before him, he thoughtlessly wishes aloud for a bowl of steaming pudding, which appears forthwith. One wish lost. Greatly annoyed, his wife asks for the pudding to be stuck to the end of the incautious peasant's nose, which happens immediately. The second wish is lost. There is no other option but to use the third to rid the unfortunate woodcutter of the disfiguring pudding.

In Jacobs's short story, a peaceful and happy couple living in retirement are called upon to make three wishes, although there is nothing they really desire. For the first, they decide to ask for one thousand pounds to pay off the mortgage on their cottage. Next day the money arrives, but this sum turns out to be the compensation paid by the factory where their only son has been the victim of a fatal accident. Three months later, the mother, crazed with grief, asks for the return of her son, and immediately the ghost is heard knocking at the door. The last wish can only be used to return the spectre to his void.

The structure of the two stories is strictly parallel. Yet on closer view it is clear that the difference between them is not only that of the amusing and the horrible. There is a fundamental contrast in the very conditions of one and the other adventure. Three marvels, which disturb the natural order of things, indicate the deception of the peasant in a popular tale. In Jacobs's

short story, the influence of the fantastic talisman, the monkey's paw, which governs the course of action, can only be seen in a connection of the causes which one feels to be inevitable, but which nevertheless remain equivocal, and of the consequences, which remain ambiguous. The three wishes are granted without any manifest breach of the order of the world, for nothing happens which contradicts it. An accident in a factory, the payment of compensation, a knocker rattled on the door of a house in the night, the disappearance of a non-existent visitor: all can undoubtedly be explained by the evil power of the monkey's paw. But anyone outside the secret, and who would therefore be discounting the power of the fatal relic, would see in the drama nothing but coincidences and self-suggestion. In the immutable laws of the everyday universe, a crack has appeared, tiny, imperceptible, doubtful, but enough to let through the Unmentionable Fear.

The fantastic thus presupposes the solidity of the real world, but only so as the better to play havoc with it. At the chosen moment, contrary to every possibility or likelihood, on the most reassuring wall, as once to the King of Babylon, appears the writing in phosphorescent letters. Then the most firmly rooted certainties begin to waver and Terror takes command. The essential feature of the fantastic is the Apparition: what cannot happen but happens nonetheless—at a specific point and a precise moment in the heart of a perfectly charted universe, from which mystery was thought to be banished forever. Everything appears the same as yesterday or the day before: calm, commonplace, with nothing unusual about it; and then—slowly—creeping up or bursting in like a thunder clap—comes the Inadmissible.

The fairy story is a tale set from the beginning in the imaginary universe of enchanters and genies. The first words of the first sentence are already a warning: *Once upon a time*... or *In those days*... That is why fairies and ogres never really disturb anyone. The imagination exiles them to a far-off, fluid, watertight world, without connection or communication with everyday reality, which the mind knows they will never penetrate. It is understood that these are inventions to amuse or to frighten children. Nothing could be clearer: there is no misunderstanding. I mean: by definition, no reasonable adult believes in fairies or enchanters.

The difference is startling when it comes to ghosts or vampires. Of course they are also merely creatures of the imagination, but this time the imagination does not situate them in an equally imaginary world; it represents them having access to the real world. It projects them, not confined to Broceliande or Walpurgis, but passing through the walls of flats duly rented from a house agent or through mirrors bought, if not in a large stores, at least at an auction or from a second-hand dealer round the corner. With their trans-

parent hands they raise to their invisible lips the glass of water the nurse has placed at the sick person's bedside. The heavy footsteps of the statue shake the stairs. A fragment of space unexpectedly disappears, and the traveller no longer finds in the morning the bedroom where he spent the night: the wall is smooth and sounds solid. There is no bedroom in this place; there never was. Time splits in two, multiplies or stands still. Two, three, four—ten times one lives through the same horror, every morning, day after day. The tear-off calendars, the newspapers, the postmarks of letters repeat the same pitiless date.

The manifestations of the fantastic, it can thus be seen, all derive from the same principle. The more familiar their setting, the more secret or sudden their ways, the more they are accompanied with that sense of fatality and irrevocability springing from the ineludable progress of events, the more terrible they are.

Tales which take as their theme the irruption of the abnormal into the commonplace by no means invariably base themselves on such a clearly defined principle. Frequently the author fails to follow it through to the end and, by some trick or other, reconverts the element of the fantastic when bringing his story to an end. I shall list a number of the tricks most commonly used.

In the first place it may happen that the fearful occurrence is only apparently supernatural. It was deliberately contrived merely to strike fear into the hero's heart. A subtle piece of machinery, dismantled in the end, informs the reader that the sinister apparations had their origin in human stratagems. The accepted name for this is the "supernatural explained." Jules Verne's "The Castle in the Carpathians" offers a more modern version of this than the mistery novels in which Mrs Radcliffe and Horace Walpole abuse the process with ingenious monotony. It is remarkable that the epilogue, which should astound us by the subtlety of the invention, rarely fails to cause disappointment. The reader had accepted the idea of a spectre. The thought of a spectre had chilled his spine. If he is than told that the ghost was only some supernumerary dressed in a shroud and rattling chains, he considers the trick ridiculous and rather childish. He cannot accept trembling for so little.

A similar disappointment is produced by stories with all sorts of baffling intricacies which are nicely sorted out in the closing lines as being a dream, a hallucination or delirium. This phantasmagoria which is purely psychological leaves the intelligence feeling itself tricked. Pushkin's "The Coffin Dealer" is an illustrious example of this kind of trap.

In the third kind of pseudo-fantasy the writer resorts to some defect or

monstrosity which transforms a living species. A spider swells up to the size of a giraffe, giant ants track down a fear-stricken humanity. A freak of nature or the experiments of a fiendish scientist are at the bottom of these metamorphoses. Erckmann-Chatrian and H. G. Wells remain the ill-advised initiators of these biological fantasies. In this genre I give my preference to the story of the Uruguyan, Horacio Quiroga, "The Feather Pillow," for the cohesion of the narrative, the horror of the denouement, and the serenity of the final comment. Nor have we long to wait for contributions from the other sciences. Mysterious inventions produce the most surprising effects from a distance. All kinds of waves and rays have been used with varying degrees of success. Delicate instruments make it possible to steal souls, dreams and emotions away. The genre is not always childish: Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde provide the proof. It is true that, in this case, the author laid no stress on the chemical elements of the elixir used by the hero. The interpolation of scientific knowledge reduces the boundaries of the marvellous while broadening the scope of science. It does not repose on the horror which springs from the revelation of the Impossible.

Another class of mystery stories prefers to make use of the data of the psychical sciences: telepathy, spiritualism, levitation, ectoplasm, warning dreams, and so forth. As manifestations of the Beyond, such phenomena should rightfully find their place, one would think, in the domain of the fantastic, and this would effectively be so if these authors did not in general claim belief in the events which they relate. But the rather pedantic manner they have of presenting them, the certitude with which they proclaim that these phenomena are part of science and will one day be the object of scientific study, discourage their classification among those written with the deliberate intention of being entertaining through fear.

Here a serious misunderstanding must be avoided. Fantastic tales in no wise set out to give credence to the occult and the supernatural. The conviction, the urge to convert the reader, of the votaries in this field only succeed in exasperating his critical mind. The literature of the fantastic falls from the outset within the domain of pure literature. It is above everything else a *game* with fear. It is probably even a necessity that the writers who make use of spectres in their books should have no belief in the phantoms they invent.

To adopt the form of fiction means above everything that all attempts to convince are renounced and that the writer does not offer himself as a witness.

I admit, however, that the question remains open. Certain impressive tales by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle show that a skilful writer can successfully

attempt to make his readers share his own obstinate credulity. Nor is it important if they continue to disbelieve: they will shudder just the same. In the end, it is the naïveté of the author himself which gives the unbelieving the opportunity for that delectable fearfulness in which the attraction of ghost stories resides.

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It is tempting to put forward the hypothesis that only those cultures which have accepted the concept of a constant, objective and unchangeable order of nature, can produce, by way of contrast, the particular form of imagination expressly contradicting the perfect regularity of such an order—the terror of the supernatural. In that other world where the fairy story holds sway, everything is enchantment or presages enchantment. The fear springing from the violation of natural laws has no place there. For there are no natural laws as yet sufficiently established or defined for any phenomena denying them to provoke a sort of mental panic. The fantastic comes later, in a world without miracles, a world strictly subjected to the laws of causality.

In Europe it is a contemporary of Romanticism. In any case it hardly appears before the end of the eighteenth century as a compensation for an excess of rationalism. The Middle Ages, which are impregnated with the marvellous, cannot give their sorcery and enchantments the degree of tension, the high level of anguished suspense essential for the future shudder. Melusine and Merlin, Satan and Beelzebub are the equivalents of Circé and Iblis. They do not presage Hoffmann or Edgar Poe. For they live in what is still a supernatural world. They do not force their way into a world where the Extraordinary is forbidden. On the other hand, as far back as 1704, Saint-Simon, in his account of the wax masks, gives an unmistakable foretaste of the fantastic. Here is the short passage from his *Mémoires*, which, to my mind, deserves to stand out in the history of the modern fantastic, somewhat as Zadig stands out in the history of the detective story.

"Bouligneux who was lieutenant general, and Wartigny, field marshal, two men of great worth, but very eccentric, were killed before Verus. The previous winter a number of life-like wax masks had been made of *habitués* of the Court, which were worn under other masks, so that when the wearers unmasked, the onlooker was deceived into taking the second mask for their face, when the real, but quite different, face in fact lay beneath. The game caused great amusement. This winter again, they wanted to revive it. There was great surprise when these life masks were found to be quite fresh, just as when they had been stored away after the carnival, with the exception of those of Bouligneux and Wartigny, which, while still

resembling them perfectly, had the pallor and the wasted look of people who have just died. They appeared like this at a ball and caused so much horror that an attempt was made to touch them up with rouge, but the rouge faded instantly, and the wasted look could not be effaced. This struck me as being so extraordinary that I thought it worth recording, but I too should have been cautious of doing so, had not all the Court been, like myself, a witness, and extremely surprised, and that several times, at this strange occurrence. In the end these two masks were thrown away."*

Saint-Simon restricts himself to guaranteeing the authenticity of the facts. He gives no explanation of them. Coincidence or amen: he does not judge. Several generations of writers will proceed to traffic in this sort of ambiguity which, leaving the choice to the reader, imposes on him the agonizing responsibility of denying or affirming the supernatural for himself. As for the event quoted in the *Mémoires*, Claude Farrère used them for a story which he very honestly dedicated to Saint-Simon. The expanded version rather weakens than develops the brief account of the chronicler.

The Age of Reason ended, as we know, with the resounding revenge of the marvellous. Every superstition flourished, and all the more successfully since they were given a scientific guise. Fairy stories on the oriental model were moreover highly fashionable. In so far as France is concerned, we need only refer to the *Diable Amoureux* by Cazotte and *Rodrigue ou la Tour Enchantée* by the Marquis de Sade. In Germany, Goethe wrote a number of allegorical stories in which a rigid masonic or rosicrucian symbolism regulated the smaller detail. The fantastic tale proper emerges rather slowly from all this extravagance of marvels and parables. None the less it is rare to see so synchronized an appearance in the fashion for such a definite literary *genre*. Hoffmann was born in 1778; Poe and Gogol in 1809. Between these two dates came the births of William Austin (1778), Achim von Arnim (1781), Charles Robert Maturin (1782), Washington Irving (1785), Balzac (1799), Hawthorne (1803) and Mérimée (1805), in fact, all the earliest masters of the *genre*. Dickens (1812), Sheridan le Fanu (1814) and Alexei Tolstoy (1817) followed shortly afterwards. From the Ukraine to Pennsylvania, in Ireland and England as in Germany and France, that is to say, with the exception of the Mediterranean, over the whole expanse of Western culture, on both sides of the Atlantic, in some thirty years, from approximately 1820 to 1850, this new and original *genre* produced its masterpieces.

As often happens, the first was a master stroke: I mean the *Manuscrit trouvé à Saragossa*, written in French by Count Potocki, the first part of which

* *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon, Bibliothéque de la Pléïade, Vol. II, Ch. XXIV. Paris, 1949, pp. 414—415.

was published in St Petersburg in 1804 in a very limited edition. Despite the publication of the second part in Paris in 1813, the work has remained almost unknown. To such an extent that it appears no one has realized that one of the most famous stories of Washington Irving, "The Grand Prior of Malta," is nothing more than a strictly literal translation of one of the episodes in Potocki's work. Other authors knew of this source and drew on it. None, however, seem to have ventured to commit themselves to its fundamental originality: the series of short stories which make up this fantastic Decameron repeat and vary the same strange and irrevocable adventure, so that the apprehension aroused by each of them is increased by the mystery and dread deriving from the recurrent plot pursuing its heroes from generation to generations.

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As to the marvellous element in science fiction, in so far as it is not the trashy literature of wars between worlds and accounts of interstellar journeys, it is not based on contradictions of the facts of science but, on the contrary, mirrors its powers and, above all, its enigmas, that is to say, its paradoxes, its consequences drawn out to the extreme absurd, its bold hypotheses scandalizing all commonsense, likelihood, custom and imagination as the result not of an unbridled fantasy but of a harsher analysis and a more ambitious logic.

If this is really the case, the elements of the marvellous, far from originating in some indefinable creative profusion heaping up an infinity of conceit as the fancy takes it, would each time be governed by a hidden necessity, capable of determining in advance their various springs of action, no doubt only approximately, but none the less with decided rigidity. It would then be possible to classify and explain, list and foresee, these almost mandatory themes rather than deduce them. This would no doubt require a superhuman intelligence, the speed in permutation and combination of a computer; but it is already reversing the direction of research, or establishing the possibility of it, to surmise that each epoch has its corresponding finite number of imaginable marvels, or types of imaginable marvels (and which for the most part have to be *in fact* imagined); they represent the transfer papers, the negatives, the hollow moulds of what the level of culture of each period feels is lacking. Anticipations and gaps, nostalgias and vain dreams, fundamental incompatibilities tomorrow find themselves without meaning or interest because, reality having overtaken the dream or confirmed the fear, they will have had to renounce their function of beguiling some unsatisfied need or assuaging some deep-rooted anxiety.

It is thus, I imagine, that the fantastic replaces the fairy story and science fiction the fantastic. At first sight, it seems a contradiction that these privileged kingdoms, these remote lands of the imagination should not be entirely free to conjure up marvels at pleasure, without any limits set to its powers of invention. The notion that the series of fantasies possible could be exhaustible is contrary to all preconceived opinion. I suggest, however, that this is in fact no more than a cut and dried opinion, the offspring of laziness, discouragement, as well as the lack of a sure method of ascertaining the complete number of foreseeable eventualities. These, multifarious as they undoubtedly are, only appear infinite in number owing to the difficulty of recognizing them and isolating them among the apparent variety of tales. Like elements, no less difficult to define and identify, in the diversity—also infinite—of aspects of matter.

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Through the marvels of fairy stories man, still lacking the skills which would enable him to dominate nature, realizes in an imaginary world the naive desires which he knows unrealizable: to move from place to place in a flash, become invisible, possess powers to act from afar, transform himself at will, see his needs fulfilled by obliging animals or supernatural slaves, command genies and the elements of nature, posses invincible weapons, infallible ointments, cauldrons of plenty and irresistible philtres, and finally to escape from old age and death.

These marvels translate wishes which are simple and limited in number. They are dictated, without too many intermediaries, by the infirmities of the human condition. They betray the obsession to escape from it, if only once, through the favour of some exceptional decision of fate or the higher powers. Only, in the final resort, it is the techniques of knowledge which make flying through the air and working without fatigue possible: the real aeroplane eclipses the dream of the flying carpet or the winged horse; steam or electricity makes the intervention of miraculous aids unnecessary. Science, to a very great extent, alters the human condition, but in so doing defines its frontiers more precisely and causes them to be recognized as impassable. Greater powers are granted man, but the darkness of the beyond appears all the more formidable. From its night rise spectres and phantoms, ghosts ready to seize the living at the moment least expected. Hence the fantastic tale of terror, the incursion of baleful forces in the tamed world which excludes them.

This new world of marvels is entirely dominated by the Other World: pacts with the Devil, the vengeance of the dead, vampires thirsting for fresh

blood, statues, effigies, automatons suddenly coming to life and moving among the living. These accursed beings haunt death and darkness, the shadowed side of the world. Crouching in the invisible, they await the moment to invade the beaten track of every day. Essentially apparitions, their presence is a breach in the fabric of scientific certainties so firmly woven that it seemed it could never suffer the assault of the Impossible.

Nor do the fundamental laws governing life and matter allow for an unlimited number of evident and absolute impossibilities. And it is just these flagrant impossibilities which call for the intervention of the fantastic and as a result determine the themes of the *genre*. The variants are infinite in each category, but the categories themselves remain relatively small in number. Let me give a few examples of them here.

The pact with the Devil. The model is Faust. There are any number of variants. One of the most recent and most ingenious is the short story by Mack Reynolds, "Martinis: 12 to 1"; translated into French under the title of *Les Treize Cocktails.*

The troubled spirit which demands a certain action to give it peace. A dead man returns to earth to persecute his murderer; a ghost is forced as a punishment to haunt the scene of a heinous crime he had committed; this type of ghost was already known to the Greeks.

The spectre condemned to wander eternally. This is the medieval story of the Wild Hunter and the Mesnie Hellequin which was brilliantly revived in the nineteenth century by William Austin in his short story on the disappearance of Peter Rugg.

Death personified, appearing among the living. It might be during a feast, under the brilliant light of chandeliers, that it marks off its victims one after the other, in accordance with the orders of inexorable fate. At another time it might await its fleeing victim in the very spot he had run to for refuge. Among the narratives making use of this device as part of the scheme of the plot, in the order of their increasing merit, are: *La Mujer alta* by Pedro Antonio de Alarcon, "The Masque of the Red Death" by Edgar Poe, and the Persian anecdote in which the Caliph, in order to save his favourite from Death, dispatched him to Samarkand, while it was just in that city that Death was destined to seize him.

The "Thing" indefinable, invisible, but which is present, is oppressive, which kills or harms. Fitzjames O'Brien and Ambrose Bierce, among others, have written gripping tales on this theme: the unparalleled triumph of this category remains *Le Horla* by Maupassant.

Vampires, that is, the dead who assure themselves of perpetual youth by sucking the blood of the living. Hoffmann, Alexei Tolstoy, Balzac, Sheridan le Fanu and

many others have made out of the old superstition studied by Don Calmet one of the themes *par excellence* of fantastic tales, one of those, too, which most regularly exact their quota of boredom from the reader. A binding tradition has in fact fixed most of the significant details. Alexei Tolstoy's tale is a happy exception to the usual conformity.

The statue, the effigy, the suit of armour, the automaton, which suddenly spring to life and acquire a dangerous independence of their own. The names of Mérimée and Achim von Arnim are especially linked with this type of story, the first for the statue of *La Vénus d'Ille,* the second for the "Golem of Isabelle of Egypt," and for the effigy in the *Marie de Melük Blainville.*

The curse of a magician bringing in its train fearful and supernatural disease. "The Mark of the Beast" by Rudyard Kipling is the best known example of this *genre,* and White's "Lukundoo," the most terrible.

The seductive and fatal temptress, come from the other world. In Chinese tales this is almost always a fox transforming itself into a ravishing being; in the short story by H. H. Ewers it is a spider with a look of inexpressible sweetness.

The transposition of dreams and reality. Suddenly, like a tilting iceberg, reality dissolves and disappears, submerged, while in its place the dream takes on the overwhelming solidity of matter. "Io" by W. Onions and *La noche boca arriba* by Julio Cortazar are enough to demonstrate the depth and importance of this theme, which is exceedingly rare and difficult to handle, but draws extraordinary strength from the complete reversal it seeks to impose. This type of story is the opposite of those in which the reader is reassured in the end, realizing that the whole story was only a nightmare. Here, on the contrary, we have a nightmare which suddenly proves to be reality—hence the horror of it.

The bedroom, the flat, the house, the street, wiped out of space. Jean Ray gives a first-rate illustration of this with *La Ruelle Ténébreuse.* Philip MacDonald in "Private—Keep out," and Richard Matheson in the "The Disappearing Act," step by step spreading over a being the blur of absence, abolish from space and time, from the web of memories and events, a human life and its many interactions with other lives.

The suspension or repetition of time. In intervals of minutes or centuries, the same acts are reproduced in the same order. An ancient chronicle gives an exact account of an event now in the process of taking place. Potocki's "Toppila the Finn," the "Friday 19" of Elisabeth S. Holding, and more diffidently, Edgar Poe in "The Fall of the House of Usher" enriched the undeviating linear progress of irreversible human time with unforgettable cyclic returns.

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At this point I shall cut short this catalogue, which everyone can continue as he pleases. I merely wanted to make clear the coherence and stability of mythology called into being by the desire for fear and the shudder of fear. It is time to reach a conclusion. The terror which belongs to the fantastic tale only flourishes in an incredulous world, where the laws of nature are held to be inflexible and immutable. It makes its appearance there as a nostalgia for a universe open to the powers of darkness and the emissaries of the other world. And finally, in prefiguration of another type of tale, time splits in two or multiplies itself, strange gaps, forbidden and formless territories appear, in space "pockets"—that have no place. And in these regions the laws of causality suffer inexplicable derangements.

An almost forgotten remark by Madame Du Deffand clearly sums up the state of mind of the lover of fantastic stories: "Do you believe in ghosts ?"—"No, but I am afraid of them." Here fear is a pleasure, a delightful game, a sort of wager with the invisible, where the invisible in which one does not believe does not seem likely to claim its due. But a margin of incertitude exists, which the talent of the writer exploits the best he may. A writer will succeed by the use of logic, accuracy and plausible details. He must be precise, scrupulous, realistic. That is why among the uncontested masters of the *genre* we found so many novelists and story-tellers with a flair for describing flatly the most commonplace reality: Balzac and Dickens, Gogol and Maupassant. For in the first place all the circumstantial evidence for the truth of the incredible story must be presented. This is the necessary background for the irruption of the terrifying Occurrence, the hero being the first to be terrified. His scepticism, humbled, yields before the unimpeachable demonstration. The fantastic—the weakness and punishment of the freethinker... happy the weakness and delicious the punishment.

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From the moment that death is held to be an impenetrable barrier, the ghost theme takes on a tragic aspect which is new and threatening; whence the frequency of tales about spectres, phantoms and vampires, which from then form the major part of fantastic literature.

The now capital distinction between the animate and the inanimate provides the starting point for another impossible violation; hence the number of statues, effigies or robots which suddenly come to life and turn against the artisan, the mechanic or the artist who has arrogantly fashioned inert matter in the human form.

