New Horizons in International Comparative Literature

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Edited by

Cao Shunqing, Theo D'haen, Yang Qing, Zhai Lu, Zhou Shu, Li Shen and Xia Tian

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FOREWORD

The term "comparative literature" first appeared in J.F.M. Noel and Laplace's *Tutoriel sur la literature comparée* (1816), and has been around for over two hundred years now. The studies of comparative literature worldwide have gained great and exciting development, which developed in a diversified direction including innovative theories, research methods, and research objects with unique regional and contemporary characteristics at each stage, especially in the Eastern academic community represented by China, where significant progress has been made. Relevant research has also developed towards cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, translingual directions. Dialogue and exchange between Eastern and Western civilizations has become an unstoppable trend in the research of comparative literature and world literature. In light of this background, it is necessary to publish an annual anthology of important academic achievements from different regions, languages, and cultures of the world.

Sponsored by the College of Literature and Journalism of Sichuan University in China, *New Horizons in International Comparative Literature* is an annual anthology of academic articles (as well as interviews and reviews). The purpose of the anthology is to make available in a timely fashion the multi-faceted aspects of the discipline by inviting, calling and selecting articles from all over the world, aiming at sharing new ideas in the context of globalization. The current anthology covers a wide range of articles in different research fields of comparative literature and world literature, which, at the time of writing, have just been published in the last 2 or 3 years. Our selection of these articles conforms to strict criteria: which contribute to the newest theoretical, practical and methodological developments; which best represent the trans-cultural, multi-national, inter-

disciplinary, thematically diverse and intellectually reflexive features; and which have won global significance and is referred by colleagues and researchers within and without the scope of our discipline.

Through these criteria, we successfully collect XVI articles to map the most cutting-edge and important research directions for future scholarly expertise and concerns. Authors of these articles contain renowned or emeritus scholars in the backgrounds of comparative literature, world literature, translation studies, cultural studies, linguistics, comparative cultural studies, comparative and contemporary poetics, diaspora literature, cultural studies, media studies and regional studies (including American countries such as the USA and Canada, European countries like Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Asian countries like China, etc.) and so on. Since its establishment, comparative literature has been constantly reflecting on its position and development. The spirit of self-reflection has been present throughout the development of comparative literature, and is also reflected in these articles. Drawing on the scope of these scholars' collective intellects and insights, our anthology will connect disparate research highlights and contexts to illuminate the multi-dimensional views of related areas as we step into the third decade of 21st century.

—Cao Shunqing

PREFACE

Like its predecessor, the *New Perspectives on International Comparative Literature*, the present edition offers a diverse sample of what is at stake in contemporary comparative literature studies. To this end, this *New Horizons in International Comparative Literature* again gathers a set of previously published articles on the most recent developments in the discipline. Invited thereto by Jacob Edmond in 2016, David Damrosch and Haun Saussy engaged upon a spirited exchange of views on the present state of comparative literature (Damrosch, Saussy and Edmond 2016). Saussy claimed that the discipline of comparative literature in the United States moves in either one of two directions: that of world literature or that of interdisciplinarity. He declares himself an advocate of the latter. Damrosch takes the opposite stance. The articles gathered in the present volume illustrate the two sides of contemporary comparative literature just mentioned.

The majority of the articles fall within the field of world literature, with an added focus on translation. Translation studies emerged in the 1970s and '80s as a coherent body of theory with the work of James Holmes, José Lambert, Hendrik van Gorp, Raymond Vandenbroeck, Kitty van Leuven-Zwart, and André Lefevere in the Low Countries, Susan Bassnett (who often collaborated with Lefevere), and Gideon Toury and Itamar Even-Zohar in Israel. It was picked up in the United States by a.o. Maria Tymoczko, Lawrence Venuti, and Edwin Gentzler. Damrosch's definition of world literature, in his groundbreaking *What Is World Literature?* (2003), as literature that gains in translation fostered insights from translation studies to be integrated into world literature studies. At the same time the practice of presenting all selected works in English translation in world

