Travelling around Cultures

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Collected Essays on Literature and Art

Edited by

Zsolt Győri and Gabriella Moise

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

ZSOLT GYŐRI AND GABRIELLA MOISE

Embarking on a journey to a yet-unvisited destination releases sensations of fear and wonder, grief and anticipation. No lone traveler is fully alone, however; itineraries, personal belongings, and expectations travel with us, so do the people, landscapes, and social environments we depart from but never fully leave behind while moving forward to new places, unknown encounters, and unforeseeable challenges. The experience of traveling is hardly ever grounded in perceptions of distances covered but in networks of conscious and unconscious associations.

Art shares a lot in common with traveling as the artist, in the quest for heightened experience, often finds himself or herself on unfamiliar terrain following signs, in search of causes, recognizing hidden correlations, and, as the authors of this volume believe, exploring the human sphere. Artistic journeys are exercises in self-reflection, part of which involves understanding the culture—its notions, images, heroes, values, and meanings—one is embedded in while making sense of being in the world. Whether in novels, poems, plays, films, travelogues or graphic novels, textual crystallizations of cultural processes invite audiences to consider the often invisible mechanisms at work in social systems, be they gender, class, or ethnic conflicts, stereotypes, and cultural discourses that solidify hegemonies.

The culturally sensitive critical approach owes a major debt to Michel Foucault and his predecessors for their explorations into the dynamics of *power* which have their resonances in the artistic and cultural artefacts and styles of various eras. Such output should not be confined to individual texts and artists but to phenomena ranging from reception to censorship. Nóra Séllei addresses the former in her chapter and answers Michel Foucault's programmatic inquiry—what is the author?—by analyzing the past five decades' reception history of Katherine Mansfield's work in Hungary. Authorship is addressed as a construction of the receiving

culture: a discursive product of professional reading communities and the sociocultural and ideological environment in which these are embedded. According to Séllei, the "Hungarian Mansfield" emerges within the interplay of material conditions and the institutional framework of the post-1956 era, when, despite the de-Stalinization of cultural life, ideological paternalism was still a dominant factor in literary reception. Despite regular praise for Mansfield's prose in various collections containing translations of her work, a reappearing criticism was of her inclination not to present grand social perspectives and class struggle openly but to focus on intimacy, emotion, and domesticity instead. As this case study testifies, intercultural translation is just as crucial a factor in the canonization of authors as the texts themselves.

Geographical and ideological borders might highlight certain authorial features while rendering others invisible. The reverse might also be true: an artwork may evince its creator's attachment to or separation from the dominant norms of an era. According to Judit Kónyi, the poetry of Emily Dickinson, by expanding writerly and readerly sensibilities through the multiplication of rhyming word-pairs, questions both the form and the function of lyrical self-expression that dominated the nineteenth century. The great variety of combinations Dickinson uses in her verse places the reader into an ambiguous situation, and requires him or her to read the poem as if solving a puzzle. Kónyi identifies the writerly strategy of elliptical expression as an invitation for readers to be more than passive recipients of prescribed meaning and to become active producers, even co-authors of these literary pieces. The cultural translation of this textual innovation constructs Dickinson's authorial position as that of the outsider: a poet who resists the inherent hierarchy of the well-established nineteenth-century hermeneutic process wherein the poet serves as creator and the reader as recipient of ready-made messages, and prefigures poetry as a participatory artistic-cultural experience. The progressive nature of such practices would be recognized by both literary modernism and cultural/literary theoreticians of the twentieth century but it also emerged in Dickinson's own time.

Her contemporary across the Atlantic, William Morris, pursued an "artisan-archaeologist" approach towards art which—according to Balázs Keresztes—neither abstracted the physical reality of architecture into immaterial ideas or messages, nor did it reduce its object to simplifying analytical descriptions. In Keresztes's chapter Morris is introduced, on the one hand, as a sceptic of binary categories such as design and craft, fashioning and execution, architect and builder, abstract and practical art, "thinking" and "working" and, on the other hand, as an outspoken supporter

of collaborative working processes and artisan authorship. His archeological interest in buildings and books originated from his socio-cultural interest in details: their bearing witness to lived and popular culture. In addition, his appreciation for "native" and "ecological" working methods illuminates his refusal of the practice of restoration, the aim of which, he believed, was to ignore the minoritarian politics of past artisanship and its knowledge of building materials. Instead, he proposed a kind of a re-enactment of not only the artwork but also a way of creative (cultural) being in the world, a quality shared by people who practiced art in the past for their own sake, for pleasure and spiritual enrichment, instead of serving high architectural and stylistic ideals. To recall Walter Benjamin's later notion of auratic sensations, Morris ascribes a unique and even magical force to the activities of the artisan which is also a force permeating popular culture. Dickinson's fashioning of the textual sphere for audiences with writerly sensitivities and Morris's efforts to integrate relevant aspects of artisanship into appreciating art were important incentives for questioning elitist tendencies in art and its reception.