Only a transparent body, true, that is, one which allows the light to pass,

which casts no shadow, which finds no reflected image in a mirror. But it is then itself invisible. A man who can be seen and touched, who casts no shadow and no reflection in the glass, contradicts the physical laws and so gives birth to a third type of terror tale.

Philosophy recognizes certain primary properties in bodies—extension or weight—implied by their nature as material bodies, and secondary properties—form, colour, smell, temperature—which vary according to the circumstances and to which the primary properties provide, so to speak, a support. So that the one set of properties depends on the other. The fantastic conceives the idea of disassociating them and invents beings or things with a perceptible weight and measurable extension, but lacking form, colour, consistency and any properties which would enable the human sense to perceive or demarcate them. These Things are material and possess none of the properties of matter, save those, abstract and intangible, which enable them paradoxically to occupy a place in the material universe. In contradictory fashion, they retain outline and autonomy, and are precisely situated in space, while their fluid or, even better, gaseous nature should result in their diffusion at random in all directions until some obstacle stops them. This theme, which has been brilliantly exploited, is perhaps the one best designed to show how the fantastic is based on the concept of the world established by the physical sciences, and each time is made up of a characteristic breach in these basic laws.

It stands to reason that scientific investigation does not always contradict the elementary evidence garnered by the most imperfect experience at all times. In this case, the same theme is perpetuated and passes as it stands, at least in its principal points, from the world of the fairy story to that of the fantastic. But the treatment given it undergoes a significant change. A marvel which went without question becomes a sudden source of difficulties, stemming precisely from the physical properties which have been outraged. The theme of invisibility, for instance. In folklore or in the story of Gygès, the hero turns a ring or puts on a magic cloak. He promptly vanishes from sight, and that's that. He can see without being seen, he can confuse or disconcert his pursuers. In a fantastic tale, on the other hand, the disappearance is not so simple: it gives rise to countless questions. Do the ring and the cloak remain visible, or do they also suddenly disappear? Do the clothes covering the vanished person also vanish? Does the body which has been effaced continue substantially to occupy a certain part of space? Does he still have the power to move objects? Can he open doors, his transparent hand turning the handle which seems to move by itself? Or does he rather possess the power of passing through walls? Does he or does

he not offer an unforeseeable resistance to the person who runs into him without seeing him, or who naively prepares to pass through the space believed to be empty? Those are some of the questions that a Wells must have asked himself, and any author who, borrowing the theme of the invisible man from the world of the fairy story, attempts to introduce it into a world governed by the physical and natural sciences.

I am not at all sure, moreover, that in doing so, he would not meet with another difficulty less easily solved. In the *genre* of the fantastic, the invisible being which takes first place is the Spectre, the emissary from the other world. The human being, made pervious to luminous waves by some dematerializing or chemical means, provokes no shiver of terror. He is more likely to be regarded as a practical joker than as the redoubtable emissary of the Implacable Powers. His freedom to appear or disappear at will makes him more a conjurer than an instrument of doom. To such a point that a series of subtle and discreet rules govern these matters, none the less precise for being implicit. They are observed by means of a secret table of reciprocal agreements and intolerances.

The hero, moreover, usually owes his invisibility less to a pact with the Devil than to a laboratory process, to the new invention of a scientist who uses costly and rare substances. This is already a foreshadowing, somewhat timid, it is true, but above all childish, of the resources of science fiction: the anticipation of discoveries capable of leading to radical changes in the manners and armoury of man.

Science and technology consequently engender a form of the marvellous which is their own. It is not enough, however, for the writer merely to build on their successes, for reality rapidly overtakes anticipation. To take only tales by a master of the *genre*, to whom this has already happened, I mean Jules Verne, the invention of the submarine has outstripped "Mathias Sandorff" and "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea"; of the aeroplane, "Robur the Conqueror"; of television, "The Castle in the Carpathians." I have only quoted the best examples: "Five Weeks in a Balloon" is only attractive today through its old-fashioned aspect, like an account of a trip by stagecoach. We must be on our guard against this deceptive aspect of science fiction, which is not the aspect that brings it under the category of the fantastic.

This remark applies to most specimens of this type, which is also the weakest and most boring part of the *genre*. They consist of repetitions or indefinate variations of tales of interstellar voyages, wars between galaxies or the colonization of distant stars. At a time when the conquest of space is becoming a fact, this predilection comes as no surprise, but the narratives it inspires only too rarely come within the purview of the fantastic. The

universe, even spreading beyond the nebulae, does not therefore change its nature. It continues to be subject to the same laws. The diversity of worlds certainly leaves a free field for the most fertile of imaginations, but these other worlds, explored and catalogued, are never The Other World, the one into which death leads the living. Interstellar space is not so yawning an abyss as this ineluctable and approaching change in man's state. And it is from this rent in the fabric that the fantastic, properly speaking, necessarily arises.

It sometimes happens, however, that the planets described or the civilization of the beings who inhabit them simply serve as original or sinister settings for unfathomable events. The author proceeds to speculate on the singularities of these remote and inconceivable beings inhabiting the confines of the universe, on their special sense, their faculties, their ways of life and thought, their morals, the laws of their cosmos and political organization, and even their religion. The narrator revives and justifies in retrospect the supernatural premises of ancient tales of the fantastic, presenting them as laws of another kind. In the story by Henry Kuttner and Catherine Moore, for instance, entitled "Rite of Passage," we find a meticulous description of the rediscovered truth and mechanisms of primitive magic (initiation, tabu, and the mysterious punishment of sacrilege) which, in this universe, corresponds effectively to the order of things. In this context I know of no more remarkable example of the possible interpenetration of the fantastic and science fiction. But it remains exceptional.

Science fiction is frequently used for the purposes of social satire, exactly as Voltaire in his time in *Micromégas,* and Swift in "Gulliver's Travels." Maintaining a proper sense of proportion, of course, a Ray Bradbury could nevertheless pass in this field as their direct heir. His stories anticipating the future, his space expeditions or Martian adventures permit him to give his fellow citizens lessons in modesty, commonsense, tolerance or simple humanity. A number have followed him in this *genre*, which, to tell the truth, is less properly a tale of the fantastic than a moral fable and which, in the majority of cases, is more similar to parable in that it provokes no shudder of fear.

Others frequently make use of stories of the future in order to express a widely shared anxiety over the progress of science and the deadly menace to which nuclear discoveries have subjected the whole human race. Whence the disconcerting and persistent series of short stories of American origin written in praise of the gypsies, the real masters of the world, after mankind has been practically wiped out at the end of an atomic war. The nomads, who had made it a point of honour to refuse the city and civilization, science

and industry, are then rewarded for their wisdom. Everyone left on the devastated planet offers them his gold or his daughters in exchange for an old woman's recipe, a healing herb, the simple and age-old skills of the basket-maker, the potter, or the poacher.

Biological discoveries give rise to a similar anxiety. Induced genetic changes, the growing audacity of neuro-surgery inspire thoughts of the birth and development of new beings, profoundly different from men, but with the same human appearance. Scientific literature usually calls them mutants, or presents them as unstable intermediaries between a bygone form of life and another not as yet stabilized. Extreme powers of receptivity make the thoughts of others perceptible to them immediately, on occasion from remote distances, with the consequence that they live in a barely endurable uproar, which tortures them. Or, due to their abnormal psychic powers, they are regarded as monsters or dangerous exceptions. In any case, their superiority dooms them to misfortune.

It seems to me that the theme of the mutants in some way corresponds to the theme of the gypsies: a double reply to the same fear before the development of sciences and the prospect of a mankind destroyed or disrupted. Neither of these themes properly belong to the fantastic tale as such. But they have their rightful place in science fiction, and are even very characteristic of it. They too constitute the hollow moulds, one might say, the aspirations, the fears, the desiderata of the epoch.

In the same way breaches of the fundamental laws governing the regularity of the natural order have culminated, in the last resort, in breaches which call in question the *a priori* basis of perception: time and space. Hence the themes, new in comparison to the others, of a part of space reabsorbed, of a part of time contracted or expanded, suspended, repeated or reversed. Both geometrical spaces—infinite, homogeneous, three-dimensional, equipollent, and abstract times—infinite, irreversible, irreparable, isochronic—are to be denied. In outlining the different types of fantastic literature, I drew attention to these divisions under which very much more elaborate constructions are now being introduced. The outer spaces have more than three dimensions, they telescope into each other, are polarized in an inexplicable manner and include inadmissible gaps. A hero (or a victim) balances in a parallel universe: all that was needed was a slip, a moment of distraction, a beckoning of air. He can only return into his own world by again availing himself of one of the points where, at unforeseeable intervals, twin worlds brush against each other and interpenetrate.

As the poet said:*

> Touch not the shoulder
> Of the knight who passes,
> He would turn,
> And it would be night,
> A night without stars,
> Without arc or clouds.
>
> What then became
> of all that makes the sky,
> The moon and its passage,
> And the sound of the sun?
>
> You would have to wait
> Until a second knight
> As powerful as the first
> Consented to pass.

On such an expectancy rests a large part of the fantasy proper to science fiction, I mean the coexistence of interlinked and separate spaces and the improbable hazard of passing from one to the other. As to time, writers have been quick to conceive it as elastic, cyclic, reversible. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the Infante Don Juan Manuel, in his tale of the Dean of Santiago, produced the illusion of the course of a whole life taking place in a few brief moments. The legend of the Seven Sleepers knew the art of suspending time. Other stories repeated the same recurrent episode, the same series of events, as a gramophone needle stuck in the same groove of a record. From then on time appeared in addition as a flat surface, a dimension of space permitting movement within it. It is the link of the simultaneous and not the vista of the successive. Here there is an attempt to base the sense of the marvellous on epistemologic reflection rather than to run counter to the image of the structure of the world imposed by science. For in the meanwhile, this image has largely diverged from straightforward experience and the evidence of the senses. In certain respects, it has taken on the air of the fantastic. It contradicts evidence and perception.

Generally speaking, speculations on space are still in the embryonic stage. As far as I can see, very little use has been made of the fancy of absolutely flat beings invented by Einstein in order to demonstrate that a world

* Jules Supervielle.

could be finite and at the same time be perceived (and even calculated) as infinite. Nor do the surfaces of devices which are distorted and rejoined, allowing one to pass from the inside to the outside without changing planes (surfaces), seem to have inspired many writers of short stories. Just chance, or the difficulty of conceiving plots which match and illustrate the paradoxes of space? I do not know. It is, however, a fact that the metaphysics of time, although generally more difficult to handle, have given rise to an appreciably wider variety of ambiguous and bewildering tales turning exclusively on the nature of duration. A form of fantasy, owing no doubt something to science, but more picturesque than dialectic in character, which as starting point invents a machine for exploring time and will transport the traveller at will into the past or future. If his role is no more than that of an invisible and uninvolved spectator, there is nothing to fear. The problem begins at the moment when he himself intervenes at any set moment of the past. In doing so, the traveller is of necessity the occasioner of changes which affect the subsequent chain of cause and effect, so that he runs the risk of suffering the consequences of the changes he himself has brought about and which can lead to his own destruction. Put into its simplest form, the paradox is as follows: a man moves backwards into time and kills his father before the latter has begotten him. It is already clear from that moment that the murderer cannot have existed. It is therefore impossible that he could have travelled into time to kill his father. But if the father has not died before he begot the assassin-son, there is nothing to hinder the latter from... And so on to infinity, like the syllogism of Epimenides and the Cretan liars.

Starting from this essential difficulty, writers have proceeded to endless elaborations of the theme, multiplying returns into the past, changes made and sometimes re-made by mobile experts entrusted with the task of remedying the ravages provoked by the saboteurs of history. Saboteurs? Yes, indeed. But saboteurs from what angle? Is it sabotage or correction? What absolute criterion, what extra-terrestrial arbiter is there to decide? It is common knowledge that Paul Anderson has made a speciality of these inextricable stories. An initial difficulty is to be aware that the path of events has been deflected from its original direction. (Once again, I accept the word, though not at all convinced that the word "original" conserves any meaning.) A second problem is to determine the exact moment in the past when the fork in the ways, the often insignificant incident took place, after which history moved into a different future, producing a world without Christianity, without the Roman conquest or without industrial civilization or the discovery of America. Marcel Thiry set his novel *Echec du Temps* in a Belgium where Waterloo was a victory for the French. Only the obstinacy of

a physicist of genius, the embittered descendant of the British officer responsible for Wellington's defeat, succeeded in changing history to what every child learns in its history book today.

No matter how carefully the writer organizes his tale, the fundamental paradox still remains. What happens to the previous universe once the changed universe has taken its place? And doesn't the change imply that the author himself cannot be born in the new future he has created, or will a change of destiny not prevent him from being the cause of that fatal disturbance? And so the inevitable vicious circle comes round again.

The next tempting step is to imagine an infinity of simultaneous worlds which realize all their possibilities, so that those closest to one another, almost identical, are distinguished merely by some insignificant detail, such as the name of a station or a street, as in Marcel Thiry's novel where the outcome of the battle of Waterloo in the end changed practically nothing. Or one might imagine the fabric of causes as being so closely interwoven that alone some key event or other is capable of offering an alternative (like J. T. McIntosh in "Tenth Time Round" or again as so elastic that eventually the consequences balance themselves out through their very profusion, so that the division originally created by a different decision, after widening in the first phase, is later gradually eliminated. At all events it appears to be accepted that the time traveller neither corrects nor alters the past. He simply abandons one world to penetrate into a second or third, where other futures, more or less dissimilar, but always incompatible, unfold.

Marcel Thiry, who as far back as 1945, that is, ten years before Paul Anderson, conceived and experimented with these various solutions, chose none of them. I suspect that a choice is impossible and that each author is here condemned to ambiguity.

No solution in fact could perfectly seal the crack opened up by the traveller. The fact remains that he played a part in the world he leaves and he introduces a creature too many in the world he penetrates. The transfer, here, interrupts or simplifies the causal chain; there, it complicates it or introduces others. These are important difficulties hard to obviate without a thoroughly convincing explanation. It has to be accepted that the transmigrant will successively inhabit empty organisms, phantom wombs always available, waiting eternally for the transient visit of these incredible expatriates.

I do not know to what extent it may be premature to try and give a sufficiently representative picture of science fiction. Even taking into account the accelerated development of history, the evolution of a literary *genre* could hardly take less than half a century. None the less, accepting the

risk, I have tried to discover the constants which indicate that the same holds good for science fiction as for the fairy story or the fantastic tale. It continues the same narrative of the unreal and fulfils the same unchanging functions. The fairy tale expresses the naive desires of man in face of a nature he has not yet learned to master. Supernatural tales express the terror of suddenly seeing the regularity, the order of the world so painfully established and proved by the methodical investigation of experimental science yielding to the onslaught of nocturnal demoniac and irreconcilable forces. In its turn the tale of the future reflects the fearful apprehensions of an era which is dismayed by the progress of technological theory, and to which science, ceasing to represent a protection against the unimaginable, appears more and more like a vertigo giddily pushing one towards it. It could be described as being no longer a source of enlightenment and security, but of confusion and mystery. In all three cases, however, the general climate, the predominant themes, their basic inspiration, derive from the latent inquietudes of the period in which the *genre* flourished.

The imaginative fantasy of the author presides over the plot and subject-matter of the stories, but not over the problems and the elements—heroes or accessories—that go to compose them. It is as if the author was forced each time to draw on the same series of character types, place them in the same situation, provide them with identical virtues or weapons of defence, and expose them to the same trials. Perhaps I went too far in asserting that it was possible to classify these themes, which none the less are very largely dependent on a given situation. I shall continue all the same to consider them as subject to enumeration and deduction, so that in the last resort those missing from the series could be conjectured, as the periodic table of elements of Mendeleyev makes it possible to calculate the atomic weight of elements which have not yet been discovered or are unknown to nature, but which in fact exist.

The fairy story, the tale of fantasy, and science fiction thus fulfil the self-same function in literature, which they seem to transmit to each other. They reveal the tension existing between what man can and what he would he could, according to the period—fly through the air, or reach the stars; between what he knows and what remains forbidden for him to know. On the one hand, they extend into an imaginary world the present state of power and knowledge of a being whose ambition is limitless. On the other, as this same being is needy and a prey to fatigue, they cradle him in the eternal mirage of the instantaneous, total efficacity of magic, which asks no more from him than to make the master-sign or speak the master-word. As he is a prescient and calculating creature, they hold in reserve for him

unavoidable predestination and inexorable doom; as he is inquisitive and ignorant—the menace of the mysterious and the temptation of omniscience; as he must grow old and die—the fountains of youth and elixirs of long life, along with spectres, mates and the Darkness of the Abyss; and finally, as he is the prisoner of distance, duration and determinism—the dream of finding himself suddenly emancipated from space, time and causality.

These fantasies, apparently unbridled, thus conceal under a variety of symbols the nostalgias and fears which continually recreate themselves throughout history and change with the changes man makes in his condition. For that part of it which remains unchangeable, these apprehensions and wishes remain fixed themselves. But for the rest, the visage changes—features and expression. As in filigree work the pattern is revealed through fiction and, though blurred and uncertain, is each time identifiable and revealing.

ERVIN PAMLÉNYI

VIENNA CONGRESS OF HISTORIANS

Although the 1815 Congress of Vienna, contrary to popular belief, did in fact work as well as dance, nevertheless its programme on the whole was probably not so packed as the agenda of the Twelfth International Congress of Historians, held in that city to commemorate the 150th anniversary of that famous event. The eight days of meetings proved rather a tax on the energy of the more conscientious participants. However, no one could have followed the entire proceedings of the Congress even if he had scrupulously sat through them every morning and afternoon in one old-fashioned uncomfortable auditorium or other of Vienna University, for even so he would have been able to attend no more than a fraction of the total of 36 meetings in all. Consequently, like any of the other 2,500 participants, I am not yet in a position to do more than give a brief sketch and record a few cursory impressions of the deliberations of the Congress as a whole. When, if ever, a balanced assessment of the work of the Congress is made, the effort will be considerably facilitated by a careful perusal of the four bulky volumes published for the International Committee for Historical Studies by the Austrian Federation of Historical Societies, organizers of the Congress, with the aid of UNESCO, a few weeks before the Congress met. These four volumes contain the papers which were discussed at the meetings, and a fifth volume will contain abridged versions of all lectures actually delivered. Only when the fifth volume has been published will a complete picture of the work of the Congress emerge.

Naturally the printed page only conveys a partial reflection of the atmosphere of the Congress. Yet, given the conditions of the contemporary world, that atmosphere—if we except the actual achievements of scholarship—constitutes the greatest success of the Vienna Congress. Credit for the good atmosphere, attested unanimously by all the participants, is largely due to the understanding and tactful, unobtrusive work done by the Austrian hosts, who took great pains to create an atmosphere—in harmony with the international status of Vienna—that was conducive to a rewarding dialogue, such as has been going on in other spheres of activity, between historians of the socialist and of the capitalist countries.

The subjects discussed by the Congress represented a great advance over previous meetings, and undoubtedly greatly contributed to the success of this dialogue. In the first place the historians were enabled to debate problems which perhaps most interest them. At first hearing, this may sound odd; but the packed rows of benches whenever topics of contemporary history were discussed were clear evidence that the centre of interest has shifted. In earlier years, the International Committee for Historical Studies, which laid down the main lines of the discussions, adopted an attitude of reserve towards questions of contemporary history. Yet over the past ten years the resistance to such subjects of discussion has weakened, and the most important of these topics were put on the Congress agenda this year; what is more, the Committee showed a keen acumen in their choice, from international historical literature published since the preceding congress, of problems that needed discussion, and much sensitivity in putting their finger on the central points of interest. By putting this type of topic on the agenda they succeeded in attracting more than 2,500 historians to the 1965 Congress in Vienna. It would almost seem that this illustrious body of historians had sensed the crisis of contemporary scholarship in the divorce of academic learning from life throughout the world, and had designed this Congress to demonstrate the enormous ener-

gies to be released, even in this sphere of learning and research, once a sound link is re-established between the problems of contemporary life and research into the past.

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Some latter-day Rip van Winkle, awakening from no more than a fifteen year sleep, would have rubbed his eyes incredulously when, leafing through the agenda of the Congress, he came across the following titles of lectures: "Economic and social problems of World War I"; "Political problems of World War I"; "The impact of the German military on the political and social life of Germany during World War II"; "Decolonization"; "Social and literary patterns in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries"—to say nothing of the special colloquium on "History of the Resistance in Europe" held in the great lecture-hall. Nor was the Congress programme restricted to such specific chapters in contemporary history: it included a good number of wider issues, in which answers were sought to the most urgent theoretical questions contemporary historical studies have to face. One of these was the problem of nationalism and internationalism—the discussion which perhaps aroused most interest at the Congress; other lectures connected with it were on such themes as "Typology and forms of national states of Europe" or "Socialism and the national question at the end of the nineteenth century." Another aspect of this field of research was discussed in a lecture on "Federalism and federal states in history." It was in fact a further welcome change that a number of subjects—mostly dealing with social history—were included in the agenda which extended down to our times as, for example, "The ruling classes from antiquity to modern times," "Peasant movements in Central and South-Eastern Europe from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries." Finally a number of papers on the theory of history and the problems of historiography, "The development of historical thought in the middle of the twentieth century," "Evolution and revolution over the centuries," "Projects and concepts of world history in the twentieth century" might well be included here.

The fifteen subjects listed here accounted for well over one-third, indeed nearly half, of the lectures on the programme. This means that contemporary history has been given a place in universal historical studies commensurate with its importance. Another encouraging change, less spectacular, perhaps, but far-reaching in its implications, has also been taking place: the earlier, Europe-centred attitude to history is slowly giving way to a fresh approach taking in the history of other continents as well; and while the attendance of historians from Africa and Asia at the Congress was rather small, a whole lecture series was specifically devoted to the history of non-European peoples of other continents. Problems thus debated ranged from Far Eastern history to the ancient civilizations of Central America, from the sources of African history to medieval religious links between Asia and Africa on the one hand and Europe on the other.

In so far as what are generally regarded as the conventional fields of historical study, subjects of this class on the agenda were such as were either closely related to contemporary controversies (e.g., "The emergence of peoples and states in Central Europe in medieval times" or "The efforts of the Balkan peoples to achieve political and economic independence, 1875–1914") or such as touch upon such controversial arguments as the lecture on "The economic and social foundations of absolutism."

In contrast to earlier years, when the International Committee for Historical Studies was afraid, not without reason, that debates on questions of contemporary history might well turn into an acrimonious exchange between East and West, the recent Vienna Congress has demonstrated that under present conditions efforts to exchange the conclusions

of research, put forward different approaches, and define existing differences in assessment, were not only possible but necessary. Many believe that the encouraging atmosphere of these discussions may have opened the door to open and fortright discussions in the future on even the most controversial issues.