literature anthologies such as the Longman (2004), edited by Damrosch et al., and the Norton (latest edition 2018), edited by Martin Puchner et al. since 2012 but with earlier editions by Sarah Lawall et al., led to severe criticism by for instance Gayatri Spivak (2003) and Emily Apter (2013). Articles in this collection that insert themselves into the ongoing discussion about translation studies and its relation to world literature are those by Joseph Pivato, from a specifically Canadian perspective; Byron Taylor, who sees in untranslatability the possibility to renew literary theory; Abhinaba Chatterjee, for whom the concept of untranslatability has productively redefined the idea of world literature; and Sunqing Cao and Lu Zhai. Cao and Zhai are concerned with how variation over and between literatures, and with a special emphasis on Chinese literature, leads to innovation. Claudia Zucca looks into the same phenomenon from the perspective of the rise of vernaculars.

Closely related to issues of translation is the position of "minor" or "smaller" literatures in world literature. As the Danish critic Georg Brandes already argued at the turn of the twentieth century, authors from such literatures are naturally disadvantaged. They, their works, and the literature of which they are a part, are condemned to always play second fiddle to "major" literatures such as French, German, or – especially since the second half of the twentieth century – English literature, into the language of which they need to be translated in order to reach a wider readership. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek's article looks at this problematic with respect to a Czech woman author. He also draws upon his own comparative cultural studies approach and upon Cao's variation theory. Miloś Zelenka discusses the concept of world literature in Czech and Slovak literary studies. Anders Pettersson focuses on the concept of world literature more in general. Even more general is the same Pettersson's article on literary meaning. Peter Zima addresses questions of sameness and difference in comparative literature.

The more interdisciplinary dimension of comparative literature is addressed in articles by Marko Juvan, who situates Edward Said's ideas on worldliness and worlding in an economic- materialist context framed by Immanuel Walllerstein's world systems theory and the Warwick Collective's foregrounding of economic inequality. Christine Emmett also uses the Warwick Collective's approach in her discussion of how in societies marked by inequality, in this case South Africa, this leads to a particular narrative form. Hans-Herbert Kögler looks at comparative literature from the viewpoint of cultural studies and the philosophy/sociology of the Frankfurt School. Via the analysis of an African novel Hassan Mbiydzenyuy Yosimbom posits the possibility of a common cosmopolitan identity. Finally, Huimin Jin offers an overview of Western studies in China.

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—Theo D'haen

PERIPHERALITIES: "MINOR" LITERATURES, WOMEN'S LITERATURE, AND ADRIENNE OROSZ DE CSICSER'S NOVELS

STEVEN TÖTÖSY DE ZEPETNEK[1]

Abstract: In "Peripheralities: 'Minor' Literatures, Women's Literature, and Adrienne Orosz de Csicser's Novels" Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek discusses events surrounding Adrienne Orosz de Csicser's (1878-1934) work. For the contextualization of the events, Tötösy de Zepetnek employs his own framework of "comparative cultural studies", here applied to "minor literatures" (i.e., peripheral) and women's literature and Shunqing Cao's "variation theory." While Orosz's novels are not considered exceptional, the author achieved notoriety after being locked up in a mental institution. In addition to three published novels, Orosz narrates in an unpublished novel (excerpts of which she read at various literary and social gatherings) her love affair with a Roman Catholic bishop. Knowledge about her novel's contents resulted in the bishop orchestrating Orosz's commitment to a mental hospital. The context in which Orosz's texts are located is the socio-political situation in Hungarian society prior to and shortly after the First World War.

Keywords: Comparative Cultural Studies; Minor Literatures; Peripheral Literatures; Women's Literature; Variation Theory and Literature; Hungarian Literature

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This study's theoretical background is a combination of perspectives based in "comparative cultural studies," "a field of study where selected tenets of the discipline of comparative literature are merged with selected tenets of the field of cultural studies meaning that the study of culture and culture products—including, but not restricted to literature, communication, media, art, etc.—is performed in a contextual and relational construction and with a plurality of methods and approaches, inter-disciplinarity, and, if and when required, including teamwork. In comparative cultural studies it is the processes of communicative action(s) in culture and the how of these processes that constitute the main objectives of research and study" (Tötösy de Zepetnek, "From Comparative" 13-15). It is important to note that comparative cultural studies refers its practitioners to the relevance and problematics of the "other" which in the case of this study's subject matter ("peripheral" and "minor" literatures & women's writing) represents a principle of comparative cultural studies that offers a prominent reason for the intellectual (and pedagogical) value to implement the recognition and inclusion of the Other, that is, in this case women's literature and minor literatures (Tötösy de Zepetnek, "From Comparative" 13).