One of the most recent literary phenomena to follow in the paths of both democratized textual production and popular cultural influence is fanfiction, described by Larisa Kocic-Zámbó as a mind-set heavily reliant on participatory practices and a communal sense with a focus on the present moment and the reuse of formulas. Such repetition represents a strong ritualistic dimension, while selection, variety, and invention will mark a progressive side. The combination of these two in acts of transformative retelling—a possible definition of fanfiction itself—allows people to create the core myth through which they find meaning in the world. Fanfiction might teach us about twenty-first-century strategies of forming communities, the members of which do not personally know each other and come from various continents, social classes, age groups, religious and racial environments, yet who exploit the possibilities of what Walter Ong terms "secondary orality" and progress from passive consumers into active producers of cultural artifacts.

The case of fanfiction might stand as a strong argument for the disappearance of hierarchy between high and popular culture and signal empowerment for creative minds previously excluded from cultural production while also strengthening grassroots communal values. Such assertions, nevertheless, would misrepresent the architecture of global culture which is still very much under the double burden of what Louis Althusser identified as Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), the latter of which enforces similar techniques of repression as those of RSA "even if ultimately . . . this is very attenuated

and concealed, even symbolic" (2001, 146). The institution of censorship, as a permanent although historically changeable RSA and limit on artistic freedom, is explored in this volume by Alberto Lázaro. His case studies examine both censorship strategies that claim to protect core cultural values by expurgating literary works and the authors' battle against such repressive discourses, which they believe, only solidify hegemonies. The chapter discusses how in the eighteenth century Jonathan Swift maintained an ironic position in relation to then-contemporary censorship and incorporated its criticism into his literary style, while the less-fortunate Thomas Hardy had his literary career first marred, then eventually terminated by censorship. Moving into the twentieth century not much has changed; censors still hope to sanitize public thinking, an activity that is all too symptomatic of contemporary geopolitical, moral, racial, gender, and religious anxieties. Also an effective tool in the hands of political hysterics, as Lázaro concludes, censorship stigmatized and vilified authors such as George Orwell, Doris Lessing, and Salman Rushdie despite their immense service to culture through efforts to counter forces of repression and concealment with their therapeutic liberation of language.

The constitution or destabilization of hegemonic mechanisms through artistic practices suggests that the struggle for power and meaning are interlocked. There is, likewise, a strong association between the struggle for meaning and *identity*. The Victorian Era has long been in the focus of scholars studying the social constraints and moral limitations forced on individuals and groups alike. Amongst them, Foucault's research into the Victorian discourse on sexuality presented how sexual others "would be driven out, denied, and reduced to silence," that is, he sketched a portrait of the period in which "repression operated as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence" (1979, 4). Apart from penal law, medical reports, and court cases, art also captured the official identity politics of the period as hypocritical, misogynist, colonial, and generally intolerant towards behavior that would not fit received archetypes, ideals, and norms.

A precursor of the suffocating mechanisms of ordering, othering, and silencing was colonial identity politics that took distinct shape from the late eighteenth century. The most revealing examples, however, were not the scenarios of declaring natives subaltern and subjugating them by way of direct military conquest but the more subtle ways of appropriation. Efterpi Mitsi presents a case study of the latter in her analysis of the exploited architectural treasures of the Acropolis. In addition, she also demonstrates how cultural meaning and identity crystallized around material artifacts of symbolic capital and was produced through

negotiation and the contest between different, often ideological discourses and narratives. In this case, the Western narrative, according to which the classical heritage is best preserved by colonial powers, was confronted by the perception that it formed an unalienable part of Greek national history. Apart from the underlying discourses of (cultural) colonialism and nationalism, the sculptures also held symbolic values for individuals, like Mary Nisbet of Dirleton who, while managing the removal and transport of the Acropolis statues, exercised control over the men around her. As opposed to Nisbet's feminine agency of colonization, the locals sought to preserve the ruins to articulate, on the eve of the Greek Revolution, their continuity with antiquity and traditions.