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In order to give an impression of the atmosphere in which the dialogue was conducted, we might consider a few lectures that were of particular interest. H. Kohn's extremely scholarly lecture on "Nationalism and internationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" came in for practically unanimous praise. Nearly all the thirty-two speakers who took the floor in the ensuing debate commended it for its exhaustive documentation, its rigid attempts at impartiality, and the profusion of fresh ideas it had raised. A number of speakers nonetheless had some criticism to proffer; some of them deplored what they called a failure on the part of the author to stress the distinctions between internationalism and cosmopolitanism and between patriotism and nationalism, and to appraise the historical importance of Marxian philosophy at its just value. A number of speakers went further than comment; they attempted to delve more deeply into the issues that had been raised. Professor F. Zwitter of Yugoslavia, for instance, attempted to trace the divergences in East European and West European nationalism back to dissimilarities in the development of the two areas. The contribution made by Professor J. Kowalski of Poland was also enlightening. Professor Kowalski criticized Kohn's idealist views and took issue with him about manifestations of nationalism under socialism. He did not deny that owing to certain historical causes nationalistic aspirations may assert themselves under socialism. These, however, he declared were merely passing phenomena; the whole trend of socialist development indicated the growing ascendancy and ultimate dominance of internationalism. Professor Kohn did not accept the criticism in his rejoinder; but, of course, congresses like this do not as a rule bring forth spectacular victories. Indeed, as the chairman of the Congress, Professor Engel-Jánosi, somewhat dryly pointed out, the most anyone can hope to achieve is being congratulated by his colleagues. The points that are raised in the course of such debates —whether or not Professor Kohn accepted the criticism of his views—nonetheless stimulate the mind of every participant or reader. The real success, therefore, is the culmination of a slow process, and its fruits may take years to ripen.

The fiftieth anniversary of World War I, which was commemorated in 1964, and the papers that were published on that occasion, helped to enliven the discussions on its history. These questions came up for debate on two occasions during the Congress. One occasion was provided by the aged conservative West German historian, Gerhard Ritter, whose paper on "Bethmann-Hollweg's political activity in World War I" was in point of fact a polemical argument against the well-known book of Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht*. In his paper Ritter—who was absent—attempted to minimize German aspirations to world hegemony by stressing the personality of Bethmann-Hollweg and his moderate policy, emphasizing the peaceful and moderate nature of those policies as well as the great pressure brought to bear on him from many quarters, which prevented his original defensive position from being consistently carried through. He described Germany's war aims—this was the essence of his argument—as an extended form of defence *(eine erweiterte Form der Defensive)*.

The controversy which followed was waged in the main among the German historians, and it revealed a wide range of attitudes and schools of thought. It was remarkable that Ritter's case received no support from any of the participants. Some of the West German historians, while not supporting

Ritter, disagreed with Fischer on Germany's pre-war plans for conquest and world hegemony and on her war aims. They insisted that Germany had not wanted World War I; that she had only gambled on the risk in July 1914 to strengthen her deteriorating position as a great power. Yet even this "qualified form of defence" could not be maintained in the face of the counter-argument at the meeting brought by Fritz Fischer himself, seconded by a number of other German and Austrian historians. Perhaps the most effective arguments were advanced by Academician Khvostov: he admitted that Bethmann-Hollweg had not been the most extremist exponent of imperialism and that German war aims had frequently fluctuated between moderation and excess; but, he argued, neither the actual appraisal of Bethmann-Hollweg's policies nor any modification of Germany's war aims could alter the character of German imperialism or abate the fact that Germany's war aims were the embodiment of expansionist aspirations.

Unfortunately, however, the "German Question" is the crucial problem of the Second as well as the First World War. It was the subject of a paper presented by Professor Gordon A. Craig of Stanford University. Professor Craig's paper was more profound, more thought-provoking and more subtly motivated than Professor Ritter's, even though, as its final note indicated, it was designed to lessen the responsibility of the Wehrmacht. Professor Craig certainly pointed out a number of remarkable differences in the scope of the authority and power enjoyed by the Wehrmacht in the First and Second World Wars, respectively. Equally interesting was his suggestion that it was high time to make a thorough investigation of the influence and function of the armed forces in the modern State. Yet his argument that the Wehrmacht had been relegated to the background by the Nazi party could be countered by the question of whether there was not a basic coincidence of objectives between the National Socialist Party and the army leadership; whether the entire political and economic life of Nazi Germany was not geared to war as the principal objective.

If the debate on the German problem—a highly sensitive issue—was conducted with cool heads and with scholarly thoroughness, the warm and friendly atmosphere in which the all-day deliberations of the Committee for the History of the Resistance in Europe proceeded was more than encouraging. The right tone was set by Professor Henri Michel, secretary of the Committee, who in his lecture carefully reported the results of research, mapped out future lines of investigation, and tried to answer some of the theoretical implications of the resistance movement. His points, of course, did not fail to lay bare differences of opinion; for Professor Michel stressed the anti-German and nationalist character of the resistance movement, minimizing the trends in it for the transformation of society. The critical remarks that followed, legitimate though they were, had the weakness that they represented a tendency to overemphasize the social and class-war factor, ignoring specific conditions in countries like Holland, Belgium or Norway. This part of the debate—and it displayed, perhaps better than anything else, the positive achievements of the Vienna Congress—drew attention to the need for a more searching analysis than has been made hitherto into the nature, relative proportions and interconnections of nationalism and the class war in the history of the resistance movement. Such an analysis would make it easier to produce accurate definitions of the political shade and peculiarities of each resistance movement.

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Although no one disputed the success of the Congress, there was some criticism of the proceedings. A number of speakers deplored the working methods which had been adopted. This problem has undoubtedly given headaches not only to historians, but

to scholars and scientists in other branches of learning who periodically hold international conferences. How can you make the most of the very limited time at your disposal? How is it possible to achieve scholarly results at such large congresses? All that had been learned from previous experience was put into effect in Vienna. Printed copies of the lectures had been distributed prior to the Congress, which meant they did not have to be delivered; speakers in the debates were allowed a maximum of ten minutes. Even so there were certain drawbacks. In the first place a fair number of speakers failed to engage in a *debate* or offer observations on the main theme, but confined themselves to the provision of additional data, mostly from the national history of their respective countries or from their respective fields of research, without, in many cases, explaining what light they cast on the historical picture or what peculiarities they reflected within the general context. Contributions of this kind transformed the debates into a series of almost disconnected lectures. Other speakers quite legitimately deplored the packed programme which led to the discussion on several important items being cut short.

In view of these difficulties, the Hungarian historians, like many of their colleagues, put forward suggestions for reforms in the proceedings of future congresses. Such reforms are needed mainly in view of the general desire to achieve a higher standard of scholarship. A proposal put forward by Professor László Zsigmond of Budapest University seems particularly worth considering. He proposed that the only topics to be put on the agenda of international congresses of historians in future should be those which needed an international gathering for their discussion. These themes, the number of which would be considerably smaller compared with the present agenda, would be prepared by working parties, with the collaboration of historians from various countries, between the present and the next congress, and the international congress would be chiefly responsible for providing a wider forum for discussion and debate on the activities of the working parties and for deciding on future subjects for discussion. This conception, in whatever form it may eventually be realized, if at all, undoubtedly embodies a sound disposition to encourage cooperation based on a collective effort among specialists. A number of special committees have already been set up under the International Committee for Historical Studies, and these—for the first time—met in the course of the Congress. Further steps along the same lines will be taken by these committees.

These difficulties in organizing the proceedings of congresses cannot, of course, obscure the fact that a result of the Vienna Congress has been to strengthen the spirit of academic cooperation in no uncertain manner. Not that there was a lack of speeches made by emigrés on this occasion—it is by now an almost standard feature but increasingly ignored—or of some violent, politically motivated, attacks coming from the West German side—equally disregarded on the whole. The view that prevailed with most of the historians, both Marxists and bourgeois, was that the exchange of views and the results of research were of great value and should be developed further.

For participants of the Congress had at last been given the opportunity of familiarizing themselves with each other's point of view on various historical issues, and this familiarity led to a further extension of the dialogue between them, when it was found that for all the great divergences in their respective positions, there were many points of agreement. There was the common realization, for instance, that all participants could benefit from the high-precision methods of investigation used by French economic and social historians, or from the lucid, positivist exposition of problems by the British historians, nor did the high-level theoretical approach of the Soviet historians fail to impress their colleagues of other nationalities.

It was remarkable how the need for international collaboration on many subjects was increasingly brought home. And not on the conventional historical subjects alone but—and, in point of fact, very logically—also on sensitive issues in which the gap between the opposing positions is still wide. Tentative moves for further *rapprochement* were made on all sides.

The spirit of cooperation was evident not only during the debates but at the general meetings of the International Committee for Historical Studies held before and after the Congress. The Committee of Cuban Historians and the South European Scientific Society were admitted to membership by unanimous vote. Professor Deistor of Poland and Professor Tadić of Yugoslavia were elected members of the Bureau directing the work of the International Committee (the Deputy Chairman is Academician A. A. Gubert of the USSR). The Bureau's decision to hold the next Congress —in 1970—in Moscow has been very well received. It was a special point of pleasure for the Hungarian participants that the Bureau, accepting an invitation from the National Committee of Hungarian Historians, decided to hold its next meeting in Budapest in September 1966.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ANNA FÖLDES

OF GENERATIONS, OLD AND NEW

IMRE KESZI: Flóra at Lágymányos *(Flóra Lágymányoson)*, Szépirodalmi, 1965.

EMIL KOLOZSVÁRI GRANDPIERRE: The Caul *(A burok)*, Kozmosz Könyvek, 1965.

IVÁN MÁNDY: The Devil's Kitchen *(Az ördög konyhája)*, Magvető, 1965.

KÁROLY SZAKONYI: Men *(Férfiak)*, Szépirodalmi, 1965.

OTTÓ HÁMORI: The Second Morning *(A második reggel)*, Szépirodalmi, 1965.

ANDRÁS TABÁK: The Sargasso Sea *(Sargasso tenger)*, Magvető, 1965.

The six works of fiction here reviewed are greatly divergent—not only as to their authors' age (ranging from Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre, now in his late fifties, to András Tabák, in his early thirties), but also as to their genre, value and craftsmanship. They do, however, have a striking feature in common: they all deal with the conflict between the generations. As a sub-title to each of the six, one might use Turgenyev's *"Fathers and Sons."* The conflict has two aspects; on the one hand the nostalgic envy of the fathers for the ardour and passion of youth knocking at the door of the adult world, and on the other the accusing impatience of the young with their elders for the imperfect world they have left them.

Flora Reincarnate

In Mr. Keszi's new book, "Flora at Lágymányos," the novelist does not belie the aesthete of yesterday, as is to be seen from the avowedly literary inspiration of the novel. For Flora is not Mr. Keszi's brainchild; she was born into Hungarian literature as the heroine of "The Teacher," an early 20th century play by Sándor Bródy, forerunner of Hungarian naturalism, and has since become a classic literary figure in her native country. In the first decade of this century, Flóra Tóth was a revered paragon, as attractive in character as her fate was disconcerting. What sort of life could a young and pretty teacher, ambitious and strong-willed, expect in the Hungarian village of the time, oppressed by poverty, caught in the net of prejudices, and languishing in intellectual darkness? Countless strenuous workdays, interspersed with occasional holidays, foreign to her dreams and her nature; exposure to the obtrusive admiration of village notables, the greed and mutual hatred of men trying to take unfair advantage of their power. Flora, however, is no easy prey, and rather than be a plaything in the hands of the mighty who seek to exploit her love, she chooses to fight the surrounding world. Bródy's original work ends on a note of bitter hopelessness. Only his second version—revised to suit conditions in the contemporary theatre and to pander to the tastes

of his audience—ended with the teacher marrying the landowner István Nagy. In his novel, Mr. Keszi has reached back to this latter version, taking its happy ending, with its tragic implications, as point of departure. He traces the subsequent life of the one-time rebel—from an emotionally unfounded, ephemeral marriage, through an involuntary isolation (which later becomes an idyll), to a late love and a peaceful old age in which she finds fulfilment through her children.

At the outset such an undertaking is liable to arouse the mistrust that greets fictional treatments of derivative literary experiences. True, nowadays we are witnessing a veritable resurrection of classic literary heroes, yet Flóra reincarnate can scarcely be compared with the modern Electras and Antigones. The reason is that the original Flóra Tóth, though an attractive, well-conceived figure, could not grow into a myth that could serve as a subject of re-creation. She remained what she was: Bródy's creation, a character firmly set in the context of a given time, place and oeuvre. While the narrative of Flóra's life may be continued, it inevitably will transcend the original in all important aspects, whether historical, social or psychological. One might consider Mr. Keszi's venture justified, if he were to produce either an exciting new psychological novel based on the teacher's character, or a broad canvas spanning the period from the 1910s to this day. Either variant would be feasible. But in both cases one could ask why the author needed to turn to Sándor Bródy for inspiration.

If we ignore the starting-point of the novel and take the literary antecedents as given, we may read the book with much interest—and some dissatisfaction. Its canvas is extremely broad, comprising as it does the lives of the husband, who emigates to America, of the three children, whom Flóra brings up alone, and of the in-laws (daughters and sons) and suitors; moreover, it covers—with some gaps—more than fifty years of Hungarian history. This abundance of detail, on the one hand, lends variety to the description of the world around Flóra and, on the other, makes the treatment superficial. Throughout, the author's attention remains focussed on Flóra, who has retained the moral strength and serenity of her youth. Her solitude, the daily treadmill, her drab workaday life fail to make a martyr of her, for she has attempted to convert necessity into an idyll. Yet this idyll is not the acme of happiness, but a well motivated, consciously accepted compromise. From without—through her sons' eyes—the author defines the weaknesses of this idyll. It is narrow-minded and tedious—and could not be otherwise in a life where possibilities of happiness are limited by unpretentiousness and divorced from time.

What made Bródy's Flóra attractive early in this century was her modernity. Mr. Keszi's heroine seems to bury herself in her memories and in the 19th century. Even if we accept this, it still does not absolve the author from a more profound analysis, with the aid of modern psychological portrayal, of his heroine's mental image, her emotions, her love life, her wrestling with her solitude, and her acquiescence.

The at times over-symmetrical plot of the novel provides an appropriate background for Flóra's idyll. The more sharply drawn sketches of the second generation are an indication that in his portrayal of Flóra the author is paying his last respects to an outgoing generation. A few aptly written episodes within the main story authentically capture our time. They emerge from the novel in the manner of a series of remarkable portraits in an otherwise blurred fresco.

Inter-generation Marriage

The most striking feature of Mr. Grandpierre's short novel "The Caul" is its style. The author, known for years for his elegant prose of Gallic grace, surprised his readers some years ago with a picaresque story,

"Starry Eyes" *(A csillagszemű)*, written in an unaccustomed, poetical vein. In "The Caul" he once again resorts to a new literary idiom, a racy, delightfully sparkling—if somewhat stylized and, in places, overdone—variant of modern Budapest slang.

The author was driven into using this linguistic *tour de force* by his theme. The heroine of his story is Ildi, a thoroughly modern young girl whose dress and manner almost place her in the category of youngsters referred to by many of us—with or without reason—as rather cheap. Yet for all her slick exterior, Ildi works like a Trojan as an evening-course law student and uses a spicy bluntness of tongue to strike a blow for a freer, more humane morality. She starts a liaison with a chief engineer of fifty, marries him, but soon realizes that twenty-nine years is too great a disparity for lasting happiness.

This can hardly be called a brand-new story; it is, in fact, a modern version of Hauptmann's "Before Sunset"—translated by the author's modern rationalism from the plane of sentiment onto that of satire. The lesson to be drawn is that the attraction of an aging man to a mettlesome young girl, though supported by a car, a villa and other amenities of the "good life," may provide short-lived compensation, but no foundation for enduring marital happiness. Now, had the author reached the opposite conclusion, he might be blamed for violating the truth, but as it is, he discovers—a platitude. The thin plot, no matter how ingeniously Mr. Grandpierre weaves newer and newer fabrics—in themselves fascinating—out of the air, would run the length of a short story; as a result, the well-tailored garment of a novel hangs loosely from the scrawny shoulders of a short story. In nine cases out of ten, such a glaring absence of literary economy would be irksome. With Mr. Grandpierre, even this becomes a literary gourmet's delight: he thus finds the time and opportunity, whenever the engine of his plot is running in neutral, to captivate his readers through linguistic hat-tricks. In Chief Engineer Bartucz's and Ildi's spirited, glib dialogues, one is attracted by the bravura of alternating idioms. Mr. Grandpierre brilliantly wields the instrument of language for suggesting the age, educational background and moral outlook of his hero and heroine; he also uses this means for passing sentence: the influx into Hungarian teenagers' slang of the political terminology of the fifties throws light on a curious linguistic inflation, a devaluation of slogans. On the other hand, the ironical overtone one is aware of behind Ildi's clichés is entirely her own; it conveys the superiority, the sound thinking and more critical approach of a young generation uncontaminated by dogmatism.

As a popular humorist put it some time ago, the trouble with youth is that you aren't part of it. Mr. Grandpierre shares this view and openly, wholeheartedly envies young people—not only for their taut muscles and for the love of "democratic panthers" like Ildi, but also for their sharp vision and the frankness with which they express their opinions. He has a deep regard for a generation that laughs at diehards and bureaucrats and that rejects pomposity and self-importance. The chief engineer's friend, himself well past the prime of life, sees Ildi not as a "glamour girl" whose views start and end with her sex, but as a "human being... at least, I believe she is human. Not as human, perhaps, as we are, but still, human." The author defends his heroine against those who would draw moral conclusions from the sight of a pair of bright-red slacks and would not understand that fashion no less than the girl herself is—to use her own ironic words—"a historical category."

Waiting for the A-Bomb

A middle-aged writer, steeped in the Gallic spirit and tending to withdraw to the wings of the literary stage, Mr. Mándy—author of "The Devil's Kitchen"—has often appeared to be something of a visitor, even

a foreigner, in his own country. The titles of some of his previous works may, I think, help to introduce him, since they are characteristic of his world: Guests in the Bottle, Strange Rooms, On the Edge of the Play, Deep Water. For years, the strong dose of pessimism, the existentialist influence evident in his work seemed to enclose him in a sort of magic circle. Since 1948, when he was awarded the then important Baumgarten Prize, Mr. Mándy's name seldom figures on the standard lists of the literary approved, yet the more exclusive, but never-meeting jury of literary insiders has always given his writings a high rating. In recent years, however, critics have begun to rediscover Mr. Mándy's talent.

The heroine of the opening cycle, "Borika's Guests" *(Borika vendégei)*, is an attractive girl, who tends the coffee-machine in an espresso bar. Borika differs conspicuously from her colleagues, and her bosses accuse her of "attracting like a magnet the queerest fish that ever disgraced a fish-market." Well, Mr. Mándy is something of a kindred spirit. The world of his short stories is peopled with social outcasts and trouble-makers, misfits and eccentrics. It is not only material want, as a rule, that plagues the lives of these down-and-outs; one of them broods over unrealized dreams, another laments the passage of youth. The scenes too are off-beat. "The Hucksters' Market" is at once a real junk-market and a symbolical market; on an empty lot or in a gateway, a film-making staff is at work shooting pictures; and the swing on the playground seems to lift one out of the real world into a world of dreams. Sometimes what appears to be romantic serves only to deceive the reader: the realist message is, in fact, an acknowledgement of and acquiescence in the ruthlessnes and dreariness of existence. One of his bitterest stories is "The Rank-and-File Member" *(Egyszerű tag)*, depicting the systematic cruelties perpetrated by a man in the prime of life upon an old woman living in the same flat—an anatomy of murder and defencelessness. In this timeless, yet present-day story of a struggle that acquires symbolic meaning, only the title and a half sentence hint at the actual background—the killer's past association, as a "rank-and-file member," with the former Arrow Cross (Hungarian fascist) Party.

In some of the stories, the borderland between dream and reality becomes blurred. In Mr. Mándy's sad tales for adults, not only do the human participants lack a well-defined character or will of their own, the objects have no well-defined shape either. As against the irreality of themes and events, what counts is the reality of atmosphere and nostalgic mood. Whether we are listening to the conversation of old, discarded school-desks or of patients in a chronic ward, what we are fascinated by is the authenticity, not so much of the situation or of the dialogue, as of the awareness of life. The cinema is a recurrent motif in Mándy's short stories. He is equally intrigued by the technique of film-making, the strange world of the extras, and the magnetic attraction of the motion picture. The influence of the cinema is easy to detect in his construction technique, in the sparkling dialogue, in the parallel lines of action and in the rapid succession of interrelated scenes. A brilliant example is "The Girl from the Swimming-Pool" *(Lány az uszodából)*.

Reading the last cycle of stories in the volume is like leafing through a film script. Although the "Devil's Kitchen" as a whole is devoted to the theme of generations, Mr. Mándy, like Mr. Grandpierre, turns his searchlight not on his own but on the succeeding generation—the youngsters of today. But unlike the author of "The Caul," he both envies and pities those teenagers who are growing up without dreams to inspire them, often in a tormenting emotional void; who are cleverer and more courageous than their parents—and for that very reason all the more lonely. Their moments of happiness are more acrid, their revolts more faltering. Their ruthless confidence is easily vulnerable.

Teenager girls, with their grown-up curves and their patchwork experience of life, fidget uneasily in their real—and in their intellectual—school uniforms. At the same time, when confronted with the problems of the adult world, they reveal themselves as the defenceless children they are; at such decisive moments in their personal lives as choice of attitude and behaviour in matters of sex, there looms before them the question formulated by Vera, the student heroine, in these words: "Wait? What for? The Big Bang of the A-bomb?" In many respects Mr. Mándy's symbolical stories thus become the assessment of a whole generation.

As regards level of craftsmanship, the stories collected in this volume are widely divergent. Some of them are haunted by mannerisms that weaken the message, while in others a lack of thematic consistency tends to weaken the narrative fabric. Nevertheless, the reader cannot fail to fall under the spell of Mr. Mándy's talent.

Disenchantment under the Big Top

When Károly Szakonyi first attracted attention some years ago, he gave rise to the hope of even greater things to come. As yet he has failed to live up to the promise held out in those early writings.

Between the covers of his latest volume, "Men," the publishers have brought together his output of short stories for the past year, plus a play entitled "Zsóka, My Life" *(Életem, Zsóka)* that had a run in one of the Budapest theatres. Most of the stories were first printed in various periodicals. What is new in the collection now published is the commentary introducing each story. Though written in an attractively poetic style, they do not open the door to the author's world, but rather tend to close, indeed almost lock it for good.