Further, the theoretical points of departure in the present study include Shunqing Cao's "variation theory": "Based on positivism, the study of variations of comparative literature is a new perspective in influence studies. It objectively studies the dynamic development of literature, penetrates the development of literature through variation, and combines positivism of the French school with the study of variation" (Cao 43; see also Cao and Han) because the combination of the two frameworks allows for more attention to the problematics of the "peripheral" with regard to both Hungarian literature as a "minor literature" (see Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Configurations") and women's literature (on "peripheralities" and European literature, see D'haen; Juvan). Last but not least, in work with and about women's literature, a further aspect of my objective are the problematics of erotic literature and narration (see Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Eroticism"; "Hungarian").

Based on the above references to theoretical perspectives in comparative cultural studies and variation theory, the following is about a Hungarian woman writer whose work is little known today although at the time of the texts' publication her novels were well received in critical and public opinion. Adrienne Orosz de Csicser (1878-1934) published three novels: *Czinizmus és idealizmus* (Cinicism and Idealism) in 1900 (109 pages), *Bozóthy Nóra grófnő* (Countess Nóra Bozóthy) in 1907 (172 pages), and *Róma diadala. Keresztény-szocziális regény* (The Triumph of Rome: A Christian- Social Novel) in 1907 (132 pages), and a play *A két házasság* ("Two Weddings"), first staged in 1908 in Nagyvárad (today Oradea in Romania) and Orosz herself played one of the characters in the play (Anonymous, "Bemutató"). Today the novels are unavailable except in single copies in the Hungarian National Archives and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and there is no copy anywhere to my knowledge of her 1908 play. None of the texts have been translated from Hungarian into any language. In scholarship or criticism there has been no study published about Orosz's literary output. Orosz is listed in a few lists of authors' data in bibliographical works (e.g., Diera, Mészáros, Zsadányi 214), but without any information about the author. My interest in Orosz's novels is based on three perspectives: the relevance of the "re-discovery" of women authors in particular in "minor" literatures, the discussion of eroticism and erotic narration in Hungarian literature (a rarity until the nineteenth century: see Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Eroticism"; "Hungarian"; see also Borgos; Kádár, "A legerotikusabb," *Engedelmes*; Varga), and the study of nineteenth- century Hungarian women writer's (proto)feminist perspectives and narration (see, e.g., Tötösy de Zepetnek, Kaffka Margit," "Margit Kaffka's").

For non-Hungarian readers of my study Orosz's surname needs explanation as there are two versions of the surname: one is the Hungarian version as "Csicseri Orosz" and the other is in the form of surnames of historical Hungarian nobility based on Latin (the language of the country's administration until 1844) as "Orosz de Csicser." Both versions are used in

references and publications where Orosz is mentioned. “de Csicser” and “Csicseri” refer to a *praedicatum*, a geographical place name of landed property donated by a monarch or a place name of the family’s origin (for an explanation of this see, e.g., Tötösy de Zepetnek, *nobilitashungariae*). It is also relevant that Orosz published her work with her real surname against the wishes of her family (d.t. 6). Further, the social background of Orosz is relevant both with regard to the novels she published and her life story. The Orosz de Csicser family is of ancient Russian origin (the translation of Orosz is “Russian”) and following settlement and landed donations of Hungarian nobility first documented in 1107 in the person of Friedrich de Checher (see Oláh 31; see also Nagy 269)and over the centuries they were landowners, royal and county officials, lawyers, and similar in several parts of the country (i.e., “Greater Hungary” prior to 1920). Adrienne Orosz’s father Béla (1852-1881) was a captain of the Hussars (a horseback unit of the military forces) who, because of gambling debts, committed suicide in 1881 in a casino in Ostende (Belgium). Her mother, Róza Fényes de Csokaly (1860-1905), was from another old and propertied family (for sources about the genealogies of the Fényes and Orosz families see Tötösy de Zepetnek, *Records*).