In the same fashion in which architectural treasures are attributed symbolic values, so spaces—be they early nineteenth-century Greece or Victorian London. Eszter Ureczky explores Matthew Kneale's *Sweet Thames* (1992) as a diagnostic reading of repressive Victorian identity politics and medico-moral discourses that equated contagion with spaces, like the metropolitan sewage system, lying outside social and bodily margins. As often is the case, geographical topographies resonate with the topography of the human psyche. This allows Ureczky to consider the sewers of subterranean London as the "spatial subconscious" of the city. Extending this analogy, she also suggests that the Victorian metropolis stands as the historical subconscious of postindustrial and post AIDS-epidemic Britain of the late twentieth century, a bleak reminder of past sanitary, racial, and sexual crises (spatialized as contagion, disease, and filth). It is more than a reminder; it is a warning against hypocritical social morality that wishes to suppress anything it cannot control, even if—as Joshua Jevons in Kneale's novel discovers—it will eventually be consumed by it.

The symbolic values ascribed to artifacts and places never exemplify mechanisms of identity formation in as straightforward a manner as those associated with socio-moral institutions, like the family. Given its seminal role in a person's psychosocial development, furthermore being the determinant environment for notions of familiar responsibility, discipline, and patriarchy, domestic relations become infused with cultural connotations. Rudolf Nyári investigates Victorian ideals of domesticity and the grim prospects of female empowerment by focusing on the grandfather-granddaughter relationship in Charles Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840). His chapter identifies the reversal of familial roles between young Nell and her mentally deranged grandfather—for whom she acts as an emotional and economic guardian—as a case of "maternal paternalism," adding that Nell fails to seriously challenge the predominance of male

superiority, since the social function of the domestic order on which this superiority was founded is left unquestioned. Accurate cultural diagnoses of this type earn the novel its place as a lasting contribution to our understanding of Victorian domesticity.

The silencing of autonomous female agency proved an enduring cultural *topos* from the era and has inspired writers, filmmakers, and painters ever since. Janice Galloway's *Clara* (2002), a postmodern polyphonic novel, also found inspiration in the Victorian patriarchal regime which she explores from a contemporary perspective being sensitive to both marginalized lives and a multiplicity of viewpoints. Dóra Vecsernyés reconstructs the struggles of composer and pianist Clara Schumann with silence and the inability of direct speech imposed on her by a domineering father and her genius husband, both of whom at various stages of her life posed masculine limits on her female self-expression. Revolting against these patriarchal constraints, Clara develops heightened sensitivity to aural perception and uses music to communicate with others. To underline this point, Galloway makes rich allusions to Romantic compositions and composers and her frequent descriptions of sound and silences invest her novel with strong aural qualities. As Vecsernyés points out, female empowerment is not simply achieved through the juxtaposition of music and silence but through resisting the elitist ethos music held for male composers: Clara's music is the medium of creativity and female identity not subordinated to patriarchal ideals or measured by masculine notions of excellence.

Galloway's fictionalized *recollection* of Clara Schumann's achievements as a musician and, more importantly, as a woman liberated from the repressive patriarchal order revisits but also resists Victorian anxieties of gender equality. The dark heritage of nineteenth-century gender politics, however, still haunts the present, with misogyny turned into a source of entertainment in some popular culture texts. In the most disturbing cases, like recent adaptations of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes-stories, women fare even worse than in the nineteenth-century stories. Andrea Kirchknopf identifies such negligence in a British (2010-) and in a Russian (2013) television serialization of the Sherlock Homes universe, both of which render the character of Irene Adler through male-chauvinist stereotypes: a sex worker and dominatrix who usually needs to be saved by intelligent men. The desire for male superiority founded in Victorian gender hierarchy, is a clear symptom of current anxieties about weakened patriarchal identities. On that account, the resexualization and vilification of Adler's original proto-feminist figure is a rather desperate attempt to master the identity crisis by activating regressive memory, or what

Svetlana Boym has termed "restorative nostalgia." The sexist tone of the two series is certainly not a case of unfortunate misinterpretation, an error to be addressed by adaptations studies, but a conscious strategy, the dynamics of which are most fruitfully deciphered by cultural studies and its interest in how the past is exploited by individuals and communities alike. Nostalgia itself is a central issue, initially described as a male pathology in the seventeenth century, an assumption that has since been supported by literature (most notably by Marcel Proust) and military psychology. As suggested above, cultural analyses of nostalgia might reach a similar conclusion and argue for a specific gendered notion of longing for the golden age, in which the object of yearning is patriarchy itself.