The dominant theme of the volume under review is the disillusionment of today's generation of thirty-year-olds. Mr. Szakonyi shows a versatile imagination in the variations he presents of this basic theme. A child imagines what would happen if, as a grown-up, it were compelled to match its dreams with the realities of life. A party functionary, by contrast, lives to see the ideals he once wholeheartedly embraced become tarnished and his own value as a man diminished. A writer comes to realize that not even abroad can one escape one's care-worn, doubt-tormented self. In the single play of the collection, the author formulates and condemns the ideology of disillusionment, the intellectual's haunting compromise. Here, Mr. Szakonyi—and the novelist in his play—honestly grapples with the curse of moral compromise, but in this struggle he treats disillusionment as a purely moral problem and fails to get to its roots.

This collection of Mr. Szakonyi's writings would scarcely have been found worthy of being reviewed here, did it not include one short story which ranks among the best of recent Hungarian works in this genre. "The Circus" *(A cirkusz)*, a magnetic story about acrobats, succeeds at one and the same time in conveying the magic of the ring and in deeply probing into the great issues of our time. A change of chiefs forms the nucleus of the plot. The younger Rudolf brings prosperity to the old, rundown establishment he has inherited from his father in such a way as to provide real pleasure to both audiences and acrobats under the Big Top. One day, however, the new owner, this man of dreams, betrays his own reforms. The members of the troupe feel as if their former master, the rigorous, dour opponent of genuine art, had staged a come-back. But the reality is even more dismal than the imagined miracle, "for the dead do not rise again; it's only that the living sometimes resemble the dead. For a while, everyone does his best..." and then routine work is resumed in the circus, and things go on, cheerlessly, drably. The symbolical compromise of the symbolical story strangles every burgeoning happiness.

The Wide-awake Generation

Thirty year old himself, Mr. Hámori is one of those writers who try to give an assessment of their generation. In doing so, he engages in polemics of a kind rarely encountered on Hungary's literary stage. Avowedly taking issue with the tendency to look upon the thirty-year-olds as a generation of disenchanted prophets, he regards them as belonging to the "generation that has seen the light." He holds that yesterday's youth—tried by the test of history in its search for a fuller life—has stood the test of time. The members of his generation, he claims, "are capable of considering even the age of the Thinking Machine an essentially human age. Or of making it so." The pugnacious optimism of Mr. Hámori's novel is rooted in this confidence. "The Second Morning"—in which one of the main characters is also the narrator—is a story within a story. The outer frame is laid in a court of justice. The defendant is an old man—father of the narrator's friend—who is brought to trial on a murder charge. The victim is his own younger son of thirty, a good-for-nothing weakling, who, after sponging for years on his parents, ended by attacking his own mother with an axe. The family tragedy, whose airing in court leads to an acquittal, brings to the surface two seemingly contradictory conclusions. The first, relatively conventional one is that the victim is not always in the right. The second, more complex and of more universal validity, is "the inadmissibility—even with the best intentions—of encouraging the belief that one may achieve happiness by receiving everything without ever having to give in return. It is amoral, whether practised by a single father or by generations of fathers." As the trial proceeds, the story of the friendship of three young men—a chemical engineer, a philologist and a lawyer—and of its tragic end passes before our eyes and with it, as if in a series of cinematic flash backs, the history of the past ten years. The author never gets lost in this abundance of teeming memories. Unerringly he knows when to pause and to probe the deeper recesses of memory, or where to let the reader himself supply some missing link. Occasionally he abandons the narrative form in favour of essay-like presentation. Here, however, he moves less steadily. Original observations at times mingle with commonplaces; and, to take an example, the principal hero's South American travel experiences, published in letter-form, are too loosely connected with the main ideas of the work and consequently remain, for the most part, at the level of illustration.

Economy and disciplined construction are virtues rarely met with in young writers. Mr. Hámori, most of the time, excels in both. Through the expedient of recalling 17-year-old Jancsi Bartha's solitary experience with POWs, for instance, he reveals in what way the war lives on in the nerves of this young generation; in the failure of Jancsi's love affair with Kornélia, he suggests the survival of family feuds in the laws governing the class struggle, and in the parting of the lovers he hints at the effect upon young people of the benumbing, soul-killing discipline characteristic of the personality cult. Open to criticism is the—at times rather artificial—structural symmetry. The character and fate of the scholar, treated in a slipshod manner, are unconvincing. Occasionally some important detail gets lost among irrelevant ones. All these shortcomings, arising from the literary craftsman's inexperience, are dwarfed by the novel's essential qualities. Its candid description of the "generation that saw the light" is bound to advance the debate on generations and the debate on literature alike.

The Freedom Within

The youthful András Tabák's new novel, "The Sargasso Sea," has surprised even those well-acquainted with recent Hungarian fic-

tion. This surprise is due not so much to the high quality of his prose, of which he has given proof on earlier occasions, as to the nature of his literary undertaking and the success of its execution.

In some aspects, this novel is based on personal experience, although the author emphasizes that it should not be considered an autobiography. His hero is a little boy of five called Gabi, who in 1943–44 lives through the collapse of his childhood bliss, the reassessment of all human values, the disappointment, fear and horror that his adult contemporaries experience—the cataclysm of war. For all that, "The Sargasso Sea" is not just a war novel. It pivots round a very specific—in a sense, peripheral—social problem. Prior to the events of the story, the little boy was unaware of his being the offspring of a Christian mother and Jewish father. Suddenly he learns that his father is not the dashing soldier of his imagination, but a forced labourer. He comes to understand that truth is on the side of the persecuted, not the persecutors; and, in the passageway of the tenement house and in the day nursery for army officers' children, he realizes with dismay that he himself is beyond the pale of society. During the war, particularly in 1943, Gabi Novák as yet suffers no physical hardships. It is his confrontation with the truth that shakes him to the foundations of his being.

Mr. Tabák himself was five at that time, and the drama he unfolds is obviously infused with personal memories. Yet these memories could not in themselves have endowed the novel with the authenticity of narrative that so completely grips and convinces the reader. The most exciting incidents are, perhaps, Gabi's confrontation with abstract ideas and the concurrent representation of the sharp logic and charming naiveté of a child, quite incomprehensible for an adult mind. An example of this is Gabi's question: "Is Jewishness contagious?" Or this: for a slice of bacon and two cans of food, Gabi gets an older kid to take back the news that Jews are being machine-gunned into the Danube. For a child, a word retracted makes an event unreal, turns truth into lie.

Beside the excellent description of the child's mind, the other characters become sheer extras. The father embodies lost serenity, lost sense of security; the mother reflects the disharmony of an unhappy childhood, rebellion and restlessness. In general, the voluntary, experimental narrowing of the author's perspective almost never conflicts with the requirement of period portrayal. Neither in the atmosphere of the tenement house or day nursery, nor in that of the air-raid shelter is one aware of any forced over-simplification or dissonance. The fact that the author has entrusted the thread of the story to the hands of a child hero has certain —sometimes questionable—repercussions on the character of this hero, as is apparent especially in the enterior monologues that indicate an implausible precocity.

The story progresses in a steady crescendo towards the final climax, when Gabi, at his mother's orders, casts off his name and disowns his father. From this point on, the succession of events is unduly slowed down. Redundancy, which marks the novel as a whole, here becomes an obvious barrier to effect. The boy's clashes with his mother are repeated ad nauseam, and one could have done without the description of his recurring nervous outbursts. Fortunately, in the final scene of the novel, the author recovers the lost crescendo and, at the dramatic moment of liberation from the Nazis, steers clear of the pitfall of a stereotyped ending. It is here that he hands us the key to his story. The little boy, betraying his dreams, dares not tell his real name to the first Russian soldier he meets, but continues to lie as he has been taught to. This softly breathed lie is a concluding exclamation mark, warning us that liberation will change from opportunity to reality only when supported by the subjective factor of freedom within the mind.

This has a deep appeal as a human and literary programme, and as a national creed.

THEATRE AND FILM

IVÁN SÁNDOR:

SHAKESPEARE, DÜRRENMATT, BECKETT AND HAVEL

Unless the theatre makes a determined intellectual effort, it does not look as if a very bright future awaits theatrical art in Hungary.

The latest Budapest Shakespeare performances seem to have been inspired by a belief in Shakespeare's genius as an inexhaustible source for the rebirth of the theatre, in the search for a new style expressing the spirit of the age.

The two plays, *Coriolanus* and *The Winter's Tale,* lately put on by two of our biggest theatres—the National Theatre and the Madách Theatre—are associated with the last—and most discussed—period of Shakespeare's work. We feel that many of the points in these productions may add something to the interpretation of Shakespeare on the European stage.

Both *Coriolanus* and *The Winter's Tale* are not often approached in the context of Shakespeare's work as a whole. Yet it is impossible to produce any of the plays written after *Antony and Cleopatra* without considering their antecedents and studying the earlier plays.

The point of departure in any production of these two plays must be the basic atmosphere of the four great tragedies. The director must also be aware—and make the audience aware—of the fact that *Antony and Cleopatra,* the tragedy immediately preceding *Coriolanus,* marks the beginning of a new phase, an inexorable one; after all, the essence of the victorious Octavius's funeral oration on Antony is that history may produce remarkable men, great and outstanding persons may rise—yet the cool and level-headed Octaviuses of the world will meet and match them.

With *Coriolanus,* therefore, begins the Shakespearean hero's escape from a world which has no place for him. *Timon of Athens* must be approached from the same angle. The victories and defeats of Coriolanus are still interwoven with the ties which bind him to the world, which Shakespeare sees increasingly as a wilderness; Timon, on the other hand, is no longer bound by any ties; the wilderness itself is his home. Their tragedy is that of the "displaced persons," who have lost their anchorage in the world of human beings.

The sequence of defeat, flight, ostracism, and, finally, the conquest of the tragedies of life—is the underlying pattern of the last plays, and the connecting link is *The Winter's Tale.* Here, the actual world, where everything of value perishes, is intertwined with the Shakespearean vision of life, finally to be fully expressed by Prospero.

László Vámos who, with his usual skill, directed *The Winter's Tale* at the Madách Theatre, set himself the task to weld all that at first sight seems illogical and unorganized in the play into a rounded and composed whole.

Vámos, who was responsible for a memorable *Hamlet* two years ago, is a director with a keenly developed sense of theatre, and one greatly concerned with visual effects. The play as a visual spectacle is admirably composed; yet the quick pace of the performance, the simple but delightful sets and dresses, were not enough to convey the undercurrents, the subtle meanings so often underlying the words themselves.

Vámos's production, with all its merits and shortcomings, indicates how *The Winter's Tale* should be played. The first three acts, with their grim overtones form a unit, embracing all the motives of the Shakespearean tragedies, combined with the wisdom which comes from resignation. The fourth and fifth acts, on the other hand, amount to more than a fanciful tale: this is the escape into lightness and gaiety, from sorrow to joy.

Bertolt Brecht's version of *Coriolanus* written in the last years of his life, which was produced by the National Theatre, also produced stimulating speculations.

As Brecht saw it, the tragedy of Coriolanus, the fall of a great man, is due to his alienation from the people. At a time when the distortions of socialism in the period of Stalinism are undergoing analysis, the attitude expressed by Brecht is of great importance. The spectator is once more fascinated by what Brecht has to say, by the inimitable characteristics of Brecht and his particular style—yet the whole seems to lack the effective unity Brecht generally imposed on his material.

Apparently not even Brecht has been able to avoid the misunderstandings of most great Shakespearean scholars over *Coriolanus.* His new concept seems to be based on a rather old, widely adopted interpretation. Brecht's attitude, Brecht's approach, in so far as it is opposed to the original work, could only be accepted as congruous with it, if the play is to be considered as the tragedy of a great man in opposition to his people and his country—in other words, as Shakespeare's criticism of a reactionary attitude.

Brecht's attitude would only be justified if Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* had really been a tragedy springing from an oppressive ambition for power. But *Coriolanus* is about something different. It is about what happens even to great men when faced with injustice and ingratitude, an age which cannot suffer greatness in men, fails to destroy them, but corrupts them.

This is where *Coriolanus* takes its place in the pattern. It is one of the major stations of the phase in Shakespeare's works marked by the hero's attempt to withdraw from the world. A distinguished Hungarian Shakespeare scholar, Bernát Alexander, claims that the character of Coriolanus is far inferior to the general run of Shakespeare heroes: his failings and imperfections, his pride, his rough behaviour, his contempt for the people are more than what is permissible to the hero. The reason for referring to Mr Alexander is that he voices a generally accepted idea about *Coriolanus.* Yet the whole play and its relation to Shakespeare's oeuvre ought, we feel, to be approached from a different aspect, and would then lead to different conclusions.

It is, therefore, understandable that the general effect of the performance is somewhat ambiguous. Brecht's conclusions are not naturally integrated with the essence of the play, and therefore tend to be presented rather in the form of statements than in terms of a natural growth. I am not questioning the general right to adapt Shakespeare—but the nature of the adaptation. I do not consider adaptation sacrilege. As Brecht said: "It is this kind of sacrilege which makes theatre what it is." In the present case, however, the success of the adaptation is doubtful. For Brecht, to get his idea successfully across, remained considerably less faithful to the original drama. As it is, characters, plots and conclusions are all in conflict.

The performance, too, is affected by this duality. Tamás Major followed Brecht's principles in his production. The perform-

ance is boldly simplified and pared down to the essence. The style of the play is to bring the intellectual impact uppermost—that is how Brecht has to be played. Nevertheless, we missed a certain intensity of mental struggle in the characters and in the dramatic plot. The performance as a whole gave great pleasure partly due to its utter commitment, its originality and quick response to the new. The sets were good. Ferenc Kállai gave a good performance as Coriolanus. He made clear the contradictions of a great man's character: impulse giving way to rigid control, the fierce resentment of the meekness he forces himself to adopt to pander to customs and beliefs he ends by rejecting.

Among other plays of minor importance and interest produced this year there are Neil Simon's *Barefoot in the Park* at the Madách Chamber Theatre, and two of the latest Hungarian plays: *The Twenty-Year-Olds* by András Berkesi at the József Attila Theatre, and *The King of Life* by László Tabi, again at the Madách Chamber Theatre. Neither of them aroused much discussion or particular interest. Berkesi's three acts merely touched the surface of the moral and social problems confronting his youthful characters. Tabi, who is a brilliant humorist, knows the mind of the average Budapest audience like the back of his hand, and is always good for two hours' pleasant entertainment.

I don't think the production of the three performances I now want to discuss were consciously designed to expose facets of the same concept—produced as they were in three quite unconnected theatres—*Garden Fête* in the Katona József Theatre, *Waiting for Godot* in the Studio of the Thália Theatre, and *The Physicists* in the Vígszínház; nonetheless they all deal with the same problem.

All three could be described as studies of man searching for his own identity among the stresses of the intellectual complexities of the age. Facing his own solitude, or trying to face reality in solitude—the heroes of these plays are tragic in their struggle.

It is by mere chance that the Czech author, Vaclav Havel, has become associated with his world-famous colleagues, Beckett and Dürrenmatt. Yet the play that happened to be put on at the same time as the two great dramas is not unworthy of them.

Havel's *Garden Fête* is no conventional play. It requires an intellectual effort from the audience. In the brilliant production of István Egri, presented with humour and wit, the play tells the story of a perfectly average young man from a lower-middle-class home—with all the delights of a petty suburban existence—who rises from insignificance to the peaks of social success through his ability to imitate and identify himself with his new surroundings. With great virtuosity he acquires the art of deceiving and bullying his fellow-men. Havel's play is directed against cynical careerism, against bureaucratic red tape, against all the dehumanizing tendencies still to be found under socialism. Havel turns all the force of his satire on these chameleon men, ready and happy to turn and twist with every turn of the political line. György Kálmán, as one of the main characters, caricatures with exactitude the official whose every wink of the eye, hawk or hem implies matters of momentous consequence, whose loud self-assurance barely conceals his inner fears and weaknesses, and who compensates for his lack of confidence with arrogance and self-importance—a man familiar to all of us.

Garden Fête is the first play of this young Czech playwright's to be put on in Budapest. Similarly, *Waiting for Godot* is the first of Beckett's, and luckily, it is his best. The arguments which preceded its performance have neither ceased nor diminished; the discussions, the articles, the essays on *Godot* have only increased and by now would fill a modest library.

As produced by Károly Kazimir and Péter Léner, *Godot* is at once a farce acted by academicians on an academic rostrum and a philosophical treatise played by clowns in the circus ring. With a subtle but sharp

lancet the director has opened up the drama to expose its deepest undercurrents, and has not hesitated to face the fundamental question of the play: whether *Godot* is the story of man's frustration left to depend entirely on his own resources, the essential aimlessness of the pointless, unending waiting "for Godot" or, on the contrary, whether it suggests man's final and irreducible will to face life, to achieve some identity and a human existence.

In the Budapest performance, the latter interpretation seems to have gained the upper hand. Attila Nagy and Emil Keres, the two protagonists, make the audience aware of the desperate stalemate in the international situation in which *Waiting for Godot* came into being at the end of the forties, with the Second World War just over and the threat of Armageddon just ahead. As if nothing but two tragic masks had been left from what was once Vladimir and Estragon, after surviving centuries of the never-ending struggle of mankind. Their characters suggest that whatever may have happened to them, whatever new disappointments there may be in store for them, they will go on waiting. Attila Nagy's brilliant performance of Estragon, as he tumbled over the scene, turning his white-painted clown's mask to the light, his voice faltering from tragedy to comedy, gave the audience the essence of Beckett's remarkable creation.

István Horvai, who directed a very good production of Arthur Miller's *Incident at Vichy* last year, made a further contribution to his stimulating series of great modern plays by producing Dürrenmatt's *The Physicists.* He has chosen, in this production, to stress the intellectual struggle, the inner reflections peculiar to Dürrenmatt. There may be other concepts of the play—it can be played at top speed as a thriller, with the intellectual conclusion flaring up as it were, at the end, as a sort of dramatic climax. I prefer Horvai's approach, in which all the varying ideas and opinions are constantly confronting one another in the course of the play—leading up, from one scene to the next, to the typical anticlimax of Dürrenmatt—which is finally moulded into a unity by the conclusion.

In Horvai's version of the play, its character as a parable has been delicately accentuated, without formalizing the production or losing realistic effect. This is important, because instead of presenting the author in a jester's cap and bells firing off a stream of epigrams, Horvai preferred to stress the *thinker* who—through a sequence of bizarre situations—carries on a frank dialogue with himself in a search for the answer to the essential question: which direction shall mankind take? The performance also brought out the contradictions which Dürrenmatt himself would be the last to deny. It is Dürrenmatt himself who challenges the choice by Möbius to withdraw into seclusion and who declares, as a comment on the whole play: "Anything which concerns all of us, must be solved by all of us. Anything which concerns all of us, cannot be answered individually."

Nándor Tomanek, Iván Darvas and, above all, Zoltán Várkonyi as Möbius, gave remarkable performances. Elma Bulla brought particular power to her part as directress of the institute; from the moment she enters, suave and mild, the breath of a threat, the faintest suggestion of horror, enters with her.

YVETTE BÍRÓ

GIVING THE YOUNG THEIR HEAD

It is a good thing that young people are nowadays the fashion. They have brought freshness, vigour, above all honesty to the screen—all qualities particularly suited to the special demands of the film. In all sorts of films, the straight report, the documentary, the feature film, a keen hunger for life can be felt expressed in gaiety and profound emotion, in the difficulties of adjustment to the adult world, in adventure, philosophy, in light and colour, in everything in fact that daily life has to offer.

And these young people may be considered lucky. The last ten years has seen a liberation in the art of the film, the development of livelier and more varied forms, and an access to technical means which has made possible a modest expression of lyrical imagination. In the past the younger hopes of the Hungarian film had to wait years, if not decades, before they had a chance to produce films themselves. They had to fight their way through boring and soul-killing years of apprenticeship, through all the compulsory stages of an assistant's career, before they could touch their first big feature film. It is no wonder if they were bursting with ideas, with all the modern devices at their finger-tips and the passion for self-expression which had been suppressed for years. The present generation of young people can come to the camera much earlier, work through the period of experiment, hesitant practice and invention to assured control while still young. For some years now Hungary has had a special film studio in which graduates of the Film Academy are given the opportunity and financial resources to make films on a modest scale. The graduates named their studio after Béla Balázs, the excellent film critic, and the name can be interpreted as a slogan, because Béla Balázs in addition to his critical work was throughout his life the fanatical supporter of the experimental and avant-guarde cinema.

The young film men run the Béla Balázs Studio under a system of self-government. The affairs of the small group are managed by a board of directors elected from among the young producers, cameramen, dramaturgists; they plan out the yearly sum allocated them (amounting to the approximate cost of one big feature film), decide what is to be done with it, what ideas and scripts will be followed up, and set up the small crew for each film. Here indeed is collective work. The cameraman who shot one of the short feature films will be producing for the first time in the next. They distribute the work of cutting the films and organizing productions among themselves: this makes it possible for them to make low-cost films with comparatively modest technical means. And the liveliness and vigour of the young people can be seen in the films themselves: they are closer to life, they are more authentic than many a carefully prepared big feature film.

This studio of the young film directors has now been in operation for five years or so. They have had their successes and their failures over this period. They are at present so well-established that we have already begun to speak of their "periods." Above all of their "golden age" when their work won prizes at various international festivals, such as the films of István Szabó, referred to in the last number of our Review—*You*, *Concert*, *Variations on a Theme*—and *Golden Age*, the film of Pál Gábor which received an award at Oberhausen, a picture of the indestructible zest for life of the present generation, its adolescent sulkinesses in love, its emotional unbalance, its refusal to compromise. Or the gaily-shifting moods of Ferenc Kardos's little study—*The World is Ours*—of a

university student's small conquests and failures, in which his slightly impudent freedoms are slapped down in a comically charming manner. Márk Novák's wry burlesque—*Tuesday*—undoubtedly deserves mention as well.

The most distinguished film of the first period, however, is an almost faultless short feature film which is hard to define, the work of Sándor Sára, the *Gipsies*, which made a sensation at several international festivals. It is not exclusively objective like one sort of documentary film, nor exclusively poetic like another; the exacting demands are fulfilled, but allied with a prejudiced passion on the part of the producer, passion of protest aroused by self-identification with these outcasts of society. Sára is one of the most talented of Hungarian cameramen. He has a vigorous sense of composition, a keen awareness of forms. Through his use of the camera the walls of a crumbling tumbledown cottage, the desolate surroundings, the sad, burning glance of a gipsy boy, the homeless solitude of cold dawns, all become poetical elements in an assured whole. By these means he achieves his ends—his film is not a plain report about the hard conditions of life endured by this ethnic group, still suffering so often from discrimination, still obstinately refusing integration, but a disturbing verdict which arouses the emotions. All achieved without homily or harangue; relying merely on the suggestive force of the picture itself, on rhythm and design.