Adrienne Orosz was born in the eastern Hungarian city of Debrecen in 1878 and died in 1934 in Berlin, Germany. From her teenage life onward, she was interested in literature and there are a number of newspaper reports about her participation in various events where she recited poems and about occasional performances including acting and singing on the stage (e.g., Anonymous, “Várszínház”). Orosz may have had a stressful childhood owing to her father’s history of gambling and perhaps it happened because of this “influence” that she developed early on an interest in social issues which were usually not within the sphere of interest of young women of the social status in which Orosz was raised. In 1908 Orosz married Baron Pál Jeszenák de Királyfia (1882-1944), a landowner and captain of the Hussars. They divorced in 1917 and had four children: Adrienne (1909-?), Béla

(1911-1981), Melinda (1912-1912), and Melinda (1915-1945). It is interesting that Adrienne's and Pál's daughter Adrienne Orosz (1909-?) was a literary scholar who received a doctorate in French literature in 1934 at the University of Debrecen. Her other daughter Melinda (1915-1945) married a supreme court judge, Antal Baross de Bellus (1896-?). Adrienne had a brother, Géza (1879-1915), a clerk of the county who died in the First World War at the Russian front (see Tötösy de Zepetnek, *Records*).

Orosz's published her first novel *Czinizmus és idealizmus* (Cynicism and Idealism) in 1900 and it was noticed in newspaper notes not only that she was at the time twenty-two years old, but also that the writing of the novel is exceptional because its author is a woman: "Something incredible! A young girl writes a novel!" ("Soha ilyet! Egy fiatal lány regényt ír!") (Anonymous, "Czinismus" 133). The timeframe of the novel is around the last decade of the nineteenth century when Duke Philippe d'Orléans (1869-1926) was claimant to the French throne and there are many characters with extended discussions about reasons to support the monarchy. While descriptions of the novel are mostly positive, in one case the journalist criticizes the premise of the novel, namely that the author misses the point because her objective to argue that cynicism and idealism can be considered as equal and similar concepts is a mistaken idea based on the youth and lack of education and life experience of the author (Anonymous, "Czinismus"). Further, the journalist criticizes Orosz's choice of location, because the location of the novel with the author's "lofty" ideals in support of the French monarchy, could have been better in Hungary. As was said earlier, Orosz's novels were received from a positive critical point of view although at least in one article the two novels published in 1907, Bozóthy and Róma diadala, are criticized heavily because the texts are "poison" for any young reader and would be at best "smiled upon" by an adult reader (Anonymous, "Két regény).

It appears that contemporary journalists (some of whom may have been also literary critics) read the novel superficially in that no one referred to

obvious parts where Orosz narrates proto-feminist opinions and erotics. For example, the protagonist countess Camille is described as a "new woman" based partially on the fact that her mother was an American millionaire (12, 34; on the concept and history of the "new woman" see, e.g., Showalter) who becomes the lover of her later husband rather than marrying him because she prefers to be "free" of the personal and social constraints a marriage would impose on her (29, 38). The difference of age between Camille and her lover and later husband Richard is also referred to several times: Camille was 21 and Richard 35 (20, 25), although in the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century it was standard in aristocratic circles that the husband was about ten years older than the spouse. Interestingly, the novel is dedicated to Baroness Lilla Vay de Vaja (1860-1941) who was married to Count Tódor Pejacsevich de Verőcze (1855-1928) Governor of Croatia and a noted piano player and supporter of classical music (see m.r.) and this dedication indicates Orosz's interest in gaining recognition by upper-class members of society. Overall, the novel does not suggest any exceptional ideas or perspectives which would prepare readers and critics with regards to the problems Orosz would experience later.