Graham Swift's novel *Ever After* (1992)—explored in this volume by Bożena Kucała—suggests something similar, even if Swift's is a narrative of loss with disintegration serving as a central motif. The male protagonist's inability to respond in a constructive manner to personal vulnerability and destitution is presented as a consequence of the loss of faith in the Judeo-Christian promise of redemption. Bill Unwin lacks the empowering narratives of cultural identity that served as protective agency against forces of annihilation in the nineteenth century and the secularization of which deprives him of faith in an achievable paradisal existence. Ultimately the lack of such faith is not addressed on theological grounds, just as Unwin's rejection of nostalgic yearning, the contemporary equivalent of a belief in transcendental providence, is not a gender-neutral act. His dismissal of the imaginary return to the golden age of youthful patriarchal happiness is a way of accepting the male identity crisis and pressing on with his father's self-annihilating gesture to part with religious explanations in favor of scientific ones.

Memory offers itself for cultural analysis as the faculty used to create a coherent identity-narrative even if this means going beyond personal history and recognizing oneself as an agent of tradition, a bearer of cultural and historical heritage. Nevertheless, we have to sometimes step outside the analytical procedures of cultural studies to understand what triggers such quests for permanence. According to Kristóf Kiss's, W. B. Yeats's "Among School Children" and William Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" esteem memory as the vehicle for regaining the childhood experience of the soul's immortality which is forgotten but not altogether lost for the adult self. Kiss's arguments reach back to antique philosophers Plato and Plotinus to describe the motif of "presence," something distinct from psychologically grounded subjectivity—a state of an originary discontinuity and rupture—; it is a timeless unity that permeates all beings

and to which all existing things are immanent. In addition, the image of the dancer as indistinguishable from the dance in Yeats's poem is described as recollection that overcomes the despair of mortality with the promise of unity and a return to the roots of an ahistorical and non-cultural being: a being not *in* but *of* the world. Recollection might well be an intellectual and emotional journey, yet it does not thrive on summoning up specific mental contents—places, events, people—but signifies a special form of perception and cognition: a "sympathetic" relationship with existence and the world anterior to psychological and cultural frameworks of making meaning.

"Among School Children" and "Immortality Ode" conjure the powers of germinal life and make use of meditative poetic language in the battle with temporality. Elegiac poetry does something similar but from a reverse angle: it embraces death, loss, and deprivation to the fullest in order to salvage moments that were never meant to be lost. Subjective experience of demise and rejuvenation carry universal appeal not only because of the eternal human struggle with mortality but because these experiences might form part of the process of healing for communities who encountered tragic events, such as the survivors of genocide, catastrophes, and epidemics. Such is the case with Thom Gunn's elegies from the volume *The Man with Night Sweats* (1992), where Gunn, who had already revealed his homosexuality, shared the personal experience of belonging to a San Francisco gay community in the wake of the AIDS epidemic. István Rácz reconstructs how the poems address *eros* and *thanatos*, friendship, love, and loss from the perspective of a lyrical-self in a liminal state, where the death of every friend is a prefiguration of one's own demise, where life is incomplete because of deadly shadows lurking everywhere. Apart from offering immediate experience of constructing gay identity at the time of the AIDS epidemic, Gunn's elegiac poems engage in the therapeutic process by sharing the tragedies of a marginalized subculture and initiate dialogue between the queer periphery and the straight mainstream. Such instances of cultural connectivity may create a common strand in combating stereotypes and affirming identity as a framework of self-knowledge constantly under construction.

Questions of power, identity, and memory permeate cultural interpretations and emphasize the critical relation that exists between artistic practices and the social reality in which they take place. The very act of raising these questions, the aesthetic and material technologies it involves, is a subject worthy of studying in itself. Inquiries into *mediality* are essential to cultural studies since all cultural and aesthetic meanings are medialized meanings and, as McLuhan suggested, the medium

considerably affects the contents it delivers. Zita Turi demonstrates the strength of this argument while exploring the revival of Medieval pageants in contemporary British culture. Pageants used to form an integral part of religious festivals and involve a variety of scenic elements with several performers, but by today they offer secular contents yet bring the community together by profanizing and updating biblical narratives or staging glorious episodes of the national past. What remains unchanged is the medial framework: the visual extravaganza. The 2012 London Olympic Opening Ceremony—one of the three performances Turi chooses for more detailed analysis—demonstrates how modern stage and screen technologies, dance choreography, and instant sensory awareness of multimedial stimuli create a demand for Britain's rich cultural legacy and nostalgic yearning. The study of the relationship between spectacle, heritage, and nostalgia sheds light on how we stage and perform the historical dimensions of national identity with the image becoming the empowering message.