After this first, mounting period a small break has followed. Perhaps because first films are almost always richer in ideas and expression than second films, when one has to prepare for a schedule of "regular production." Emotions and events directly experienced no longer provided sufficient material by themselves. On the other hand, other fashions began to emerge, other means which have perhaps proved less effective. If until quite recently young producers in Hungary were fascinated by the gaily ironic tone and grace of the *nouvelle vague* in France, a more serious, searching attitude to reality can now be observed. Making use of modern methods, they have attempted to reproduce the vivid life-likeness of the *cinema-verité*.

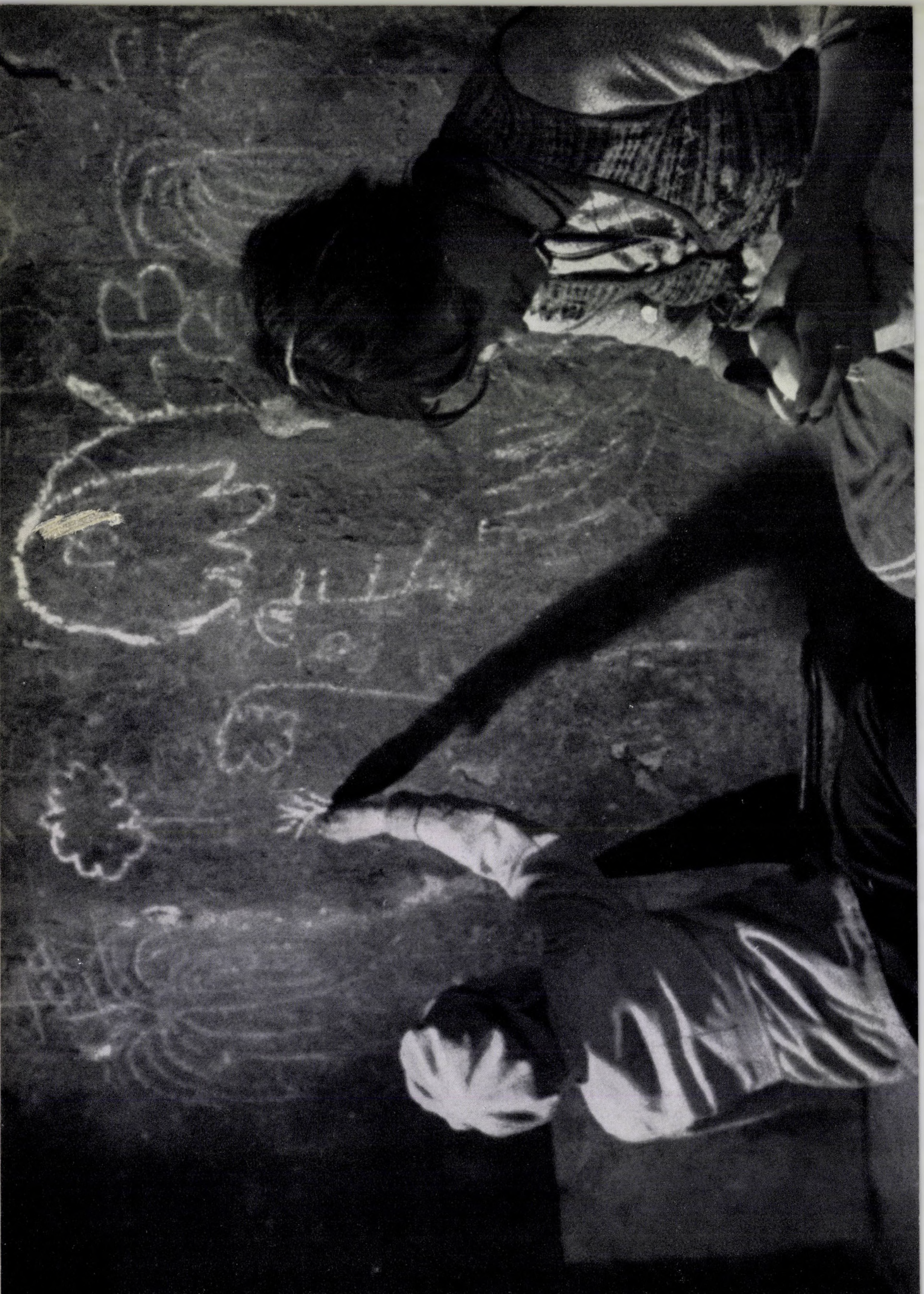
It is true enough that in the hands of an exceptionally skilled director, this camera eye trained on unorganized reality, the revelation of unexpected emotions and secrets, offers excellent material. Even the most skilled director, however impartially he attempts to handle it, must in the end be reduced to the expression of a way of thought, of an individual outlook.

The trouble with some of the young men of the Béla Balázs Studio was perhaps that they were under the impression that it was enough to go out in the street, catch the passers-by in the lens, pick a few human oddities, a few absurdities at random, and there was reality in your hands. But finally what we get is a reality which is only familiarity; we have seen them all a thousand times, and the fact that they are all authentic gives them no special significance. The embarrassed smile of the bride adjusting the white myrtle wreath at the photographer's is real, men turning their heads to glance at the swaying hips of girls along the main street are real, and so is the passing grimace of lovers drenched to the skin in the rain and oblivious of the outside world as they cling to each other—but they bore us. It is commonplace and trivial; what strikes us is rather the banality, the annoying platitude, rather than any joy in a fresh discovery.

The variations in the genre are inexhaustible. Character studies, sociographical investigations, town portraits, a journalist's reports can all be found, but all we feel is that this has proved an easy refuge for a few young producers. By deliberately thrusting all individual invention and talent into the background this type of film makes it difficult to pass any responsible judgement on the capabilities of the producers. It may be a misuse of the genre, or it may be the lack of an original view of the world which

A Scene from "Grimace" directed by Ferenc Kardos and János Rózsa

Overleaf:
A Scene from "Gipsies" directed by Sándor Sára



makes these works copies of a certain fashion, while at the same time a slavish adherence to the shots, untouched, uncut, often results in heaviness, in long-winded and boring speeches.

Luckily one or two young producers have still retained their original vitality and flair. István Ventilla and Zoltán Huszárik began their adult education at the art school, which perhaps gave them their sense for plastic form and for colour. Ventilla has made a sparkling little snap of a film called *Ferry*. He has also made a film in colour called *Testament*, out of the disquietingly beautiful madonnas in the old Serbian Orthodox churches of Hungary, the sorrowful Christ heads, the naive belief in God and the melancholy sense of a transitory world. Zoltán Huszárik's film-poem—*Elegy*—is an unusual production. It is an anguished picture of parting. The parting is the farewell to the horse, at one time the most faithful companion of our lives, slowly ousted by civilization. Yet his film is about much more than that. Changes in the way of living, the ruthlessness of expediency and progress prompt him to reflection; disquieting, perturbing music provides the rhythms and imposes order on the dance of the reds, the glittering whites, the warm browns and cold blues in which the animal, this live, breathing being, seeks his own place, startled, accusing, defenceless; and the axe strikes him down before our very eyes, while his last glance still radiates hope and confidence...

A joint production of two young producers, Ferenc Kardos and János Rózsa—*Grimace*—has called up once more the new and untouched experience of children looking out on life. It is the child's point of view that gives this lyrical and amusing film its attraction: the naughtiness, the hostility toward adults, the mischievousness of the child's view of the world. *Grimace* has its predecessors. The poetry of the unforgettable *Red Balloons* and the diabolic sweep of Louis Malle's *Zazie* have both influenced the two 28-year-old producers. Yet their film is original and fresh. The film, of course, is in colours; we say "of course," because there was no other way of conveying the fantasy world, the day-dreams of a six-year-old little boy now getting acquainted with school, now left alone among adults. There is no story; small events, impressions of mood, follow one another to compose a rounded whole, but in their arrangement reflecting the arbitrary and spontaneous order of the child's play, and so, like the child, approaching fantasy.

The directors use burlesque and exaggeration to express the unreality of the child's world. They seize on the fairy-tale element in the inner world which every child builds up for himself out of the elements of reality. A wicked, bragging uncle wants to force him to box? The child's imagination has already surrounded the uncle with prison bars. And the liberation of the uncle depends on his, the child's, pleasure, on his own exclusive power. Along come an ambulance and a police-car, almost springing to individual life for a minute, and the child, enjoying the rush, the excitement, forgets why he has conjured up these magic vehicles. For it is all play, even if a play born from the need for defence. The film may perhaps be criticized on the grounds that its humour is inconsistent. At times the sentiment and charm are slightly overdone, with the camera lingering on the wide-open dreamy eyes of otherwise perfectly nice children, the familiar *clichés* of the adult which bear no relation to a child's reality.

The colours of the film have been sensitively composed by a painter (Gábor Szinte) and Sándor Sára, who was cameraman in this production. Between them all they have managed to retain a healthy gaiety and a subtly ironic and lively structure, which together have maintained the delicate equilibrium of the magical and the prosaic in this most attractive film.

ARTS

JUDIT SZABADI

MAGIC NATURALISM

During the late fifties a new trend in Hungarian painting had its inception. First referred to as surrealism, then as new naturalism, it was later baptized "magic naturalism," a pathetic, somewhat arbitrary term chosen for lack of a better. This new style is in startling contrast both to recent developments in the fine arts and to the post-impressionist traditions of the preceding many decades. To some extent it also runs counter to the rather isolated development of Hungarian art as a whole by reopening the door to West European influences and reviving what had been an avant-garde trend in Hungarian painting. Nevertheless, it is in no sense imported art, but art in its own right. Tibor Csernus (born in 1927), the founder of the new school, grouped around him the most talented younger graduates of the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts; their sensitivity and buoyancy imparted authenticity and individuality to their works, which—while linked with certain West European avant-garde movements—spoke an idiom of their own. Most of the graduates soon grew into mature artists, whose pictures revealed a many-coloured, problem-charged world. Is all this no more than a weary and belated manifestation of a general European trend, an anachronism that is alien to Hungarian fine arts?

A cursory review of the development of Hungarian painting during our century may assist us in finding an answer.

Art in Hungary has been virtually exempt from revolutionary changes. It followed the turns in outlook and in modes of expression of West European art rather belatedly and without any upheavals. Occasional coincidences and similarities in chronology and style were purely sporadic. Szinyei Merse's "Picnic in May" (1873) found no followers, and more than two decades were to elapse before the foundation of the *plein-air* school of Nagybánya, a compact and sensual, typically Hungarian variant of impressionism. True, all the new issues cropping up successively or side by side in West European painting during the first decades of the twentieth century found their reflection and masterful solutions in Csontváry's *oeuvre**; yet his art remained isolated for a long time to come. Besides, his *oeuvre*, as a whole, was an exceptionally harmonious synthesis and failed to express the chaos that gave birth to expressionism, dadaism, surrealism, etc., in the West.

For a short time, the appearance of Rippl-Rónai, the Hungarian Nabi, and the foundation of the group of the Eight in 1911 seemed to have linked the artistic life of Hungary with the currents pervading Europe. But after his sojourn in Paris, Rippl-Rónai's art became somewhat diluted. Moreover, the revolutionary impetus of the Eight abated, and their members left the country or

* See *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 14; also Vol. III, No. 7.

went on painting uninspired, colourless works. Although one or two geniune talents dissociated themselves from a post-impressionism that had become routine (e.g., Derkovics, Barcsay, Egry), no real avant-garde movement developed. Painting largely devoted itself to satisfying middle-class romanticism, the historical past was revived in monumental, heroic scenes (Vilmos Aba-Novák), while easel painting abounded in syrupy nudes and comfortable impressionistic landscapes designed to satisfy the demands of its clients. At the very time when in Western Europe the passions aroused by the First World War found expression in violent and inarticulate outbursts (dadaism), the Hungarian middle class enjoyed its privileges almost undisturbed by any sneers, by any spiteful or ironic gestures venting hostility to its rule.

The profound contradictions that burst forth in the proletarian revolution of 1919 led to no pernament revolt of the spirit. It was as though the violent political conflict had taken the sting out of every opposition; the passions slackened and were replaced by an illusion of peace. Neither Tristan Tzara's dadaist manifesto of 1918 nor Breton's surrealist manifesto published in 1924 could influence the art that predominated in this atmosphere. The successive trends in the West called forth by blind revolt and by a desperate desire for freedom failed to cross Hungary's borders. Only one Hungarian artist was carried away by this current—Lajos Vajda,* who spent three and a half years in Paris from 1930 on. In their dramatic condensation of far-fetched, illogically linked motives, his photomontages reflect the horrors of a turbulent world. His constructive surrealism was a gesture of revolt, a cry of protest that became ever louder as fascism spread its tentacles. In the late thirties, the last years of his life, organic vegetation merged with the appalling visions of monsters and masks in his tensely explosive charcoal drawings, which nevertheless suggest disciplined order. His art was a solitary phenomenon in contemporary Hungarian painting, and his lucid and strictly composed pictures remained alien to the more naturalistic, instinctive and sensual art characteristic of Hungarian painting.

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This brief outline may have served to reveal the fateful contradiction between contemporaneousness and essential quality characteristic of Hungarian fine arts in the twentieth century. As soon as Hungarian painting broke out of its provincialism and adapted itself to advanced West European movements, it somehow disavowed its Hungarian character. On the other hand, the more Hungarian it was, the greater was the danger of its becoming mediocre in quality and involved in issues of minor interest.

After the Second World War an equilibrium between modernism and national character—or a synthesis of the two—was no longer possible. Post-impressionism, which had acquired such a firm footing in Hungary at the outset, turned academic and anachronistic, thereby losing its predominant role in the country. Its early *chiaroscuro* dramatism, its dense, concise colours had given artistic expression to the subdued and intuitive Hungarian mentality. Later, after constant repetition over several decades, however, this style could offer no more than a false sense of tranquillity and idyllic serenity.

Hungarian painting appeared to be shackled by its own traditions, and all attempts to imbue it with new life were doomed to failure as peripheral, isolated gestures. The Hódmezővásárhely group clung to memories of what was called the *Alföld* school (the members of these trends rendered peasant life in the Great Plain in dramatic terms); its classically balanced compositions with their damped colours and summary forms could seize only that part of reality which

* See *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 16.

was characteristic of peasant life. The Szentendre (a small town north of Budapest with some Greek and orthodox Serbian traditions which served as motifs to the artists working there) group also brought latent values to the surface, inspired by Lajos Vajda's seemingly forgotten legacy. In the dream-like visions of Endre Bálint and in the abstract pictures of Dezső Korniss, two independent talents of the middle generation, the artistic and ethical unexploited possibilities of their predecessor were realized. But Endre Bálint spent his most creative years in Paris (1957–1962), whereas Dezső Korniss worked in seclusion, completely isolated in his flat. Redemption from the immobility and boredom of Hungarian fine arts in the fifties came from an unexpected direction.

The source that seemed to have run dry, yet was to yield fresh values, was post-impressionism. Aurél Bernáth, its most significant exponent—one might say, the most authoritative professor of the post-impressionist Academy—had reared a generation that was, at one and the same time, his most faithful follower and most revolutionary opponent.

Having learned to paint at Nagybánya, Aurél Bernáth, in his youthful ardour, explored various pictorial possibilities, including abstract art and, after an avant-garde detour, finally returned to post-impressionism. The lyrical beauty of his soft-toned, slightly emasculated paintings gives them prominence in Hungarian pictorial art. The atmosphere of the landscape is recorded with delightful ease in his numerous ethereal water-colours of Lake Balaton. Like his oil-paintings, they reveal the creative joy that derives from the calligraphy of his inventive brush strokes. His portraits, at times wry, at times a bit sentimental, display a strong sense of reality. The reflexes, the colourful shades, the palpable delicacy of the pulsating skin of a face or a hand fill his compositions with life.

Tibor Csernus, during his student days at the Academy, was amazingly susceptible to these qualities of his teacher. A certain individuality, however, may already be detected in the work he submitted for his diploma, a canvas representing one of the events of the 1848 revolution in Budapest, entitled "Petőfi in the Printing House of Landerer and Heckenast." Particularly striking here is the freshness and liveliness radiating from a female figure entering the room out of the soft grey background, a hat on her head, a green reflection on her face.

As yet, this was no revolt, no new spirit, of course. No matter how individually applied, the acquisition of a master's techniques cannot of itself produce a new trend. Nevertheless, the two essential features of Bernáth's art, calligraphy and sense of reality fused, under Csernus's brush, with the valuable achievements of West European modernism. Already in 1956 chance assisted Csernus in creating an entirely new type of pictorial brushwork in his "Újpest Embankment." Later, a conscious application of this chance discovery was to play a large role in his art, allowing the artist the freedom of handling his material with complete disregard for tradition. Whereas with Bernáth any "arbitrariness" was inconceivable, Csernus, on the contrary, increasingly made it his principal means of expression. His "Újpest Embankment," however, represented the close of a period in which Bernáth's influence predominated rather than the beginning of something new in Csernus's art.

The decisive turning point was his first trip to Paris in 1958, where Csernus made the acquaintance of Simon Hantai, a Hungarian painter living in France, who was to become, beside Matthieu, one of the major exponents of lyric abstraction. Csernus was mainly interested in Hantai's earlier pictures combining figural painting with the techniques of avant-gardism. Perhaps the most beautiful outcome of this synthesis was Hantai's "Busybodies' Tree" (1950).

Csernus was fascinated by Hantai's powerfully imaginative art, which served to inspire his own fantasy.

Játék bolt

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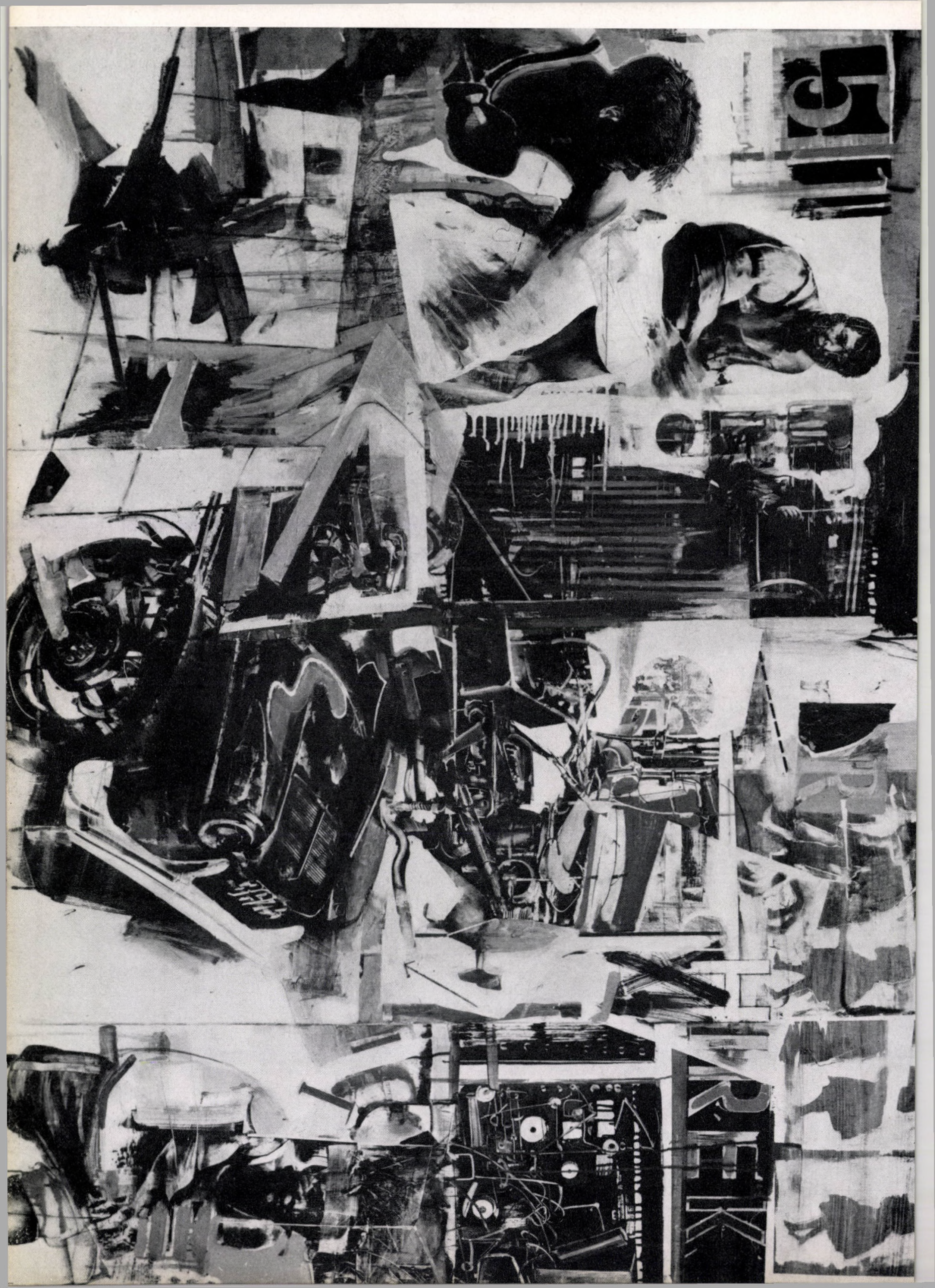

