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Richard Aczel

NATIONAL CHARACTER AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN HUNGARIAN LITERATURE 1772-1848

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To my father.

Preface

The comparative study of European literature has traditionally focused on the cultures of only one half of the continent of Europe. With the dramatic changes which have redrawn the cultural and political map of Europe over the last few years, an examination of the character and contribution of the cultures of Eastern and Central Europe is becoming increasingly crucial to our fuller understanding of the new Europe which is now emerging. In attempting to situate a formative period in the development of modern Hungarian literature in the broadly European context to which it properly belongs, this book seeks to further such understanding.

Hungarian literature was born of, and continues to embody, a fascinating fusion of broadly European and distinctively national characteristics and aspirations. This book not only explores the interrelationships between these characteristics and aspirations, but also attempts to show how the comparative study of an less widely familiar literary culture can question some of the assumptions of both national and international literary historical scholarship. Thus in addition to offering a reading of the emergence of modern Hungarian literature which challenges a number of central assumptions and conventions in Hungarian literary historiography, this study also attempts to redefine a series of key comparative cultural concepts - such as Enlightenment, Sensibility, Romanticism and Literary Populism - in a manner pertinent to the literatures of both Western and Eastern Europe.

The opening chapter *(Contrasts)* compares the social background to, and leading ideas of, the West European Enlightenment with the conditions and aspirations of the Hungarian literary revival in the years 1772-95, taking issue with the conventional characterisation of this period in Hungarian literature as a "belated" Age of Enlightenment. Chapter Two *(The Crisis of the Enlightenment)* argues the essential continuity between West European and Hungarian culture at the end of the 18th century, in a period born of the Enlightenment's inner crisis. It draws upon Schiller's notion of the *sentimental* in characterising the new cultural moment in Europe, employing this concept to move beyond the theoretical and local limitations of such constructs as "pre-romanticism", *Sturm und Drang and* "Age of Sensibility",

towards a deeper and more coherently comparative understanding of the shared preoccupations and strategies of late 18th century European literature.

Chapter Three *(The Sentimental Dilemma)* offers a detailed account of the sentimental moment in late 18th century Hungarian literature, paying due attention to key English, French and German works from which Hungarian writers drew much of their inspiration (eg. Young's *Night Thoughts*, the later Rousseau, Goethe's *Werther*). Chapter Four *(The Naive Resolution)* traces the origins of the literary preoccupation with folk culture (from Percy and Herder, through the European cult of "Ossian", to the emergence of Hungarian literary populism), which was to play a crucial role in the development of Hungarian literature throughout the 19th century. Chapter Five *(Naive and Native in the Age of Reform)* considers the development of the "naive" identification with folk culture during the Hungarian *Vormärz*, demonstrating how the Hungarian interest in folk culture differed from that of the Romantics in England and Germany at the beginning of the 19th century. These differences are further pursued in Chapter Six *(The Triumph of Literary Populism: the 1840s)*, which examines Hungarian literature's conscious rejection of foreign influences in the 1840s and its promotion of folk poetry as the basis for an "organic" and "authentic" national culture.

Chapter Seven *(Repressed Romanticism)* attempts to recover a series of profoundly European and Romantic initiatives in early 19th century Hungarian literature which have been neglected by the popular-national tradition. It argues, by way of practical, comparative illustration, for a coherent and workable concept of European Romanticism, and against the relativism of the conventional Hungarian notion of "National Romanticism".

The concluding chapter *(Perspectives)* considers the survival of these tensions between European influence and national character in Hungarian literature after 1848. It suggests that the attempt of the *Nyugat* (West) movement in the first two decades of the 20th century to renew national traditions through a creative dialogue with - rather than a purist rejection of - contemporary West European culture, might contain the resources for a resolution of the conflict between national populist and aloof cosmopolitan values which continues to inform Hungarian literary debate today.