Beside the relationship of content and material carrier, hybrid signifying processes and interactions involving more than one medium, such as in the case of adaptation or in intermedial configurations of communication, have been a hot topic for researchers of mediality. An undertheorized type of adaptation, novelization, is explored by Emma Bálint, who investigates it as a special case of ekphrastic relationship between image and texts based on W. J. T. Mitchell's notion of "image-X-text." Bálint argues that in order to understand this form of adaptation we must shift attention from semiotic structures and textual interactions of the visual and the written medium to cultural aspects of meaning making. The socio-cultural constructedness of the "X factor" in novelization prevails in the demand of fans to relive popular films as novels, to reengage in generic *topoi* or canonized stories, heroic deeds and much adored figures of popular culture. Although novelizations—like *Red Riding Hood* (2011), the example analyzed in the paper—often alter and enrich the original visual texts, they lack the active participation fan-fiction offers and seek pleasure in rediscovery rather than production for enjoyment. As such, novelizations are transmedial practices with a strong concern for the profit factor: making popular imagination consumable for another media.

The materiality of media is a constant source for artists to experiment with strategies of self-reflexivity, multimodality, affectivity, and embodiment as they create texts of mixed media and combine signifying material to achieve particular effects on the reader. Eszter Szép explores the multisensory nature of the reading process and the role of haptic communication in novels and graphic novels that include visual texts not

as illustrations but as transfigurations of written words. Szép argues that rupturing signifying chains and arresting the interpretive process brings to the surface a new dynamics between pictures, pictured bodies, and the reader: an embodied readerly position, which, given the traumatic content of the narratives, draws attention to the shared human experience of vulnerability.

Each chapter in the volume undertakes a temporal and/or spatial journey—already hinted at in the title—crossing historical and geographical borders but reaching beyond the frontier between them, as well as linking classical literary studies with a culturally sensitive approach. The volume illustrates the diversity of cultural products and phenomena while bringing to view the way texts emerge, engage with real life, and become consumed as well as commodified. The topics tackled by the authors of the present volume are pieces of a puzzle to be assembled by the prospective reader. Individual chapters, nevertheless, have lives of their own and serve as plausible illustrations of how texts of literature, cinema, the performing and plastic arts can be explored as products or critical reflections of cultures.

The contributors to *Travelling around Cultures: Collected Essays on Literature and Art* vary from well-established scholars affiliated with universities mainly in Hungary, but including those in Greece, Poland, and Spain, to doctoral students (the former outnumber the latter). The dominant cultural focus of the essays is Anglo-American, since many, though not all of them began life at the 12th Biennial Conference of the Hungarian Society for the Study of English in January, 2015 that gathered scholars of English and American Studies.

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CENSORSHIP, READERSHIP, FANFICTION

CHAPTER TWO

WHOSE CUP OF TEA? KATHERINE MANSFIELD IN POST-1956 HUNGARY[1]

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The translation and reception of an author in a foreign culture is a paradigmatic mode of travelling around cultures, tinted—sometimes tainted—by the receiving culture. Texts—or even authors in the Foucauldian sense of the word[2]—do not exist *per se*, not even in their own cultural environment, rather, they come about as a result of their interpretation, of their cultural locatedness, sometimes even of their literal materiality and publication history. As is well known, several aspects contribute to the emergence of a text as part of "literature" (or rather "Literature"), let alone as part of the literary canon, which, in turn, has an impact upon how they are read and taught, and then further published, and this mutually reinforcing process goes on incessantly. Key elements—apart from the material aspects of publication—are the dominant theories of aesthetics and literary value which create a framework for what can be incorporated as literature, as an important text or writer, or from what perspective a text or a writer can be "great." Due to the changes in the dominant aesthetic values, the framing and conceptualization of *oeuvres* and authors can also fluctuate.

This is what we can see in the reception of Katherine Mansfield in the English-speaking world. She was considered first as a "minor" modernist (due to her being a woman writer, and the writer of a "minor" genre: short

[1] This article is the continuation of a chapter entitled "Katherine Mansfield's Early Translations and Reception in Hungary," in *Katherine Mansfield and Continental Europe: Connections and Influences*, edited by Janka Kascakova and Gerri Kimber (Houndmills Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 26-39.

[2] Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?", in *Modern Criticism and Theory,* edited by David Lodge (London: Longman 1988), 196-210.

stories), seen for a long time as a disembodied creature, and not only because of her husband, John Middleton Murry's mythicizing construction of Mansfield after her death, but also because in critical reception she existed in an abstract cosmopolitan space, with no nationality or body—sex, gender or sexuality. As a result of her reinterpretation from the moment feminist and postcolonial criticism recognized her, she emerged to be a major modernist *woman* writer from *New Zealand* who just cannot *not* be taken into account.