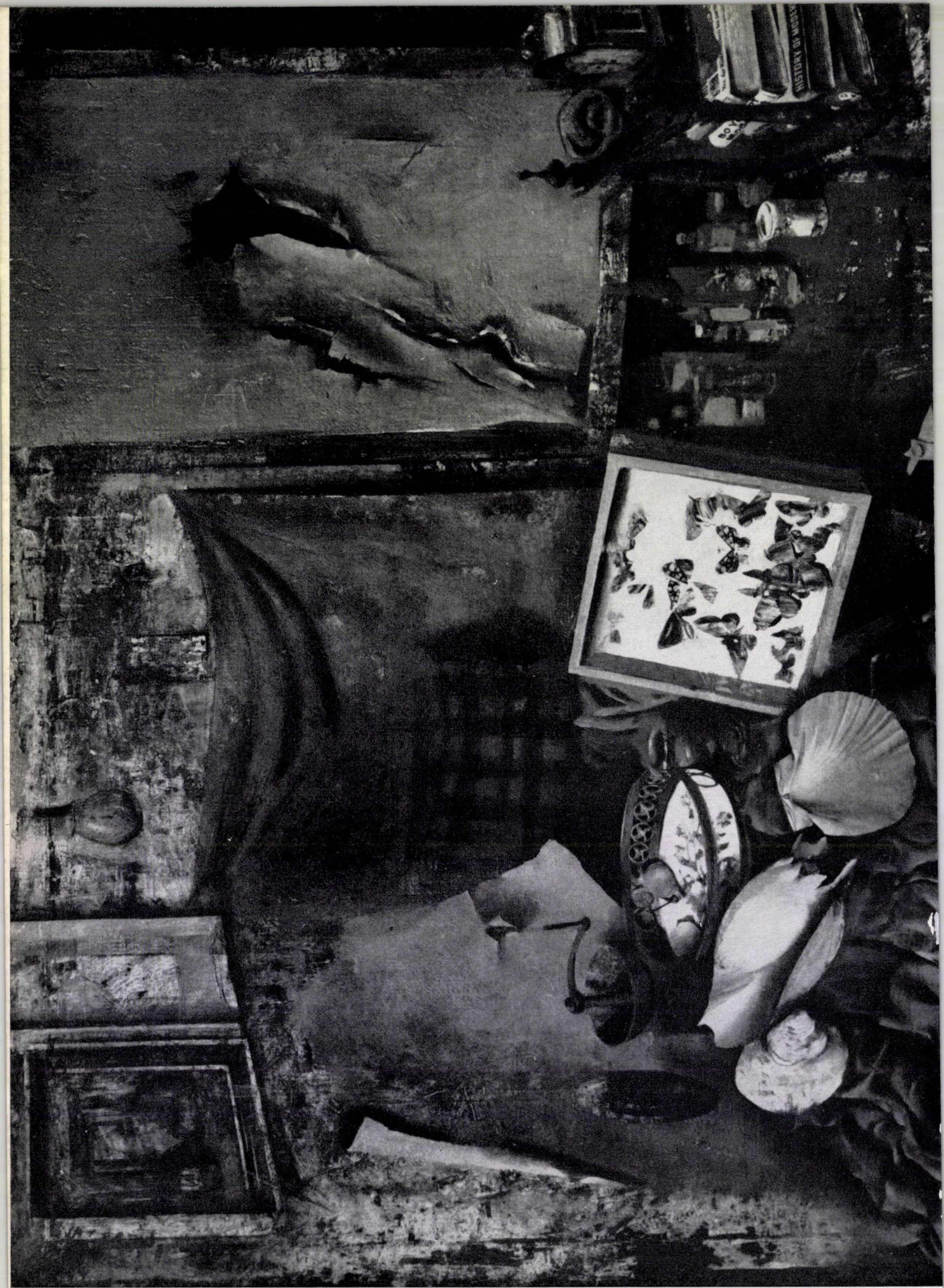

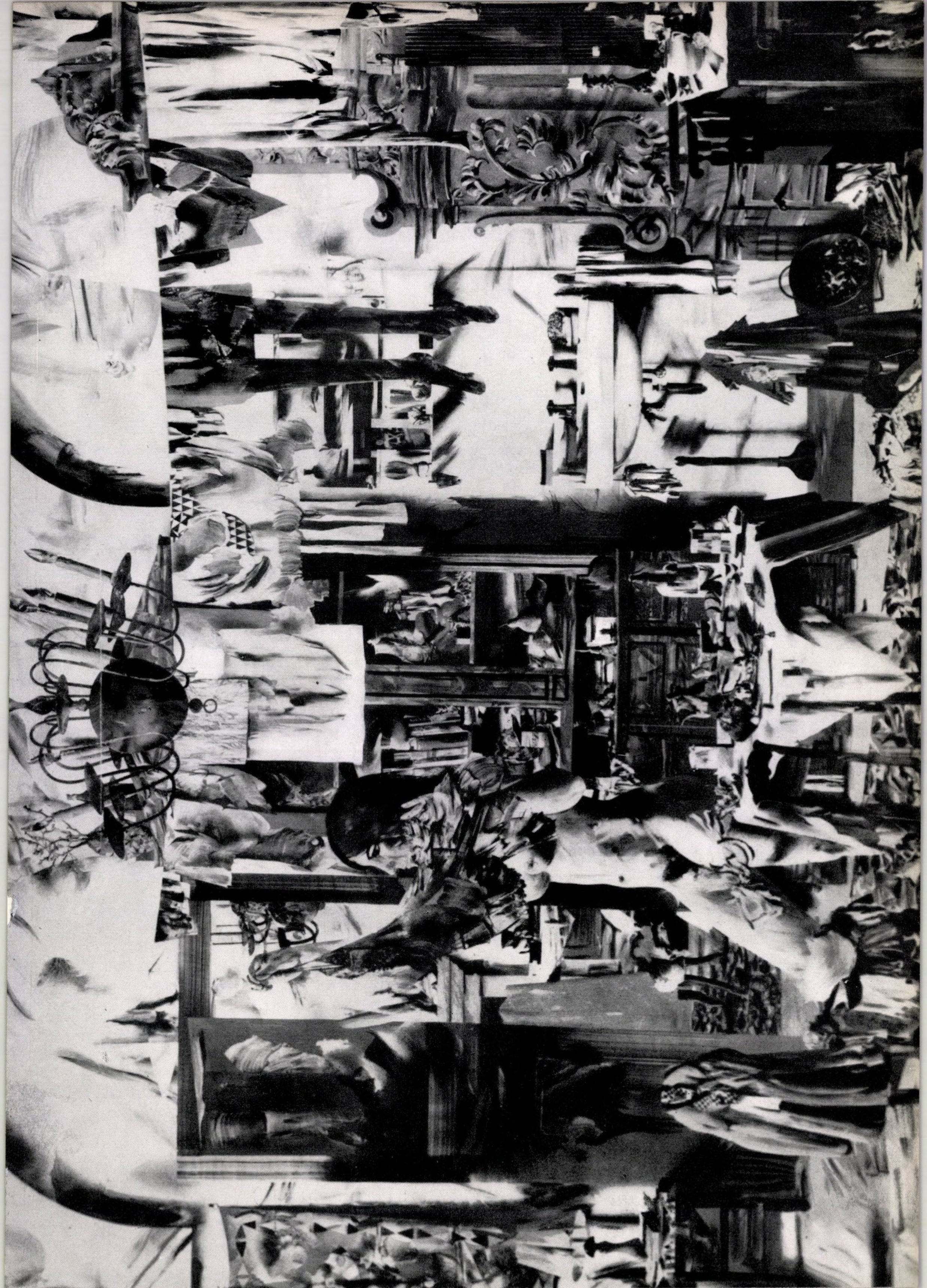

Tibor Csernus: The Reed Bank (Oil)

The reproductions on the preceding pages are:

Tibor Csernus: Actresses in the Shed (Oil)
György Korga: Mannequins (Oil)
László Lakner: The News (Oil)
László Gyémánt: By-products of Time (Oil)
Ákos Szabó: Interior (Oil)

Back from Paris, he was the first to make use of Max Ernst's invention, known as "frottage," and making it into a technique entirely his own. Its application enabled him to extract from the matter the enchanting atmosphere of his pictures. With their ruffled edges his colours spread fan-like, offering a kaleidoscope of innumerable shades in their folds. An artist, however, who has a sense of reality in his fingertips could not long be satisfied with such artifices. Csernus wished to depict reality through the sensitive use of an array of colour shadings such as he had learned from Bernáth, but applying them in the new context of present-day life. This he achieved, among others, in "Saint Tropez," "Actresses in the Shed," "Model-Aircraft Builders," the "Reed Bank," thereby introducing a new style in Hungarian painting. The almost naturalistic accuracy of his realism was saturated with a content that went beyond everyday existence, supported by a glamour of colours (which—unlike impressionism—made no attempt to recreate the atmosphere) and by a montage-like composition. Realistically painted objects (match-box, knife, watch, etc.), among them often newspaper prints, appeared in his stylized conceptions, as well as human figures floating weightlessly in a dream-like vision. The boundaries between the concrete and the visionary are blurred without depriving the objects of their apprehensible shapes. In Csernus's pictorial world the range of cognizable reality has increased, the vision has lost its singularity and uniqueness.

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In the face of what has been said above, it is not surprising that the adherents of magic naturalism, almost without exception, were pupils of Bernáth's and trod the same road as Csernus; yet the period of experimenting was shorter because they could rely on the achievements of their predecessor. Their excellent draughtsmanship and the Bernáthian ideal of beauty inevitably brought about a spiritual affinity with Csernus, whose art suited their impatient search after novelty, their individual inclinations and interests. Even Gábor Szinte, his former fellow student, displays this affinity, although his sober and disciplined attitude prevents him from identifying himself with the new-born avant-gardism. His fanciful still-lifes, lacking any decorative beauty, point to the common roots of the trend, as do his surrealistic, figural pictures.

The most consistent exponent of the new style is undoubtedly Ákos Szabó (born in 1936). He has adopted magic naturalism with such fanatic obstinacy that in his "purity of style" he has outstripped even Csernus, his model. Compared with the latter's *oeuvre,* he seems to be a painter who has given currency to a single patent. Making no concession to abstract art and to tachism, his pictures, painted with meticulous precision, remain scrupulously faithful to naturalism. Although his earlier, small-sized paintings reveal a surrealist approach to space, in his more recent, large-sized canvases he has given up every irrational means. His pictures are painted with an almost Biedermeierish carefulness; yet, despite their tangible objectivity, they imbue even such everyday objects as a wash-basin or a clothes-rope with poetry (see his "Intérieur").

If Ákos Szabó is the most consistent representative of magic naturalism—seeking, as he does, to reveal the new correlations of reality with self-imposed severity and withouth any concession to public taste—then György Korga is evidently the most zealous of Csernus's followers. Although not a pupil of Bernáth's, he willingly joined their ranks and began to reflect their style with youthful flexibility. At the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts, it was Jenő Barcsay* who not only trained him in anatomy but also aroused artistic ambitions and a sense of moral responsibility in him.

* See on Barcsay *The New Hungarian Quarterly,* Vol. V, No. 15.

Korga is most closely affiliated with orthodox surrealism, which he seeks to convert into a modern iconography by probing the symbolic meaning of objects and phenomena. His works reveal the influence of modern writers such as Thomas Mann, Friedrich Dürrenmatt and Italo Calvino. Like the other representatives of this trend, he is an intellectual painter, bur his consciousness often strikes one as concocted, which tends to jeopardize one's artistic pleasure, derived not so much from divining the meaning of interpretable symbols as from the pictorial beauty of his best works. His "Mannequins," for instance, make a deep impression, even though the figures and the shopwindows behind them are crammed with symbols.

It is much more difficult to determine László Gyémánt's place in the group. In spite of his originality and talent he is more inclined to languid sentimentalism and lyricism than to rebellious gestures. As against the impersonality of the other members of the group, his paintings are often self-revelations; much of his *oeuvre* consists of self-portraits and visions analysing his own ego. He is the least intellectual painter of the group, and his more intimate pictures are devoid of rationalism and austerity. The more moving is their shy sentimentalism and distressed sincerity. These traits bring him close to the surrealism of the Vienna School, with its lack of wide perspectives. Nevertheless, his attempts to pass beyond his own limits have resulted in several interesting and novel achievements, of which "By-products of Time" is perhaps the most inspired and beautiful.

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Among the exponents of magic naturalism László Lakner (born in 1936) is usually mentioned right after Csernus. His art derives from so many sources and covers so wide a field that it cannot be tucked into a single category. He is no less indebted to Aurél Bernáth than to Csernus, whose art, in turn, had as deep an influence on him as did that of Rauschenberg, Max Ernst or—say—even Rembrandt. His works prove that the endeavours of this group are not just a national eccentricity but the Hungarian variety of a world-wide trend. Lakner's experiments and the evolution of his art clearly link the movement initated by Csernus to a world trend in concrete and figurative painting. Rooted though it is in Hungarian soil, the achievements of this group seem to tally naturally and involuntarily with the wider movement. Yet, in spite of all external and internal determinants, the concordance is not unintentional.

Lakner was a conscious pupil of his masters and revealed his fidelity so openly that, even after an almost complete estrangement from Bernáth, the typically Bernathian bird still fluttered in his pictures, now with calmly wide-spread wings, now agressive.

Lakner had to exercise considerable self-discipline in order to escape the flood of influences in which he had immersed himself, and to achieve independence as an artist. He discovered his real self, when, at the Venice Biennale in 1964, he came across works akin to his. His 1965 paintings manifest a new spirit of harmony. After dabbling in almost all genres and techniques, he now limits himself to his own chosen style. However, the term "magic naturalism" can no longer be tacked onto his latest works, though a striving towards figural representation and a realistic method remain common features.

The once unbridled, hard and polished colours, the meticulous elaboration of details, the renaissance perspectives of his spatial solutions have yielded to colours that are softer and more mellow in tone, to larger and more sweeping brush strokes. His spaces have become more uncertain; a montage-, even film-like fusion of motives has replaced the depth and continuity of space. Static representations—so characteristic of Ákos Szabó and Korga—has given way to a sensation of movement and time. Surrealist

influence has been enriched by study of the brush-technique of abstract painters, chiefly Soulage and Tobey.

Lakner's art is a noteworthy example of how a painter may deviate from the common starting point. The distance is now growing. Magic naturalism, far from having bogged down, is a turbulent movement whose birth can be registered, whose present is known, but whose critical evaluation will be a task of the future.

The Csernus group first stirred up the stagnant waters of national painting, but later began to overflow Hungary's borders. Csernus, for instance, spent another year and a half in Paris, where he achieved considerable success. The common features which gave the movement a certain unity have, however, given way to individual traits that mark the growing differences between the painters.

László Gyémánt was captivated from the start by Salvador Dali's raw naturalism and absurd eccentricity but has now identified himself with the somewhat fossilized surrealism of the Vienna School. Ever since his student years Lakner's restless spirit has led him along several divergent paths. The throbbing power and strict construction of his recent pictures divide him definitely from his fellow-artists. And as to Ákos Szabó's limpid puritanism, it may be assumed that it will not escape the shattering effects of the hectic artistic life in Paris.

It can, neverheless, be affirmed that when Gassiot-Talabot, in his paper "La figuration narrative dans la peinture contemporaine," published in *Quadrum 65*, ranks Csernus among the narrative painters, he thereby acknowledges the reputation not only of Csernus's art but also of the entire school of magic naturalism.

CUTTINGS FROM THE HUNGARIAN PRESS

MEMORIES OF PROFESSOR H. J. BHABHA

I met Professor Bhabha for the first time nearly thirty years ago. That was when I arrived in London as a young research worker to pursue experimental studies in Professor Blackett's laboratory, and it was there that among others I also made the acquaintance of Professor Heitler. Just about this time Bhabha and Heitler finished the paper in which they gave the first theoretical explanation of the nature of air showers, which up to that time had been a mystery. The matter has since turned out to be much simpler than physicists had supposed it to be: these showers are not mysterious nuclear explosions, but phenomena following one another step by step at a rapid rate. Upon the collision of a cosmic particle with an atomic nucleus in the atmosphere a new particle is produced, then further collisions precipitate additional particles, leading to rapid spread of the shower. Today this picture appears to be quite natural to those who are engaged in the study of cosmic rays or have read popular educational literature on the subject; at the time, however, it came as an amazing discovery. It was a great event for me to be allowed to read this paper as a manuscript, but especially to meet the co-author, H. J. Bhabha, who was very young at the time. I found him to be an exceedingly dynamic, prepossessing young scholar, and the memory of our first meeting is still fresh in my mind.

While staying in England I often met Professor Bhabha, who for his part also followed my own research work with interest. During the war direct communication ceased between us, and only an indirect connection remained; as we learned later, both he and I were commissioned by the Oxford University Press, together with several well-known scientists, to write a monograph on cosmic radiation. The publishing house knew what scientists were, and was not at all afraid of receiving a plethora of manuscripts on the subject. There was no competition of noble minds, for I was the only one who sent a manuscript in—eight years later, after a delay of a mere seven years. In due course the book was published.

If Professor Bhabha refrained from writing the monograph it may have been partly due to his increasing involvement in public affairs in India; besides publishing very remarkable studies from time to time, he undertook a growing number of political tasks, especially in the field of organization. At the first Atomic Energy Conference at Geneva, for instance, in 1955 he acted as chairman; a highly respected physicist and political figure, he conducted this exciting conference with outstanding success.

Professor Bhabha kept closely in touch with Nehru, the late Prime Minister of India, worked with him, and was largely responsible for the great advances achieved in scientific life in India. In the field of pure scientific research he organized the Tata In-

stitute in Bombay and initiated the extensive Indian research programme on the peaceful use of atomic energy.

In the past few years I met Professor Bhabha several times at the sessions of the International Board of Atomic Energy, which he regularly attended. It was on one of these occasions that he was asked whether he would not like to visit Hungary. He welcomed our invitation with pleasure and accepted it a few years ago. Professor Bhabha, as a matter of fact, was not only a scientist and a politician, but also an artist—I know he painted, and he was seriously interested in music. When I invited him he promptly inquired whether the El Greco pictures he had seen during his first visit to Budapest before the war were still there. I think that his subsequent visit was due in no small measure to my reply that the pictures were still on view at the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. During his visit he not only saw the El Grecos, but also looked at the graphic collection in the Museum, including drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, in which he evinced vivid interest.

Professor Bhabha was a magnificent example of the scientist who does not develop into a "trained barbarian," but cherishes extensive social and cultural interests in addition to his scientific activities.

His sudden death is a sad loss to the world of science as well as to political life.

From *Népszabadság*, January 30, 1966

LAJOS JÁNOSSY

REMEMBERING MY FATHER, BÉLA BARTÓK*

My father, Béla Bartók, has been dead these twenty years. I did not see him die and was not present at his burial, hence he is still very much alive in my mind. Much has been written about him in the last twenty years, some of it untrue. It might be desirable, therefore, for members of his family to put down what they remember about him, all the more so because it is mostly in the bosom of their families that men reveal their true personality, when their children are young, and later when the children reach adolescence and independence. And that is why I record a few recollections of my father now.

My father lost his own father when very young; during his childhood, he lived with his younger sister, his mother—the breadwinner of the family—and his mother's sister. They were a united and happy family, and an example of family life which inspired my father in the ordering of our own home life. My father, however, developed beyond the limits of that early domestic background; he was passionately concerned with all the new trends of the early twentieth century in art, political thinking, health, education, and other fields of human activity, and saw to it that all these influences for good were part of our home background.

Of all his qualities and virtues those which most impressed me were his love of nature, his sense of patriotism and ardour for national freedom, and his extraordinary diligence and capacity for work.

He loved nature greatly and everything to do with the natural sciences. He was most interested in astronomy—the "great Universe"—and knew all about the stars and the great constellations, which he liked to explain

* The Author of this article, Béla Bartók is the elder son of the composer, and an engineer with the Hungarian State Railways.

to us on clear nights. His wonder and admiration for the perfection of nature attracted him to many of its other manifestations as well: he collected insects, plants and minerals, and would arrange them with the help of textbooks. He did his best to make time for periodical visits to the Zoo, for regular walks, and occasionally for long excursions walking in the hills.

On his walks and outings he liked to take members of his family along with him. We were never tired of his explanations and comments; in fact, they stimulated us to such an extent that geography and natural history have remained among my chief interests, although I have chosen a different profession for myself.

He loved the sort of human beings who lived close to nature—peasants, whom he came to know mainly on his trips gathering folk music. He would take advantage of these trips to add to his collection of folk art; his home was furnished with carved and painted peasant furniture which he had brought back with him from Körösfő, in the Kolozs region.* He had fine collections of peasant embroideries, pottery and musical instruments. In folklore proper he was attracted above all by folk poetry.

He had a great devotion to children, he regarded them as the raw material from which a finer humanity could be shaped. His educational activities formed an important part of his whole work—witness his piano manuals, co-authored with Reschofsky; the cycle of works "For Children," which he revised several times; and the six volumes of "Microcosmos," composed with the most careful attention to detail.

As for the kind of education he gave his own children, he believed that they had independent personalities, and that education had mainly to rely on good example and on constantly stimulating their interest. He attached importance to regular physical exercise, plenty of sunlight and fresh air, abstinence from alcohol, and a frugal and modern diet based on vitamin-rich foods. I was still quite a little fellow when he started to give me art reproductions; he encouraged me to trace on the map the events described in the books I read. He would come back from his trips abroad laden with pictures, and would give us a detailed account of everything he had seen; it was from these accounts I began to know about the world at an early date.

He looked upon both his sons as friends, and expected a similar attitude from us. Believing it was for us to work for our own benefit, he would never hear us our lessons, nor would he ever call on teachers to inquire about our progress at school; yet he was pleased whenever we brought home good school reports, and he would ask us questions about what had happened at school.

He thought our decision not to choose music as a profession was quite natural; but he liked to ask us to help him with the arrangement of folk music or other minor matters of that kind.

He had a great love for Hungary and the Hungarian people—a love which constantly found expression in his work. In an early composition of his childhood—the "Course of the Danube," written at the age of nine—he greets Hungary with cheerful notes as the river enters the country at Dévény; then, as it leaves the country at the Iron Gate, a sad note is heard. Many years later, in his inaugural address on "Certain Problems of Liszt" at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, he argued for the Hungarian character of Liszt's music.

His love for Hungary in no way implied contempt for other nations; the smaller a nation, the stronger his sympathy: he always took the side of the weak. He made every attempt to get to know other countries through their art, through their own languages, and in their own backgrounds when he went on collecting trips or concert tours. With incredible diligence he acquired proficiency in eight to ten languages, so that a fair proportion of the vast number of letters

* Now part of Rumania. Ed.

he wrote were written in the native language of his correspondents.

Giving recitals and piano lessons (he consistently refused to give lessons in composition), tired him chiefly because he always and everywhere insisted on giving his best. Five to six hours practising daily, or playing with his pupils, took up much of the time he could have devoted to pursuits dearer to his heart, particularly his work on folk music. He was only too delighted, therefore, when, in 1934, he was invited to join the Hungarian Academy of Sciences where, in collaboration with Zoltán Kodály, he could concentrate on systematizing and organizing the great work they had undertaken together.

He always looked for a flat in quiet districts, for any noise coming through the walls upset him beyond endurance. He always chose the most isolated room for his study, and tried to make it sound-proof by fitting on a double-door by some means or other. For his part, he took great care not to disturb other people's peace; when practising he would shut his windows, even on hot days, in order not to disturb other people.

The clothes he wore were plain and modest; he managed to keep them in good condition for many years at a time.

He ate sparely as a rule, and rarely drank alcohol. For many years a non-smoker, he only acquired the habit of smoking during the First World War. In later years, he made several unsuccessful attempts to break himself of the habit, and his failure to do so annoyed him considerably.

He had no recreations in the conventional sense of the word. He never visited the cinemas, cafés, or other places of amusement, and would seldom go to concerts. His principal pastime was—work. During the school-year he would leave the house very rarely—with the exception of visits to the family or to give his lessons at the Academy of Music. He read the newspapers avidly and would buy one every day, sometimes more than one. He was interested in everything in it, editorials, economic news, politics and the arts.