Orosz's second novel is *Róma diadala. Keresztény-szocziális regény* (The Triumph of Rome: A Christian-Social Novel) published in 1907 and her third novel is *Bozóthy Nóra grófnő* (Countess Nóra Bozóthy) published also in 1907. *Róma diadala* is a "traditional" text in that there are no references even in the remotest sense to or about objections or actions which could be considered "controversial." The novel is about two sisters who do not see eye-to-eye about a number of things and their husbands, one of whom is Roman Catholic while the other is Protestant and this brings about complications in the protagonists' relationships with each other and their parents. It is Orosz's third novel *Bozóthy Nóra grófnő* that, after two less than controversial texts, suggests a departure. And this departure with new perspectives commences with the image on the book's cover, a young

woman with long red hair, exposed shoulders, and partially exposed breasts in a long dress who embraces a statue of an aged horned faun. The next interesting feature is that the novel has a preface in which Orosz writes that she has no intentions to recommend her novel to the graces of her readership and that everyone is invited to judge and even "sentence to death" what she wrote. She adds that her opinion is permitted without the negation of chivalry because she was "born a lady." In the last sentence of the preface, she apologizes to her readers for bringing her text to the printer. *Bozóthy* is about an aristocratic woman (i.e., nobility with a rank: countess) who undergoes emotional, mental, and sexual tribulations prior to her marriage to Baron Sándor Barkay. Similar to *Róma diadala*, *Bozóthy* is also with two sister protagonists, Nóra and Edith, who do not like each other. There are several years of an age difference between the two and Edith is convinced that her young sister is more beautiful than she is and this sentiment runs through the narrative. The text begins with a scene in which the older sister, Edith, consults a professor and physician about her sister Nóra. The text is with references to contemporary figures in the fields of psychology and psychiatry such as Sigmund Freud and Richard von Krafft-Ebing and to astronomer Camill Flammarion and writers such as Emile Zola. Obviously, this suggests that Orosz was reading contemporary science and literature and wanted to refer to these topics in her text to encourage her readership to inquire into same.

One of the first signs of a "new" Orosz in her writing is when her protagonist Edith says to the psychologist whom she is consulting about her sister Nóra that, "nincsenek hisztérikus nők, nincsenek perverz nők ... Csak gonosz, elvetemedett nők és aljas férfiak vannak" (8) ("there are no hysterical women, there are no women of perversion ... there are only immoral women and villainous men"). However, in other parts of her text she opts for established and "stock" narration such as the beauty of women and men and that is frequent in the text: women have beautiful white skin, sparkling eyes, long and beautiful black or blond hair, thin hips, elegant

hands, etc., and men are "majestic" and strong (e.g., 43). Within the complicated emotional and social happenings between the protagonists about marriage and relationships in wealthy surroundings with dinners and outings, Orosz narrates Nóra's emotions and thoughts in detail including a lesbian relationship Nóra has with her father's brother's wife, Madelaine (47, 56-58, 70-71). Madelaine herself underlines this by saying that she would like to live with and experience "érzéki örömökkel" ("pleasures of sensuality") like protagonists in Zola's novels (56). Further, and this is truly exceptional in Hungarian novels of the time, Nóra seduces -- and sexual consummation is inferred in the text -- her father's brother and husband of Madelaine, Armand, and this incestuous relationship figures heavily in the novel despite the fact that Nóra, eventually, "returns to god" (see *Bozóthy* 69-70) before she dies.

While the *Bozóthy* described and referred to the novel in newspaper notes in mostly positive ways, the notes include statements that the text is "erotic" (e.g., d.t.). This did not result in any criticism of Orosz's text which in itself is at least surprising: it may have been that the text was not read in detail by the critics or that the same critics were a more "permissive" lot. It is what happened in the next decade and after that brings the social, personal, emotional situation of Orosz to a different level. In fact, in the same year, in 1908, when Orosz married and a year after the publication of two of her novels (1907), she founded in Budapest with two women writers a critical journal/magazine entitled *Női Élet* (Women's Life) with the intention to present discussions about the problems and problematics of modern women's lives and to "satisfy" modern Hungarian women's intellectual interests (see Anonymous, "Női Élet"). The editors intended to publish texts by women authors only. The two co-founders of the magazine were Alba Nevis aka Ilona Unger (1886-1963), who published erotic poetry, realist novellas, and plays (see, e.g., Mák), and Blanka Beck (1880-1964), also a poet. Further, in 1908 Orosz's play *A két házasság* (Two Marriages) was staged in Nagyvárad, a play about *méssaliance* marriages whereby a noble

(usually a male) marries another noble of lesser rank or a woman of non-nobility. In the newspaper note about the play the anonymous journalist writes that the play was interesting because of its social relevance and implications and that Orosz performed to the audience's appreciation well ("Bemutató"; the ms. of the play is extant).