How writers can make their way into a foreign culture is even more complex, the process complicated by the internal structure of the receiving culture that may not fully overlap with that of the source culture. The reasons are multiple: the aesthetic values may not coincide, so various aspects that are recognized in the source culture may be hidden or cannot even be articulated in the receiving culture because there can be paradigmatic—often political—discrepancies between various cultural discourses. But even apart from systemic differences, there are also haphazard elements in the process: the willingness and capacity of publishing houses to publish a foreign author, the personal taste of editors, the congeniality of translators, the choice of book designs, all of which contribute to the emergence of a writer in a foreign culture.

In terms of systemic differences, it can be clearly stated that no full overlapping is possible between the dominant readings of writers in their own culture (not as if even the home culture can be considered as homogenous, particularly not for Mansfield, in whose case even the "home culture" is difficult to define) and a foreign one. Translations—and publications in a foreign culture in general—can much rather be considered processes of transculturation, a mode of travelling, in the course of which the authors have to find their ways into the literary–cultural paradigm of the target culture. The result is frequently ambivalent, as we will see in Katherine Mansfield's reception in post-1956 Hungary.

In what follows, I am trying to locate and explore Mansfield's presence in post-1956 Hungary, embodied by her primary texts, including their material and political aspects, and also how she is interpreted by critics. The 1956 revolution in Hungary is not only a moment in the narrow political sense of the word: it also meant a major shift, an opening up in cultural policy, even if still within the framework of socialist ideology. The period covered will be split into two major phases, coinciding with Hungary's political history: from post-1956 till the political changes of 1990; and the period of our new democracy, which brought about changes not only in the conceptualization of literature (aesthetic and literary theories), but also in the publishing industry and the structure of

readership. When it comes to Mansfield, the latter phase primarily consists in the 2004 publication of a new and enlarged (but still selected) edition of her short stories and a companion and combined volume of selections from her diaries and letters, as well as their critical reception. As her reception is the result of several—literary, political, and material—aspects, I will do a cultural analysis that takes account not only of the defining ideas in the background of her Hungarian publications, but also the material conditions and the institutional framework.

In the year of 1956, even before the months of the October revolution, Hungary experienced some intellectual *détente*. Perhaps it can be attributed to this opening that in the May 1956 issue of a journal of the Catholic church called *Vigilia*[3] Mansfield made a multiple appearance: two of her short stories ("The Canary" and "The Wrong House"), and also a two-page review-like summary of her *oeuvre* were published by the translator of the two short stories, Magda Malomvizi, in the column called "Diary."[4] In the latter, in spite of the fact that she utterly misspells Mansfield's original name (Katherine Bedushamp) (Malomvizi 1956, 262) she obviously knows Mansfield quite well. She characterizes her short stories as having a ballad-like tension, considers her a conscious artist, refers to other short stories (like "Bliss"), and quotes from her diary. She is also aware of Mansfield's life story, including her illness. Perhaps due to the profile of the journal, she emphasizes Mansfield's search for eternity and spiritual healing in the last periods of her life, which obviously gives justification for the presence of a review of her work and life in *Vigilia*. In spite of the fact that the same issue also contains the two short stories, there is no reference to them at all, although illness, death, and spirituality are reappearing topics in them, thus the connection could have been made quite easily. As if to make up for this lost opportunity, *Vigilia* provided space for Mansfield once more: in 1959, they published quite long passages from Mansfield's diary of 1919-1920 (naturally from the version edited by Murry as the only available source at that time), and the selection reflects Mansfield's concerns with death and transcendence, truth and eternity, life and hope, suffering and creation, the eternal "waiting

[3] *Vigilia* almost unbelievably survived the darkest years of Communism called Rákosi era (with Mátyás Rákosi as party leader), and became a forum for dissident ideas and alternative voices.

[4] Katherine Mansfield, "A kanári," trans. Magda Malomvizi, *Vigilia* 21 (May, 1956a): 246-48; Katherine Mansfield, "Téves cím," trans. Magda Malomvizi, *Vigilia* 21 (May, 1956b): 248-50; Magda Malomvizi, "Katherine Mansfield," *Vigilia* 21 (May, 1956): 262-64.

room" and eternity, and also includes her idea of, first—and perhaps last—time in her life, entering the Catholic church.[5]

The post-1956 years, however, in addition to the publications in *Vigilia*, brought about a new and secular phase of the literary presence and appreciation in the "Hungarian Mansfield." The publications of this era can be understood within the framework of the general, poststalinist (and its Hungarian equivalent, "postrákosist") cultural policy, which meant a certain opening up in ideological and cultural terms. It resulted in a high-quality translation industry which from the late 1950s through the 1970s focused on politically "safe" and "reliable" classics that no longer had to coincide fully and explicitly with the current ideological indoctrination. The translations also functioned as safety valves for intellectuals for whom writing and publication were still problematic. Translations, partly for quality, partly for political-ideological security reasons, were double checked, thus, they are in most cases not only satisfactory, but also excellent.