His manner with strangers was reserved and to some extent cautious, due to the tendency of some to intrude on his privacy. But those he conceived an affection for were fully appreciated; he was completely at ease with his relatives. He was very fond of explaining things, teaching people, showing them the results of recent research, recordings of folk music, etc.

He had a sure sense of vocation, but would never speak of it. He was modest and polite. On one occasion I went with him to Békéscsaba, where Mária Basilides, the famous contralto, and he were scheduled to give a recital. He noticed that his name was printed first on the poster, and Miss Basilides's second. He immediately complained to the concert manager, saying he deplored the practice of putting the names of the men before the names of women on concert programmes. Because of his diffident manner strangers thought my father a sombre, melancholy man; yet he had a good sense of humour, and enjoyed puzzles and riddles.

He loved his family above everyone else: some of his works express family affections. He would pay frequent visits to his younger sister, who lived in Békés County, where Julcsa Varga, Péter Garzó and their circle, people who figured in a number of folk songs from the vicinity of Vésztő, were personal friends of his. His "The Night's Music" took its origin from the same place; in it my father perpetuated the concert of the frogs heard in peaceful nights on the Great Plain.

He made a point of remembering all family festivals, particularly each of his mother's birthdays. When he or I happened to be away from home, he would always remember my birthday in a long letter, no matter how great the pressure of work. His last letter to me was written for my birthday in 1941. War, which he hated so intessely, and death, which he had wished so fervently to delay, combined to prevent him from writing any more.

From *Népművelés, January 1966.*

BÉLA BARTÓK

THE DISPUTE OVER BARTÓK'S WILL

Béla Bartók died on September 26th, 1945 in New York's West Side Hospital; only a few friends attended his funeral at the Ferncliff Cemetery, Westchester, Harsdale.

Shortly before his death he finished his last composition, the *Piano Concerto No. 3*.

His last work, which was a farewell to life, was performed in Strasbourg in the twentieth anniversary year of his death, in a transcription for two pianos, by Ditta Pásztory, his widow, and Maria Comensoli.

Béla Bartók's widow, the pianist Ditta Pásztory, who never played in public after Bartók's death, returned to Hungary in 1946 at the end of the war. Her grief was expressed in this long silence. Last year, indeed, she took part in the recording of the *Piano Concerto No. 3* in Vienna, but still did not play in public.

This year, Paris radio asked her to give a wireless recital of some of Bartók's works. She accepted and following her radio concert in Paris, which was a great success, was invited to give a public concert in Strasbourg.

The long silence was thus broken. Ditta Pásztory accepted the invitation and played the *Concerto No. 3* with Maria Comensoli. It must have been a moving experience for those who saw and heard her play, heightened by the special character and spirit of the work—the farewell of a great genius. Béla Bartók had composed it for his wife, and twenty years later it was his widow who played it at her first public recital since his death.

The First Will

What happened to Bartók's will and his estate? I have been interested in this question ever since we commemorated the twentieth anniversary of his tragic death.

In 1965 I talked to a number of well-informed persons on the question. Among other things I wanted to know abour the first will he made, and its date.

As everyone knows, Béla Bartók hated the fascist régimes of Germany and Italy and viewed with horror the expansion of their dictatorship throughout Europe. By 1940 he was already aware that this fate threatened Hungary as well, and consequently decided he would have to leave. He embarked on October 20th, 1940, and sailed with his wife for the United States.

In 1940, before leaving Budapest, Bartók made his will. In this he left his property, most of which was the copyright in his works, divided more or less in equal shares among his wife, Ditta Pásztory, and his two sons, Béla and Péter.

His sons—the younger Béla Bartók and Péter Bartók—remained in Hungary. Bartók went on his concert tour in the United States firmly resolved not to return to Hungary until the end of the war. His younger son, Péter Bartók, who at that time was still a student, followed his parents a little later, in the middle of the war, and after considerable difficulty joined them in the United States.

Béla, the elder boy, was the son of Bartók's first wife, Márta Ziegler. He was born in 1910, now lives in Budapest, is an engineer, a technical adviser, and at present also lectures at the Budapest Technical University. Péter Bartók is the child of Bartók's second marriage with Ditta Pásztory. He stayed in the United States after the end of the Second World War, became a sound engineer, and is ambitious to produce a complete set of his father's works on records with the participation of the finest artists of the time.

The Second Will

I later asked another expert about the circumstances under which Bartók's second will was made in the United States.

The Bartóks never settled down happily

in the United States. In the somewhat less than five years they stayed there, they changed their home five times. The difficult years in New York were further aggravated by Hitler's successes in the earlier years of the war. Bartók's determination to save his work from any control by the dictatorship added to his troubles.

Shortly after his arrival in New York, Dr Gyula Baron, a former Budapest professor of medicine, introduced Bartók to Dr Victor Bátor, the former lawyer of the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest, who had emigrated to the USA in 1938. Dr Bátor suggested that Béla Bartók should set up a trust under Anglo–American law, because this would be the most effective method of safeguarding his life-work, both in the interest of his heirs and of European civilization, in the face of all the uncertainties and risks of the war. According to the provisions of such a trust the testator leaves his estate to the two executors in trust for the legatees of the will. They were in fact responsible for the management of the porperty for the benefit of the legatees during the lifetime of the widow. Upon her death the trust would be dissolved and the estate would pass unconditionally to the two remaining heirs.

Bartók agreed to the proposal. His obvious intention was that the trustees as American subjects would hold the copyrights, which would thus be protected from possible confiscation by the fascist dictatorship.

In the autumn of 1943 he duly signed the American will setting up the trust which was drawn by Dr Victor Bátor. In this he set aside the will he had made in Hungary and appointed Dr Gyula Baron and Dr Victor Bátor as trustees, with, however, far wider discretionary powers than was usual.

Two years later Bartók died.

The widow came back to Hungary. Péter Bartók remained in the States.

The New York Surrogate's Court duly granted probate of Béla Bartók's will and confirmed the trustees in their positions.

"Barely a Quarter"

Experts in international law all agree that the property was correctly managed by the trustees and in accordance with the terms of the trust, during the first two years. A little later Dr Gyula Baron resigned for health reasons, and Dr Victor Bátor was left in sole control of the estate.

For eleven years Bátor presented no accounts. When, finally, he produced them, it became apparent that the legatees, Ditta Pásztory, Béla and Péter Bartók, had received "barely a quarter" of the very considerable sums amounting from royalties. Three-quarters of the royalties were charged by Bátor to expenses. Neither the US law, however, nor the will itself authorized the trustees to charge the estate with the majority of expenses.

In the meantime legal proceedings had begun at the office of the Budapest State Notaries to obtain the administration of Béla Bartók's will; the case was finally heard in 1958, after it had been adjourned several times. In the final hearing in 1961 probate was granted to the plaintiffs. This judgment gave effect to the general dispositions of the New York will, but set aside the trust and the appointment of trustees as an institution unknown to Hungarian law. It therefore awarded unconditional possession of the estate to the three legatees.

The decision of the New York Surrogate's Court which recognized the existence of the trust and trustees is consequently in conflict with the decision of the Hungarian Court of Probate.

It is somewhat depressing that so many difficulties have had to be surmounted before the heirs of this great Hungarian could enter into their rightful inheritance.

Conflict of laws in such matters is unfortunately not uncommon. In some countries it is the nationality of the testator which determines the choice of law; the courts of his own country have jurisdiction. In others it is his last domicile which deter-

mines the choice of law, and these countries include the countries of the British Commonwealth as well as the United States of America.

It is accepted in Hungary that under Hungarian law probate of Bartók's will undoubtedly is subject to Hungarian law, since Béla Bartók died a Hungarian subject, his legal domicile was Budapest, and New York was only his temporary residence.

What happened after Hungarian judgment had been delivered? Dr Victor Bátor, under presistent pressure, finally presented his accounts on the management of the property for four further years to the New York Surrogate's Court. This account resembled the others, and the legatees again received barely a quarter part of the income. Naturally they challenged the accounts.

The Bartók Manuscripts

In the meantime Victor Bátor founded the "Bartók Archives" in New York, consisting of Bartók manuscripts, letters and other memorials of the musician, treated them as if they were his own, and in fact declared them to be his property. In these "Archives" were placed original Bartók manuscripts which in his first set of accounts were set down as part of the estate.

When the second set of accounts was presented, Bátor's duplicity over the manuscripts came to light. Bátor then declared he was willing to resign as trustee and return the manuscripts on the condition that his accounts were passed.

Negotiations for a settlement were however broken off when Bátor, in connection with the return of the manuscripts, raised new and unjustified claims to certain autograph manuscripts.

This is the point the negotiations have reached, towards the end of the twentieth anniversary of Bartók's death. Let us hope that the final disposition of the estate left by one of the greatest creative geniuses of our age will speedily be settled.

Settled, as Bartók intended in his last will.

Magyar Nemzet, December 25, 1965

PÉTER RUFFY

WILL

I, the undersigned Béla Bartók, at present domiciled in Budapest (29 Csalán út, II.), Professor at the Hungarian Royal Academy of Music, being sound in mind and after mature consideration, declare my last wishes in the following testament regarding all the goods I shall possess at the time of my death, and bequeath them as follows:

I.

It is my final wish as regards the copyright and the author's royalties on all musical and scientific works written in the past, as well as those to be written in the future, that all copyrights should be vested after my death, in equal shares, that is in parts of one-third each, in my wife Mrs Béla Bartók, maiden name Edit Pásztory, domiciled in Budapest (29 Csalán út, II.), and my sons Béla Bartók, domiciled in Budapest (2 Kenes u.), and the minor Péter Bartók, at present residing at Sárospatak.

The same is my wish regarding the distribution of the income arising from these copyrights; I desire that these also should become the property of the above named legatees, likewise in the proportion of one-third each.

My wish regarding the distribution of my income, should be altered as follows in the contingencies stated below:

A) It is my will that as long as my son Péter Bartók, a minor, has not completed his studies and has not found employment on the basis of his studies by which he can meet his needs and which will enable him to keep himself, my wife should receive a two-sixths share, my son Béla Bartók one-sixth and my son Péter Bartók, a minor, three-sixths of the income from my copyrights, in order that the latter may continue his studies uninterrupted and provision for him be assured. In the event of my wife's death during that period the income for distribution should, for the period determined above, go in the ratio of two-sixths to my son Béla Bartók and four-sixths to my son Péter Bartók. Should, however, this share of four-sixths be insufficient to enable my minor son Péter Bartók to finish his studies, I wish my son Béla Bartók to give, out of his share of two-sixths due to him, another one-sixth share to my minor son Péter Bartók until my son Péter finishes his studies.

I expect my son Péter Bartók to be conscientious in his studies and to do his utmost to find employment as soon as possible.

B) When making my will I took into consideration the fact that under existing law my wife née Edit Pásztory, domiciled in Budapest, is legally entitled to a widow's pension on the strength of my appointment as a State official. If, however, after my death, my wife should not, for whatever reason, receive a widow's pension, I direct that three sixths of the income arising from these copyrights should go to my wife for life, one-sixth to my son Béla Bartók and two-sixths to my son Péter Bartók while studying and unable to maintain himself, but apart from these provisions the principle of equal participation in the assets represented by the copyrights is to be maintained. When, however, my son Péter Bartók has finished his studies and is able to maintain himself unaided, the above division of the income from the copyrights should be so modified that a four-sixths share of the income should go to my widow while a one-sixth share respectively should go to my sons Béla Bartók and Péter Bartók.

C) Should my widow re-marry, I direct in any of the contingencies enumerated under B) that the income due to her from copyrights should not exceed one-third of the income. If as a result of this measure a part of the income becomes available for further distribution, then it is my wish that it should be used to equalize the shares in the income going to my two sons and/or to lessen the difference in the shares in the incomes to the advantage of that son who in the given situation is receiving the smaller share of the income.

II.

For the sale of the manuscripts of my musical works as well as the utilization and allocation of these assets I have concluded what is known as a trust agreement with the New York firm of Messrs. Boosey and Hawkes, Inc., and Dr George Hertzog, domiciled in New York, on May 15th, 1940, in New York, in accordance with the provisions of the law of the United States. I explicitly declare that I maintain all the dispositions made in the written agreement referred to concerning the sale of the manuscripts and the utilization of the income; those clauses of the agreement which refer to the utilization and distribution of the surplus, I interpret and change, respectively, in respect to my legatees in that I bequeath these incomes and/or the shares due to them, according to the stipulations laid down in Article I of the present testament.

III.

With regard to furniture, articles of personal use and the manuscripts of my scientific works, as well as souvenirs and works of art which are in my possession at present or which I may acquire until my death, I appoint my sons Béla Bartók and the minor Péter Bartók as my heirs in equal shares. Their rights of ownership are however restricted in that the right of use is exclusively vested in my wife, née Edit Pásztory, for her life, for it is my wish that these effects should be kept together and that she should enjoy the same rights of use as she had during my lifetime. After the death of my wife this right of use, which is a privilege vested in her person only, is automatically extinguished and the exclusive proprietorship and right of use are equally vested in my sons Béla Bartók and Péter Bartók.

Concerning the distribution of my possessions, of the two pianos which are in my possession I direct that my son Péter Bartók should have the right to choose one of them for himself and that this should be his, and the other one should belong to my son Béla Bartók.

IV.

With regard to the whole body of copyrights which are my property, it is my wish that in the event of the sale or transfer of copyrights all my legatees should act in agreement. I therefore direct that should one of my heirs wish to transfer his share of the property, he should only be able to effect this with the consent of the other two heirs. The purpose of this stipalation is to prevent the dissipation of the copyrights and to assure my heirs the protection of a permanent income.

V.

Should my wife predecease me, all the benefits due to her under the present will devolve on my sons Béla Bartók and Péter Bartók to be distributed between them in equal shares, regard being had to the qualifications under Article I/A. The same disposition is to apply should my wife survive me, and die at a later date.

VI.

Should I die when my son Péter Bartók is still under age, I designate chief physician Dr. Tibor Hajnal, domiciled in Budapest (13. Hadapród u., II.) on the strength of Par. 34, Act No. XX of 1877, to act as guardian for my minor son, Péter Bartók. If he does not wish to or is unable to fulfil this request for any reason whatever, I designate as guardian in the second place Vitéz Albert Koós, domiciled in Pusztaföldvár (László major, Szőlőspuszta), the son-in-law of my sister Mrs. Emil Tóth, maiden name Erzsébet Bartók.

VII.

Since I consider it as contrary to my last wishes if any of my legatees contests these testamentary dispositions, I therefore direct that that legatee refusing to acquiesce or accept the provisions of this will and contesting it to the detriment of the other legatees, should be restricted to the share of his inheritance regarding my entire property and its income which is compulsory by law.

VIII.

My funeral should be as simple as possible, without clergy. If after my death it should be desired to name a street after me or locate a memorial tablet which bears any relation to me in a public place, then it is my wish that

as long as the former *Oktogon Tér* and former *Köröncl* in Budapest are named after those men whose name they bear at present,* and moreover, as long as there is any square or street in Hungary named after these two men, no square, street or public building should be named after me in this country, and no memorial tablet connected with me should be placed in any public place.

IX.

This testament was written and signed by my own hand and I herewith confirm that the contents convey my last will, as a proof of which I sign this testament with my own hand, repeating my statement in the joint presence of the two testamentary witnesses, Dr Ernő András, lawyer, domiciled in Budapest (7. Akadémia utca, V.), and Mrs Béla Csomós, domiciled in Budapest (21 Nagymező utca, VI.), who were asked to attest this document.

Given at Budapest, October 4, 1940.
Signed: Béla Bartók.
Mrs. Béla Csomós, testamentary witness,
Dr. Ernő András, testamentary witness.
Kjö. 35/1946 Vn. 1/1957.
This will was published this day:
Budapest, January 7, 1947.
Signed: Dr Keszthelyi, Notary Public.

* At that date the *Oktogon tér* was called *Mussolini tér*, and the *Körönd, Hitler tér*. Ed.

COUNCIL OF COMPROMISE

After four sessions of eventful work, the great convention of prelates of the Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council, wound up its deliberations. Pope John XXIII, who had convened the Council in 1962, did not live to see the second session meet. His successor, Paul VI, displayed considerable caution in directing or, rather, limiting the debates being fought out between the conservative and reforming factions of the Church. (Towards the end, the lines were blurred as differences of opinion arose among the reforming bishops themselves.)

In looking back on the four years of deliberations, the first point of importance about the Council is undoubtedly the reason that led to its convocation. The soundest explanation comes from the Abbé Laurentin, one of the consultants of the Council's theological preparatory committee, who wrote a book on the task before the Council in which he declared, "oecumenical councils are called forth by historical situations in which the Church finds itself under fire," and went on to point out that "the world has changed rather more since the First Council (1869–70) was held than in all the years since the establishment of the Church."

The French abbé's argument reflects the spirit of Pope John: it was Pope John who recognized that the Church could no longer remain static behind the bars of the *Syllabus* promulgated by Pius IX, who convened the First Vatican Council. The "Tabulation of the errors of our time," in which the Church repudiated and condemned all the major intellectual movements of the nineteenth century, secular developments, nationalism, bourgeois liberalism, and inevitably, and above all, socialism, movements which still exercise a profound influence today, was quite unacceptable to the minds of today. The *Syllabus* had been, and remained, the very antithesis of the modern spirit; according to John XXIII. no inspiration whatever was to be derived from the First Vatican Council.

By convening the Council which has just ended, Pope John did in fact take up the challenge of our time. He believed the time had come for the Church to give its answer to all the great questions which no great social organism or authority anywhere in the world—hence also the Church—can afford to evade. To put it in our own language: what had to be faced were the problems raised by the general crisis of capitalism, the onward march of socialism, the distintegration of the colonial system; not of course recognized by the Church in such direct terms, but transposed into a theological context. None the less the fact remains that never in the history of Church Councils had the relationship between the Church and the contemporary world been included as openly on the agenda of the Council as on this occasion.

What answers has the Council given?

It is not the debates and resolutions concerned with the theological issues of the Catholic faith and the ecclesiastical discipline of the Church which primarily interest us. What is of primary interest to us, since the Church is a force in the world, is the kind of ideology and political doctrine which the Church preaches to the faithful; the position it takes on such issues as war and peace; whether it is favourable or hostile to the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems; whether it means to assist or retard the constructive efforts of countries where millions of Catholic citizens are contributing their share towards the building of socialism. And last but not least, is the Church employing its moral authority and political influence against the struggle of colonial or semi-colonial peoples to gain their national independence and their dignity as human beings, or casting about for a new position?

John XXIII opened a new era with the statements he made during his Pontificate, with his methods of government and his deliberate inauguration of a dialogue between Catholics on the one hand, and Protestants bourgeois radical democrats, representatives of non-Christianr eligious denominations and even Marxists on the other. He left the Church a political legacy in the form of his last encyclical, *Pacem in terris*. The price of ignoring or repudiating it would be to brand the Church as openly supporting political reaction. The Council debates, however, as well as the form the voting took, made it unequivocally clear that the majority of bishops took up the same or somewhat similar position, and that only a relatively small proportion regarded the *Syllabus* as its political credo and wished to see the attitude adopted by Pius XII maintained in practice.

The modernization of the Church was the central theme of this Council, even for those who only discard the heritage of previous ages in the hope that more modern instruments are better adapted for the defence of the same time-honoured, entrenched anti-communism and conservatism as before. This internal difference which divides the reformers deserves particular attention, as it supplies one explanation for the ability of the comparatively tiny group of the ultra-conservative Curia to split the more progressive wing and induce uncertainty on more than one issue, and it explains why this Council has produced so many compromises.

The encyclical *Pacem in terris* introduced three innovations. It lays great emphasis on men's duties in the world; hence its emphasis on confidence in humanity and the lack of any reluctance in its approach to cooperation between believers and agnostics. It comes out boldly against war, and supports joint action with all those who advocate disarmament. And in conclusion Pope John advocates a continuous dialogue with the communists, instead of a crusade against them—an attitude which of course implied no theological compromise on his part.

Had he lived, it is highly probable that the author of that encyclical would have urged the Council fathers to continue their search for ways and means of achieving those objectives. In the final event, however, it was not his personality that primarily impressed itself upon the work of the Council. Although his spirit could not be altogether banished, the assembled bishops found themselves, in general, rather warned from on high than given the opportunity of seeing new vistas open before them. The course of events had changed over the four years of the Council; and various international developments—especially in recent months—had undoubtedly caused certain earlier staunch reformists to waver.

None the less the exigencies of the time have left their imprint on many of the issues under discussion. The Council has condemned war, and the moral value of this judgment is not lessened by the fact that the Council— mainly under the influence of American bishops—left odd loopholes. Nor was there any doubt on whose behalf Cardinal Ottaviani, one of the leading personalities on the conservative side, was speaking when he demanded that governments fighting national liberation movements should be excluded from eventual sanctions.

Two statements of Paul VI on completely political questions, both of them made at the time of the fourth and last session, should be noted with particular attention. One was the address he delivered in the UN General Assembly, in which the Pope spoke of his apprehensions over the deterioration in the world situation and called upon the governments to save peace. Unfortunately, only a few weeks after this gesture, the Pope thought fit to receive a West German political delegation representing the most dangerous revanchist circles in the Federal Republic: it was a delegation of the German minority populations now resettled in Germany, and the Pope added fresh fuel by addressing it in terms that encouraged their political hopes.

The view which the majority of the bishops entertained on the present balance of forces in the contemporary world is reflected by the fact that the conservative motion calling for a solemn condemnation of atheist Marxism was defeated.

Cardinal Koenig of Vienna, on the contrary, speaking in the debate on atheism, urged his fellow bishops to exhort Catholic believers living in the socialist countries to serve the economic progress of their countries, thereby giving proof of their faith. Archbishop Endre Hamvas of Hungary said: "We are living under an entirely new system; hence the need for new paths. We do not regret the sacrifices in material wealth we have made for the sake of social progress... We suggest that, standing on our faith and morality, we should do everything possible to avoid exacerbating the so-called ideological war... The point now in question is the need to contribute what we can to a settlement in the world."

If the 13th schema dealing with the place of the Church in the modern world was finally worded on many issues in less forthright terms than the Council had originally conceived it, the explanation lies in Pope Paul's tendency to make concessions to the reformist bishops on questions of form, in order that major decisions of substance might in the end be formulated in a less unequivocal manner.

Among the problems dealt with by the Council which were only political in part, the *rapprochement* with other Christian churches is of importance. In addition, in a move which was long overdue, the bishops have adopted a declaration condemning anti-Semitism. The word "deicide," it is true, has been deleted from the original draft, but the statement as finally approved declares that no collective guilt rests on the Jewish people for the crucifixion of Jesus. In adopting this Council resolution, the Church has in fact attempted to provide an answer to the charges world opinion laid at the door of Pope Pius XII.