Orosz's tribulations started in 1918 and this is what elevates Orosz's life story and situation to an interesting and relevant (i.e., peripheralities of women's literature and erotic writing in Hungarian literature) socio-literary phenomenon of the early twentieth century, a situation that is unique: it is unique because of Orosz's social position (ancient nobility by birth and marriage into propertied aristocracy), her position as a woman writer, and the involvement of the highest levels of government and the Hungarian Roman Catholic church and the ensuing events where a member of the aristocracy is taken to a mental asylum based on claims made by a bishop: needless to say, such situations are not common in any European society because "problems" of and in the elite (i.e., aristocracy) usually did not result in situations like Orosz's: at best, an aristocrat, if he or she overstepped certain boundaries, would be "blackballed" but not imprisoned in a mental asylum which is why the several newspaper reports about the case considered it exceptional.

In 1918, when Orosz's husband, Jeszenák, was deployed to the Russian front, Orosz began to write a new novel she entitled *Intézmények* (Institutions) about the love affair of an Italian cardinal and the abbess of a convent (d.t.), parts of which Orosz read in social gatherings. Apparently, a high-ranking church official (i.e., Prohászka: see below) and a lady of high society got wind of the story and they thought they recognized themselves in the story and attempted to stop the publication of the novel. While this did not succeed, a friend of the high-ranking church official, Dr János Tóth (1864-1929), became head of the Ministry of the Interior and saw to it that the head of the office of detectives, Dr Imre Hetényi (1862-1930), would summon Orosz to appear in his office and demand of Orosz repeatedly to

not publish her novel (d.t.). Orosz declined and asserted her intention to publish the novel after which Hetényi released Orosz. After Orosz arrived at her home, the police were already waiting at her apartment and she was taken back to Hetényi's office where she was put in a straightjacket and transported by the police to the notorious mental hospital in a Budapest suburb called Lipótmező (see d.t.). It should be added here that the theme of celibate priesthood and "carnal love" and eroticism in Hungarian literature is likely a first in Orosz's *Bozóth,* and her unpublished *Intézmények* (note that the ms. is extant) although Orosz's treatment of the theme had been surpassed not long later by Renée Erdős's (1879-1956) 1922 novel *Santerra bíboros* (Cardinal Santerra) (on Erdős and eroticism, see, e.g., Kádár; Kemenes-Géfin; Varga).

Orosz's story and the mental hospital -- at least according to newspaper articles published in 1918 when she was taken to the mental hospital and in articles published later -- is to be understood in the context of class, institutions of religion, and politics: the writers of the newspaper articles appear to be suggesting that there was indeed something happening between Orosz and the theologian and bishop of Székesfehérvár (1905-1927), Ottokár Prohászka (1858-1927). The difference is that in some of the articles it is Orosz who is described as "crazy" and Prohászka is subjected to a crazy woman's advances and hence it was within "his right" to get the police involved (Anonymous, "Az élet"; Anonymous, "Az Őrült"; d.t.; maz) while others suggest that what Orosz is saying is likely true, but that this does not warrant the over-the-top action of police and her commitment to a mental hospital (Pilisi; p.r.). Whichever suggestion, the fact remains that a woman writer from the upper class, with no indication of any "craziness" in public or family life, is taken in a straightjacket to a mental hospital by machinations instigated by a bishop of the country's majority religion (Roman Catholicism) and hence a major political and social base of power. In another 1918 article in the newspaper *Népszava* it is reported that Orosz admits to be in love with Prohászka and that she visited him often since

1914, that they had an affair, and that she was hoping that Prohászka would marry her (see p.r.): she had been divorced from Jeszenák since 1917. In the same article it is also stated that the police (i.e., Hetényi) had copies of the letters Orosz wrote to Prohászka:

"At first, he [Hetényi] attempted to persuade her [Orosz] to give up publishing her novel and after this did not succeed, he showed her a number of letters which she had written to the bishop and in which she pursued the bishop to deliver on his promise to marry her. Unfortunately, said the Baroness, the letters the bishop wrote to her were destroyed by her husband prior to their divorce. She did not wish to mention to her relatives the scandal because she loved the bishop and she was repulsed by the possibility that the mental institution story would involve the bishop. But now she was aware of the bishop's "gallantry" to release her most intimate letters. She said that she was very disappointed in the bishop and said that she can now state without blushing that she had indeed had an affair with him. They had lunches together several times at the bishopric residence together with the bishopric secretary and a canon, and she mentioned these by their names. And she added that she has been informed that the bishop at least acknowledges they do in fact know each other and spoke five or six times when he offered her spiritual support while earlier he denied that they know each other altogether. (p.r.; trans. Tötösy de Zepetnek)

Előbb a regény kiadásától akarta őt eltántorítani, majd amikor ez nem sikerült, fölmutatott neki néhány levelet, amelyet ő a püspöknek irt, és amelyekben nógatta, hogy váltsa be ígéretét és vegye el őt feleségül. Sajnos -- mondotta a bárónő -- azokat a leveleket, amelyeket ő írt nekem, nincs módomban megmutatni, mert azokat férjem megsemmisítette, még mielőtt elváltunk. De hiszen én nem is akartam erről a botrányról még a rokonaimnak sem említést tenni, mert én a püspököt szerettem és irtóztam attól a gondolattól, hogy az ő neve belekerüljön ebbe a tébolydai históriába. Ámde most látom, milyen finom gavallér volt a püspök. Képes volt a legdiszkrétebb leveleimet kiadni kezéből. Nagyon kiábrándultam belőle.

Most már megmondhatom önnek pirulás nélkül, hogy igenis viszonyom volt vele. Nem egyszer úgy ebédeltünk együtt, hogy velünk voltak a püspöki rezidencián egy érseki titkár meg egy kanonok is. (Az illetőket névleg is megnevezte.) Egyébként úgy értesültünk, most már a püspök úr is elismer annyit a viszonyunkból, hogy 5-6szor beszélt velem, de csak "lelki vigasz" nyújtása miatt. Mert eleinte azt is letagadta, hogy ismer. (p.r.)"

Bishop Prohászka refers to the "baroness" in his diary on 2 May 1912, but denies the affair and does not admit to it as he reportedly did in the above newspaper by journalist p.r.: "The soul of women is multiple times more moral because it is more sensitive and pure; those who are not like that will slide [into sin] and I had nothing to do with such sullied ones; the single such was Baroness X who crossed my path, a hysterical and perverse woman. God bless my soul, I had nothing to do with her" ("A nők lelke sokszorosan morálisabb, mert érzékenyebb és tisztább; aki nem ilyen, az lesiklik s ily piszkosokkal nem volt dolgom; az egyetlen X bárónő, tévedt utamba, egy hisztérikus s perverz asszony. Isten látja a lelkemet, hogy semmi közöm sincs hozzá!") (Vol. 1, 299-300)

The news of the Prohászka and Jeszenák affair found its way to foreign newspapers too: here is what was published in 1918 in the US-American *Albuquerque Morning Journal*:

From the Vienna Neues Journal. Baroness Jaul [Paul] Jeszenak, a member of the Budapest aristocracy and a well-known authoress, has been forcibly placed in a lunatic asylum. To explain the affair, statements were at first circulated in the press claiming that the baroness' internment had been ordered by her distinguished relatives, who objected to the publication of her recent novel dealing with the flagrant immoralities of society life in Budapest. The "Eigh O'clock Journal" of Budapest now gives the real reason for the forcible removal at night by half a dozen masked men and her subsequent incarceration. It appears that the lady had been enamoured with Dr Ottokar Prohaska, the bishop of Stuhlweissenburg [i.e., Székesfehérvár], who, though he admitted in the presence of other church dignitaries that the

baroness' affections were reciprocated by him, had judged it right in the interests of clerical discipline to cause the baroness' removal to a remote locality. (*Albuquerque Morning Journal* [1918.06.30.] 6.)