The Hungarian texts, particularly at the beginning of this period, were usually provided with a preface or postscript, were often annotated, creating an apparatus which established an ideologically "correct" context and guidelines how to read a specific text. In this way, the translations functioned as an impetus to start a critical discourse on texts, including those of Mansfield. This critical discourse, however, also has to be considered in the social and literary context of the period also known as the "soft dictatorship," or "existing socialism," which gives a special edge to the reception history of every author published in this period because there were limits to what could be said and what could not. In most cases, great emphasis was laid on the realist and social aspects of the texts since the critics made (or, rather, had to make) their points in a double bind and in a double code: partly, to adjust themselves to the existing parameters of criticism in the English language and to speak about the texts *as* literature. To a greater extent, however, at the same time, they also had to comply with the dominant approach in literary criticism current in Hungary, which allowed only certain kinds of discourse—obviously from the perspective of classical Marxism; that is, critics still had to meet the ideological expectations and constraints of the current social and literary discourse, even if the texts did not obviously offer these kinds of readings.

This is the cultural-political atmosphere in which Mansfield starts appearing in an incredibly extensive way, and becomes quite soon an inevitable staple in journals, in anthologies of English literature, and in

[5] "Katherine Mansfield naplójából. 1919-1920. Részletek," *Vigilia* 24 (November, 1959b): 657-62.

just one year's time her first *volume* of short stories of new and professional translations is also published (1958). A most obvious sign of the ideological and, thus, literary opening in 1956 is the launching of a new journal *Nagyvilág* ("The wide world"), dedicated to publishing world literature. Significantly, the foreword ("Bevezető") was written by György Lukács—or as he is rather known Georg/George Lukács—, who has the courage to air the view that it is a shame that the literary scene could get rid of ideological paternalism only at this historical moment, and claims that being locked up intellectually also meant provincialism, and *Nagyvilág*, an official journal of the Hungarian Writers' Association, serves the purposes of real Hungarian culture. There are—as there must be—, however, limits to this opening as Lukács also warns the readers of the dangers of western ideologies also surfacing in the threat of decadence in literature. He adds that we have to go on fighting against decadent antirealism, but this statement is also modified by his emphasis on the directives of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (1956) that have put an end to dogmatic control over literature. Finally, he draws the conclusion that readers are adults (a rather daring statement in the atmosphere of political paternalism), and this is what the new journal *Nagyvilág*, quite tellingly launched in October 1956, the month of the Hungarian revolution, aims to prove (Lukács 1956, 3-5).

What we can see in the following two decades on the Hungarian literary scene and in literary criticism is modelled upon this foreword by Lukács: opening, but at the same time creating an aesthetic-political guidance with ideological implications, in which one can never know how much of the latter is genuine and how much of it is only present to pay lip service and to serve as justification for publishing a text that otherwise would not necessarily be suitable. This is how, among the first English authors to be published, Katherine Mansfield makes her re-entry on the Hungarian scene in the 1957 volume of *Nagyvilág*.[6] The short story to appear is "The Garden Party,"[7] in a full translation by Mihály Sükösd, himself a scholar of English literature.

[6] In the October 1957 issue publishing Mansfield, among others the following authors appear: Heinrich Böll, Apollinaire, Rimbaud, Ilf and Petrov, Bertolt Brecht; there are reviews of Woolf's *Flush* (also published in 1957) and of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* (published in Hungarian in 1955); and there is also an overview of what English-language encyclopedias write about Hungarian literature.

[7] Katherine Mansfield, "Kerti bál," trans. Mihály Sükösd, *Nagyvilág* 2.7 (October, 1957): 1022-33.