The Pope's decision to start simultaneous proceedings for the beatification of both his predecessors, Pius XII and John XXIII, has become a symbol of the work of the Second Vatican Council as a whole. By this decision he has made it all too clear that his paramount concern is the need to maintain the inner equilibrium of the Church. If his decision was justified from this angle, it points to the relative weakness of the Catholic Church. It is also evidence that Paul VI takes a far more pusillanimous attitude towards a new opening, the "rebirth" of Catholicism, than did his predecessor.

This fact to a large extent detracts from the value of the work done by the Council. For mankind in general cannot fail to note that while it can count on the cooperation of many members of the Church in the work of constructing a world based on more equitable and more peaceful human relationships, a considerable proportion of the reformist forces of the Church will be occupied by the struggle which influential irreconcilables are waging against today's pressing needs.

What matters, however, is the essence. It is an indisputable fact that all the debates on the most significant issues which took place at the Second Vatican Council were imbued with a new spirit. Though our ideology is different from that of the Catholic Church, none the less we watch for signs of progress in movements with different principles. We earnestly hope that following the Council there will be more opportunities for interchange and cooperation in the spirit of social progress between Catholics on the one hand and Communists, both believers and agnostics, on the other. This hope is founded on the fact that those who voiced the desire for such action outnumbered those who advocated acquiescence in what they considered the old unchanging order of things.

From *Népszabadság*, January 1966

JÁNOS HAJDU

THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN

A Short Story

by

GYULA CSÁK

As they came to the outskirts of the village, the youngster burst into tears. Nervously his father turned to him from the wheel.

"And what's the matter with you now?"

"Nothing," blubbered the boy.

"What is the matter?" his mother, leaning forward from the back-seat, inquired.

"Your son's snivelling," said the man, and his thoughts returned to those repair men who had cheated him after all. They had fixed the lining only the week before, and yet the dust was pouring into the car.

"You'd better pull up the window," he said to the boy. His wife fished out a handkerchief and wiped the lad's eyes and nose.

"What is it, Lacika?" she murmured into the boy's ear with the reticent humility that had characterized their relationship ever since her son chose to take his baths by himself.

"To think that they still haven't built a decent road to this wretched village! It's enough to drive one crazy!" the man fumed.

"We're almost there," said the woman, anxiously scanning the back of her son's head. 'Why does he act so strange towards his parents?' she asked herself, as she had done many times of late.

The man's mind dwelt on the gears and how they must be getting choked with dust.

"Do they know we're coming?" he said to her over his shoulder.

"How many times have I got to tell you that they do?"

"So you too are becoming hysterical. That's all we need. Can't one even ask a question?"

"But I've told you fifty times."

"I can recall forty-nine," he remarked mildly, trying to avoid a quarrel. 'That scamp,' he thought, 'has obviously inherited his mother's disposition.'

"You like to come here—that's why you're crying, isn't it?" she whispered in her son's ear. The lad hunched his shoulders and made no reply. He pressed his forehead against the windowpane, as if observing something attentively. The mother tried to follow his stare, her thoughts on how much she had disliked living here. Poverty, distress—the very memory was unpleasant. She was a bit ashamed of their not having visited her native village for six years; but she never had felt any desire to go there, and even now her husband had to be dragged along by force—they were doing all this for the sake of their twelve-year-old boy. Two summer holidays they had spent abroad, one in the mountains, and three at the Lake Balaton—what more could one want! Yet if it's this the boy wants... ? Had they ever refused him anything?

They drew up beside a picket fence, and the man began to honk like mad. At that moment, the double gate opened, and so did the arms of the stout woman—his sister-in-law—who was awaiting the visitors in the middle of the yard.

The boy's sobbing changed into laughter, as his father nearly ran over Aunt Sári and the car stopped as if the engine had gone dead. His mother quickly jumped out and flew into a delirious wrestling-match with Aunt Sári, while his father went on racing the engine.

"Do you intend to take a nap in here?" he barked at his son. Something seemed to have gone wrong with the engine, and this made him nervous.

"Why, see who's here!" Aunt Sári cried, turning to face Lacika and crouching slightly as if to tempt a tiny tot into her arms, although the boy was taller than she by half a head. "Is that my little godson?"

She drew the flurried and embarrassed Lacika to her capacious bosom. The boy blushed still more when he saw his father too getting entangled with Aunt Sári and even slapping her buttocks.

"Now kiss the spot you spanked!" squeaked Aunt Sári, laughing. 'To the stake with her!' Lacika ordered, addressing his servants. Lately he had taken to the game of having his adversaries burnt at the stake.

"What's happened to the cow-shed?" he asked, dumbfounded.

"Oh, that, my sweet," Aunt Sári said, hugging him again and giving him a smacking kiss on the head. "We've pulled it down." In a more serious tone of voice, by way of explanation for the grown-ups, she added: "For years it stood empty, so we pulled it down. That's what's become of it."

She led the party to a detached little building and opened the door.

"We village folks are also beginning to live in great style," she said, a curious mixture of derision and self-mockery in her voice. "Peasants too must have a bathroom!"

She showed them the tank mounted on the outside and the drain, all built by her husband. Laci's father, though nodding appreciatively, muttered something about certain technical problems he was going to discuss with Géza—he might even help to improve the setup. Again Aunt Sári dashed up to Lacika.

"See, here you can take a bath whenever you feel too hot," she rhapsodized, and again pressed the boy to her bosom. This time he didn't mind, for he wanted to hide his gloom. His mother, however, saw him purse his lips and quickly herded the company into the house. Hustling her husband and sister ahead, she shyly took her son's arm.

"Feeling sad about the cow-shed?" she asked in an undertone. The boy looked at her spitefully.

"No."

Suddenly, he felt pity for his mother, and repeated in a softer tone:

"I don't, really."

'Find out who wanted the cow-shed to die,' was his harsh command to the Lord Chamberlain. 'Don't fall for that tale of the cow-shed's having been empty! It stood empty six years ago, yet they let it live then. It was my favourite chamber,' he explained to the Lord Chamberlain, who was standing there, his head bowed. 'That's where I used to retire to whenever I felt like secluding myself from the world.' The Lord Chamberlain nodded understandingly. Lacika noted with satisfaction that this was his most loyal adherent, one he could trust completely.

In the passage-way they ran into a tremendous commotion. A crowd, made up partly of the relatives and partly of next-door neighbours attracted by the honking, had gathered here and now rushed upon the visitors. Everyone was surprised at everyone else, at how well everyone looked—especially Lacika, who had become quite a young man. But where had he left his bride? And what about his school report? Did he remember Auntie Irma, the neighbour who once gave him a spanking for stealing apricots? And Uncle Gábor, who had since departed this life? And that oafish, skinny little girl, who never seemed to brush her teeth and whom he had been in love with six years ago?

'Patience, Your Majesty,' the Lord Chamberlain whispered, dangling the keys of the Chamber. 'This is obligatory diplomatic intercourse. Your Majesty should smile!"

Aunt Sári talked louder than everyone else to indicate that she was the hostess, while the rest were just a casual reception committee.

"Aren't you people tired?" she asked. "Dinner isn't ready yet, as we expected you later. Still, let's have a bite. How about some curdled milk,

Lacika ? Remember how much you liked it ? Now, listen, people, leave them in peace—there'll be plenty of time yet, don't worry! You're staying for two weeks, I hope ?"

"Only four days," replied Lacika's father, whereupon everybody cried out in unison. "Oh, no! Only four days ?!"

"We're also going to Czechoslovakia," explained Lacika's mother, who, one had to admit, looked prettier than any woman present. "You see, Jenő's got to be back by the twentieth, for that's when they're going to okay his invention. From the bonus he'll get we want to replace the furniture."

"Throw out that fine furniture ?" gasped Auntie Irma, the neighbour who had done the spanking. Four years before, she had gone to Budapest and looked up Lacika's parents. "My! What marvellous furniture you had!"

"Oh, that's already been replaced," said Lacika's mother with a deprecatory gesture. "Somehow I don't seem to like baroque."

They all nodded sympathetically, although nobody knew what baroque was; yet they too felt they didn't like it. Lacika had a hunch that his mother didn't know, either; so he motioned the Lord Chamberlain to come to him and pointed at his mother. 'I have no evidence as yet,' he said, 'but I find her suspect. Have her watched!' He had a fleeting thought that baroque must be something kinky, but wasn't sure. 'Consult encyclopedia.'

"Oh, it just occurs to me," Auntie Irma yelled. "Here's the expert I need, and I'm not going to miss this opportunity."

Bashfully bragging, like Aunt Sári, she complained that her television set continually emitted sounds like "psss" and "trrr" and that it ought to be fixed. Lacika was amazed to see his father nodding his head with a knowing air, although, at home, he was unable even to set the monoscope. Suddenly, Lacika became ill-humoured.

"Where's Granny ?" he inquired, his gaze riveted on the floor.

"Good gracious! Well, I never!" Aunt Sári cried, throwing up her hands and rushing to Lacika. "Why, Granny can hardly wait to see you!—Isn't he a darling ?" she exclaimed addressing the others. "Everywhere he's looking for nothing but the things of old. 'Where's the cow-shed ? Where's Granny ?' So you still remember Granny ? Eh ?"

"Yes, I do," Lacika said impatiently.

"Well, neighbours, I'll be expecting you at our place," Auntie Irma said; and the party broke up, since no one was interested in the old woman.

'The water in the radiator may have boiled,' Lacika's father thought and turned to Aunt Sári.

"Let me have a funnel and some water, please."

Granny lived at the back of the yard, in what used to be the wood-shed.

"We moved her over here," Aunt Sári explained apologetically. "She's better off here, poor dear."

The old woman was sitting on a stool. With one hand stretched forward and resting on a stick she was staring in front of her, motionless. She did not notice the party entering. 'Sári and her husband are a heartless lot,' Lacika's mother thought slightly shuddering as she looked at the old matron. At the same time, she considered it a piece of good luck that it wasn't they who had to provide for their late father's sister. 'But, after all, Sári and her husband have inherited half a house from him. . . '

Aunt Sári walked over to the old woman and shook her by the shoulder.

"Lacika is here, Aunt Julcsa," she shouted at the top of her voice. The old woman looked at her and nodded, but it was evident that she hadn't understood a word.

"Let's get out of here!" Lacika whispered to his mother.

Uncle Géza came home for dinner. The skinny girl from next door showed up too, along with her mother. They didn't eat, but the girl played at being the housewife and dipped a finger in Lacika's soup. 'Cut off that finger!' Lacika bade the Lord Chamberlain. Despite the urging of their hosts, Lacika refused to eat more than two spoonfuls of the soup.

Uncle Géza noisily consumed enormous quantities of food. Ignoring his wife's scolding, he sat down to dinner in his long johns, because of the heat. He listened with interest to what Lacika's father had to say about the drain; then they switched to the affairs of the cooperative farm where Uncle Géza was in charge of the granary. Sacks were being stolen from it, he complained.

"Well, sonny," he said, turning to Lacika; "what do you want to become when you're grown up?" He and Aunt Sári had no children, and that was the only question he could think of when speaking to a youngster. Or at the most: "How's the world treating you?"

"He'll become an engineer like his father, won't you, Lacika?" Aunt Sári said quickly.

"You'd rather be a doctor, wouldn't you, my dear?" said Lacika's mother stroking his hair. Irritably, the boy jerked his head away and started tapping the rim of his plate with his fork.

"I won't be nobody," he said.

"Now, now!" cried Auntie Irma, who was watching the party, asquat on the doorstep. 'This pampered child's going to give you people a lot of trouble yet,' she thought gloatingly. "That's not right, sonny. You'll be whatever your daddy says."

Lacika's mother was much annoyed at not being able to impress the

company as her son's confidant. Anxious to keep up appearances, and preserve the harmony between herself and her son, she heaved a little sigh, and said:

"He'll become whatever he pleases. We don't want to meddle in this."

"Come, come," the father interjected. "A pretty kettle of fish that would be..."

"Take a leg, too," Aunt Sári urged her guests. "There's enough and to spare. I've killed two chickens."

"No," mumbled Uncle Géza, vigorously champing his food, "it isn't right for a kid not to heed his father."

"A pretty kettle of fish," the father repeated. Uncle Géza got into his stride and, turning to the boy, began to sermonize.

"One born with a silver spoon in his mouth like you were, my boy, should appreciate his good luck. Your dad and mum work for you day and night."

"Do help yourselves! We don't want all this food left over. Why don't you eat, Lacika?"

"Because it stinks. Everything stinks!"

Lacika got a ringing smack from his mother. Silence fell for a moment. A fork dropped onto the stone floor of the kitchen. Lacika turned a chalky white and stared ahead of him with knitted brows.

"You got what you asked for," his father said softly.

"Ah, come. What's the good of this?" said Aunt Sári appeasingly and pressed Lacika's head to her bosom. Infuriated, the boy tore himself from her arms and ran out of the room.

"Why did you lose your temper like that?" Lacika's father snarled at his wife. "Just the right thing for your heart!"

"You see what he's like," she said.

"It's you who have brought him up!"

Lacika's mother started to cry. She just couldn't understand, she sobbed, why her boy should behave that way, for surely they had never refused him anything. For a little while, she and her husband continued to quarrel, each blaming the other. Finally, she announced that they were leaving at once. Her husband did not object; indeed he was only too glad. Aunt Sári and Uncle Géza raised a hue and cry in protest, but Lacika's mother remained adamant.

The boy had gone to the wood-shed. Granny had not changed her position, except that the other hand was now resting on the stick. She turned to face Lacika, and her eyes seemed to brighten with joy.

"Oh, Granny!" Lacika walked up to her and dropped on his knees. "Granny, darling, do tell me the story of the itinerant journeyman!"

He fumbled for her hand and felt it gently pressing his.

"Oh, Granny. You know what I want to be when I'm grown up?" He looked at her imploringly. "An itinerant journeyman, that's what I want to be, one who never wins a kingdom but always remains poor so he can always, always do good. What do you think, Granny?"

Dusk was falling when they left the village. As a punishment, Lacika was made to sit in the beak of the car. Huddled up in the corner, he stared sullenly at his feet. The Lord Chamberlain, a broken man, stood tottering before him and was listening to his farewell address. 'I am obliged to dismiss you, faithful servant,' Lacika said with emotion. 'You have served me loyally; but now I shall dismiss you, along with all my other loyal servants. For I am going on a long journey.'

His mother, sitting on the front seat, was softly crying.

"Ah, stop it, please," her husband said irritably. "Now it's you. Do you propose to keep blubbering all the way? A nice lot we are."

He was not very angry, though; for—luckily—there was nothing seriously wrong with the engine. It was running smoothly. All the same he was going to have the carburettor checked.

AS LIKE AS TWO PEAS

by

LÁSZLÓ FELEKI

"To kill two birds with one stone," said a political commentator on the BBC the other day, adopting the—by now worldwide—custom of interlarding political comments, speeches and harangues with homely little proverbs. We Hungarians have the same proverb, but instead of saying "birds" we, being a small nation, are content to say "flies". "To kill two flies with one blow," say the Hungarians, demonstrating the same parallel can be achieved by more modest means.

I was intrigued by this little parallel, which exposed national differentiations, and decided to study the proverbs of other nations and work out analogues, similarities, etc., of a similar cultural pattern. I was given the utmost assistance and the fullest facilities, and take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to the Institute for Cultural Relations, UNESCO, and the UN Commission for the Trusteeship and Supervision of Proverbial Postulates, for their invaluable cooperation. Here is the little thesaurus of analogous proverbs that I have culled from the lips of the people in the various countries.

Spain	to kill	two bulls with one muleta
Greenland	to kill	two seals with one gaff
France	to fight	two elections with one gaffe
South America	to organize	two coups with one general
West Germany	to clear	two nazis in one trial
Australia	to carry	two kangaroos in one pocket
Mexico	to wangle	two rains from one god
Guatemala	to eat	two bananas at one bite
Bulgaria	to grow	two Methuselahs on one yoghurt
Scotland	to throw	two wedding parties on one penny
Switzerland	to build	two clocks with one cuckoo

Monaco	to run	two gambling-clubs with one prince
Sweden	to survive	two wars with one neutrality
India	to charm	two cobras with one flute
Andorra	to congest	two citizens in one crowd
Japan	to entertain	two geishas on one tea
Brazil	to go through	two evenings on one coffee
Holland	to carve	two sabots out of one faggot
Egypt	to offer	two pyramids in one prospectus
Antarctic	to make	two ice-slabs in one freeze

For the sake of accuracy I must add that the Hungarian version has recently undergone a slight adaptation. Owing to the recent technological reorganization of the fly-killing industry, the proverb now runs "To kill one fly with two blows".

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SULYOK, Béla (b. 1904). Economist. A bank employee before 1945; after 1947, following the nationalization of the banks, President of the Commercial Bank and subsequently of the Hungarian National Bank. Deputy Finance Minister till 1951, responsible for the reorganization of the banking system. He was for a time Professor of Finance at the Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest. Between 1954 and 1959 head of the Hungarian Commercial Mission in Paris. After his return to Budapest, became President of the Hungarian National Bank for the second time, and subsequently First Deputy Finance Minister. Deputy-President of the Permanent Committee for Finance and member of the International Bank for Economic Co-operation (Comecon Bank). Publications: "Multilateralism" and "Study of Convertability under Socialism."

VAJDA, Imre (b. 1900). Economist, Professor at the Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest, member of the Editorial Board of The N.H.Q. See his "The Changing Role of Hungary in the International Division of Labour," in The N.H.Q., No. 19, as well as other contributions in several previous issues.

MAJOR, Máté (b. 1904). Architect, Professor of Architectural History at the University of Architectural Engineering in Budapest, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Has written much on the basic principles and tasks of contemporary architecture as well as twentieth century building developments. See his "Matter and Form in Hungarian Industrial Architecture," in The N.H.Q., No. 7.

VÉRTES, László (b. 1914). Archaeologist, works at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest as the head of its Palaeolithic Collection. Conducted numerous excavations. See his "Evolutionary Links and Chains of the Palaeolithic Age in Hungary," in The N.H.Q., No. 11.

ROBBE-GRILLET, Alain, the well-known French novelist and ideologist of the *nouveau roman*, spent a few weeks in Budapest last autumn. During his stay he gave lectures organized by the Hungarian Writers' Association, The Hungarian P.E.N. Centre, the *Institut Français en Hongrie*, and Eötvös University.

KÖPECZI, Béla (b. 1921). Ph.D., historian, Professor of French Literature at Budapest University, head of the Cultural Department of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Has published several studies and essays on Hungarian, French, Rumanian and other literary and historical subjects. His latest works are a monograph on Ferenc Rákóczi II and a volume entitled "Existentialism." See his "New Problems of Socialist Realism," in The N.H.Q., No. 17.

GODA, Gábor (b. 1915). Novelist, popular for his satirical approach to themes of the inter-war period, especially the Hungarian petty bourgeois. His collections of satirical stories: *Panoptikum* ("Waxworks Show") and *A planétás ember* ("The Fortune Teller") ran into several editions at home and abroad and brought him literary awards.

HUBAY, Miklós (b. 1918). Playwright. Until 1949 headed the Hungarian Library in Geneva and was a delegate to the *Bureau International d'Éducation*. After returning to Hungary after the war wrote film scripts and plays. A collection of his plays was published in 1965 under the title *Hősökkel és hősök nélkül* ("With and Without Heroes"). His play, *C'est la guerre* (published as "Three Cups

of Tea," in The N.H.Q., No. 4), was made into a successful opera by the composer Emil Petrovics and performed in several countries. His one-act play "The Crocodile Eaters" (published in The N.H.Q., No. 14) was awarded the Golden Nymph Prize at the Monte Carlo TV-Play Competition in 1965.

VÉSZI, Endre (1916). Poet and dramatist, whose successful works are largely based on his working-class background. In his plays for radio and the theatre, *Varjú doktor* ("Dr. Varjú"), *Árnyékod át nem lépheted* ("You Can't Step over Your Shadow"), *Hajnali beszélgetés* ("Talk at Dawn"), etc., he has dealt with moral issues of the day, sometimes in experimental form. Some of his works have been published in Czech, Polish and German.

SOMLYÓ, György (b. 1920). Poet, essayist, translator, Secretary of the Poets' Section at the Hungarian Writers' Association. Son of Zoltán Somlyó, a distinguished poet of the early twentieth century, began to publish at the age of nineteen and has since published some ten volumes of poetry, three volumes of essays, and numerous translations, including Shakespeare, Keats, and modern English and French poets. See his "Children of War (young Hungarian poets)," The N.H.Q., No. 17.

PAMLÉNYI, Ervin (b. 1919). Historian, head of a department in the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and editor of *Századok* and *Acta Historica*, two journals devoted to history. His main interests are Hungarian historiography and the early years of the Horthy era. Has published several papers in these fields and collaborated in the writing of several comprehensive historical works.

CAILLOIS, Roger (b. 1913), the French writer, Head of the Literary Section of UNESCO, spent a few weeks in Hungary as guest of the Hungarian National Committee for UNESCO and the Hungarian P.E.N. Centre. An expert in the various genres of literature, M. Caillois sent us his essay on science fiction after his return from Hungary.

FÖLDES, Anna. Journalist, critic and literary historian, graduated from Eötvös University in Budapest, in English and Hungarian. Has published monographs on Sándor Bródy and Ferenc Móra, Hungarian novelists of the early twentieth century, for which she was given an academic degree in literary history. At present works on the staff of *Nők Lapja*, an illustrated Budapest weekly for women. See her book reviews in The N.H.Q., Nos. 17, 20, 21.

SÁNDOR, Iván (b. 1930). Playwright and theatre critic, on the staff of *Film, Színház, Muzsika*, an illustrated Budapest weekly for film, theatre and music. See his theatre reviews in The N.H.Q., Nos 20 and 21.

BIRÓ, Yvette. Film critic, research worker at the Budapest Institute of Cinematography, editor of *Filmkultúra*, a periodical dedicated to theoretical questions of cinematography. Graduated from Eötvös University. Wrote several works on the theory of films. See her film review in The N.H.Q., No. 21.

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CSÁK, Gyula (b. 1930. Writer, works on the staff of the Budapest weekly *Élet és Irodalom*. Spent his chidhood in a little village on the Great Plain. See his "Deep Sea Current," in The N.H.Q., No. 8.

FELEKI, László (b. 1909). Journalist and writer. Formerly worked for sporting papers but since has become a humorist and is now working for the satirical weekly *Ludas Matyi* in Budapest. See "Varations on a Current Theme," in The N.H.Q., No. 11.

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