Overall, based on these newspaper reports it may well have been that Orosz was indeed in love with Prohászka although the twenty-year difference in age makes the affair and its inferred sexual component questionable: in 1918 Prohászka was 60 and Orosz was 40 years of age. It is to be noted that Prohászka was a prominent church leader who published work to advance conservative Roman Catholic education, but who also gained notoriety because of his anti-Semitic beliefs (see, e.g., Fazekas). Apart from the age difference between Orosz and Prohászka, it is also the position of Prohászka that suggests a bishop would not have been interested in actually marrying Orosz and leaving the church, but this does not negate the possibility that the two had an affair including "consummation." Orosz was herself not likely anti-Semitic, e.g., her two co-editors of the magazine *Női Élet* (Women's Life) they founded in 1908 were both of Jewish origin. A further curious aspect of Orosz's story is a newspaper report in 1923 that Orosz was arrested in Vienna because of her monarchist statements and that the Austrian police deported her (Anonymous, "Monarchista"; Anonymous, "Die ausgewiesene"; Austria was by 1919 a republic, titles of nobility were prohibited by law, and public support for the monarchy a punishable offence). In another newspaper article in 1924 there was a longer storyline according to which Orosz was a left-wing socialist already in her teens, that she lived with Russian anarchists in the 1910s in Zürich and Paris, and that in 1924 she was living on the streets as a penniless beggar in the southern city of Temesvár (after 1919 Timișoara in Romania) (Anonymous, "Az élet"). Between the last newspaper note in 1924 and the latest note in 1989 there are to my knowledge no records about Orosz in public media or in any other type of documentation. The 1989 note is by a journalist "K.B." whose article "Filmnovella. 'Vagy amit akartok'" ("Filmnovella: Or What You Will") recounts the same story of left-wing socialist and anarchist Orosz and

that she had become a beggar, but does not refer to the 1923 arrest in Vienna as a monarchist. In the newspaper notes about Orosz, the two opposite ends of the political spectrum (socialist/anarchist and monarchist) are curious because said opposite ends are hardly possible and hence there is a curious *lacunae* about the perception of Orosz. In my opinion it is more likely that she was a monarchist and, in many ways, a conservative, and that she may have fallen on hard times by 1924, but it was unlikely that she was by that time a beggar who lived on the street.

Owing to the lack of published or archival sources about Orosz's writing and life it is unlikely that we will be able to arrive at more data than what I present here. Yet, I argue that with the material available it is possible to (re)construct some of what would/could have happened: a woman writer is first relatively successful and receives newspaper accolades about her novels, then gets married and does what is expected and produces children. Her marriage appears to have been unhappy between the birth of her third child in 1912 and prior to the birth of her fourth child in 1915 and she has an affair with a high-ranking Roman Catholic priest between 1914 and 1918. We do not know whether it is true -- as Orosz states following the words of the interviewing journalist -- that the priest is also in love with her although I would take the position that it is possible although it is questionable that the bishop would have left his church and married Orosz. What resonates in the context of society, politics, literature, and women's writing is that it is Orosz, the woman writer, who "goes under" by 1924. But, again, we do not know how she got to Berlin to die there in 1934 (the same year when her daughter receives her doctorate in literature). There is no explanation with regard to the report that she was a left-wing socialist associated with Russian anarchists in the 1910s and then in 1923 she was arrested in Vienna for her monarchist statements. As I suggest above, evidence indicates the two opposite ends of the political and social spectrum. And the years of the 1923 arrest in Vienna and the 1924 report of Orosz as a beggar in Timișoara do not make sense because either she became penniless within a few months

and becomes a beggar or this did not happen at all as reported. Of course, all this is not necessarily relevant with regard to the interpretation of her writing and her "affair" with the bishop, but it is relevant to re-discover women authors' texts which broaden and impact our understanding of women's literature and literature altogether. These "impacts" include the already referred to "rediscovery" of women's writers, women's voice(s) which deviate from the "norm" such as the advocation of women's rights, and the presence of women's voices about their erotic imagination – all of which, I submit, are present in Orosz's novels. Last but not least, Orosz's novels and her life story are relevant with regard to the situation of "peripheral" and "minor" literatures and the argument to pay attention to such.

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