This single-story debut was followed by the first collection of her short stories, significantly by the newly established publishing house Európa ("Europe").[8] The volume contains twenty-six short stories, almost four hundred pages, and inevitably includes an afterword written by a contemporary expert on English literature, László Báti.[9] He is really appreciative concerning Mansfield's "humble" *oeuvre*, saying it includes treasures, and as such is a classic. The afterword, however, oscillates between the—at that time—inevitable implication that good writing must be socially responsible, and between the appreciation of Mansfield's fiction with a focus on the child's perspectives, on the ordinary human beings, on her use of the apparently insignificant details. In some cases the two agenda can even meet: in Báti's analysis, the indifference of the well-to-do to the suffering of the poor is a key element of some of the stories (like in "The Garden Party"), which "saves" Mansfield for the agenda of the social realist aesthetics, even though Báti imposes a limitation on her, claiming what she lacks is Chekhov's social perspective (1958, 374).[10] He turns Mansfield's self-imposed limitation against her that she only wanted to write about the narrow circles of her own class.[11] What he also emphasizes is what he considers Mansfield's emotional presentation (377), and briefly addresses the question of the feminine perspective in her fiction, albeit he seems to limit grossly the potentials in that respect: he implies that in case her point of view were so feminine, she would (or even should) not have ironically presented female characters (376).

The volume itself is a paperback edition,[12] which also means that it could be bought by masses of readers. The selection of short stories is justifiable, the cover, however, is ambivalent. The front cover presents a rather alienating caricature-like drawing of two women taking tea, which can be understood in the Mansfieldian ironical way, but can also be interpreted as aimed at the primness of iconic Englishness—or even English femininity. This latter interpretation is reinforced by the Mansfield image on the back cover: her 1917, rather conservative-looking, sitting

[8] Katherine Mansfield, *Egy csésze tea* ("A cup of tea"), trans. Klára Szöllősy (Budapest: Európa, 1958). The volume was republished in 1970, 1975 and 1985, and has become a household item on Hungarian bookshelves.

[9] László Báti, "Katherine Mansfield," in Katherine Mansfield, *Egy csésze tea* (Budapest: Európa, 1958), 371-77.

[10] Hereafter all texts originally published in Hungarian appear in my own translation.

[11] This critical gesture is similar to how Jane Austen was evaluated for one and a half centuries—in contrast with the broad vistas of Walter Scott's historical novels.

[12] The distinction in prestige between hardback and paperback is a lot less significant in Hungary.

profile picture, with her hair in a bun, and her earlock rigidly curling. Mansfield was certainly chameleon-like, so this almost Victorian image of hers can be seen as part of her role-playing, but considering that this was her first image appearing in Hungary, one starts wondering about the potential—and almost political—implication of this choice.

The selection of stories concentrates on the later stories, but as all the stories in the volume were single-handedly (re-)translated by the renowned professional translator Klára Szöllősy, the collection does not contain all the short stories that appeared in Hungarian before, but some of them: "The Doll's House," "The Fly," "A Cup of Tea," "Bliss," and "The Garden Party" are re-translated. From this time on, Mansfield's stories are staples in a flourishing publishing industry of anthologies, whether general twentieth-century ones, anthologies of English short fiction or twentieth-century collections of English novellas.[13] Later anthologies that include Mansfield stories are diverse: a unique venture is the volume *Gyalogszerrel a huszadik században* ("A Pedestrian in the Twentieth Century"). The title refers to the Greek origins of the word prose fiction; the volume is a collection of fiction translations by Klára Szöllősy, and includes—out of the eight English short stories—four stories by Mansfield: "Prelude," "The Garden Party," "Bliss," and "A Cup of Tea," indicating that Mansfield was her favorite indeed (and out of the five authors three are women: a story each by Mary Norton and Doris Lessing are also included).[14] Two years later another anthology was published that took its name from Mansfield's "Prelude": *Előjáték*,[15] which is a collection of twentieth-century novellas. The opening text of the volume is "Prelude" by Mansfield, followed by E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, David Garnett, Christopher Isherwood, Evelyn Waugh, John Wain, and Alan Sillitoe. Considering that this anthology became a canonical volume of English shorter prose in Hungary, even though one may be surprised at some presences, it is undeniable that Mansfield's text figuring as eponymous with, and opening the volume suggests prestige and appreciation. So does the biographical notice that focuses on the

[13] This is not the first time, though, that a short story of hers is anthologized in Hungary. "The Life of Ma Parker" ("Parker néni élete"), translated by Piroska Reichard was included in *Mai angol dekameron*, ("Today's English Decameron"), edited by Vernon Duckworth-Barker (Budapest: Nyugat, 193?). Introduction and biographical notes by Vernon Duckworth-Barker. For more about this volume see Séllei 2015, 34 and n27 on p. 38.

[14] Klára Szöllősy, *Gyalogszerrel a huszadik században* (Budapest: Európa, 1967).

[15] Levente Osztovits, ed., *Előjáték: Huszadik századi angol kisregények*, A világirodalom remekei sorozat (series: The Masterpieces of World Literature), (Budapest: Európa, 1969).