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Chapter One

Contrasts

There are few periods more decisive and formative in the history of Hungarian literature than the last three decades of the 18th century, which saw the birth of the national literature as a modern, autonomous and self-conscious discourse. And yet there are few periods which have been so unsatisfactorily described, explained and interpreted by Hungarian literary historians. Antal Szerb (1901-45), whose *Magyar irodalomtörténet* (1934) continues to be the most engaging single-author history of Hungarian literature, came closest to transcending the key literary historical misconception preventing the proper analysis of this period in his refusal to adopt its conventional denomination as an "age of Enlightenment". His own characterisation of the period as "preromantic" - developed most fully in his short book *A magyar preromantika* (1929) - was itself, however, for reasons which will be discussed in the next chapter, no less untenable. Since the Second World War discussions of the period 1772-95 have tended to take the notion of a Hungarian Enlightenment as a matter of course. "Művelődés- és irodalomtörténetünk első, tudatosan világi eszmei mozgalma a felvilágosodás volt",[1] run the opening words of Volume 3 of the most comprehensive history of Hungarian literature to date. "Bessenyei György felléptével", we read on the following page, "1772-ben indult meg a magyar felvilágosodás mozgalma".[2]

The notion of a "Hungarian Enlightenment" is not only artifical and misleading, but also stands in the way of any meaningful reading of the period in question. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the shortcomings of such a designation in order to facilitate an alternative description of the period 1772-95 in Chapters Two and Three. My method is essentially one of montage; I propose to contrast both the context and content of the Hungarian literary renewal with the background to, and aspirations of, the West

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1 *A magyar irodalom története* (in six vols) ed. István Sőtér, vol III (1772-1849), Budapest, 1965, p.11.

2 Ibid., p.12.

European Enlightenment. Most of my examples are concerned with developments in England and France, for it was from these two countries that the 18th century Hungarian *literati* took much of their initial inspiration. Hungarian literary historians have, however, drastically overestimated the influence of French culture on late 18th century Hungarian literature. The following claim by István Sőtér represents perhaps the most radical formulation of this position: "the ideological and artistic conception of Hungarian enlightenment is characterized by its adherence to the philosophy of the French enlightenment, even to the extent of full conformity with it".[3] The contrasts depicted in this chapter should demonstrate the speciousness of such a claim.

My first set of contrasts focuses on some of the key characteristics and concepts of the Enlightenment. I shall make no attempt to *define* this term; one cannot, in Burke's phrase, with a single term draw up an indictment against a whole century. There are, however, certain social and intellectual constiuents without which any broad concept of Enlightenment is meaningless. These would have to include a commitment to empiricism in scientific method, rationalism in the characterisation of Nature, universalism in the description of human nature, and cosmopolitanism in intellectual formation and matters of taste. To this one would have to add: a fundamental rejection of the values, superstitions and "divine rights" of the feudal state and a faith in man's natural capacity to run his own affairs rationally with the least possible governmental interference. I shall illustrate the central place and significance of some of these notions in the writings of the *philosophes*, and their relative absence from the Hungarian context, in my first set of contrasts.

My second set of contrasts attempts to localize and develop this comparative approach to "enlightened" values through the analysis of two key texts: Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733) and Bessenyei's "translation", or rather reworking, of the ideas of Pope's text in *Az embernek próbája* (1772).

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3 István Sőtér, *The Dilemma of Literary Science*, Budapest, 1973, p.137.

i). Light and Dark

The view presented in this section is, as my heading suggests, a polemical one: that it is ultimately meaningless to speak of a "Hungarian Enlightenment". If I have generally chosen to focus on extreme areas of contrast, this is because of the extent and intensity of entrenchment my argument seeks to challenge. There were undoubtedly certain isolated figures and projects in late 18th century Hungary whose concerns and aspirations shared much in common with the values of the West European Enlightenment. Their achievements, however, do not provide a representative interpretative basis for a comprehensive and coherent reading of the period.

Movements in intellectual history rarely simply *reflect* the immediate interests of a social class. To note that Voltaire was the son of a notary, Diderot the son of a cutler and Rousseau the son of a watchmaker is not to prove that the Enlightenment was exclusively the ideology of a "rising bourgeoisie". All of these writers, however, were crucially aware of the changing social climate in which they lived, and their work was always firmly rooted in their experience of social reality. The Enlightenment, as both Ernst Cassirer and Peter Gay have convincingly argued, was above all an age of *criticism* rather than abstract philosophy.[4] While this criticism took different forms in different national and social envitonments, its ultimate target can be seen as the values and limitations of feudal society.

In England, therefore, where a civil war and a bloodless revolution had already secured the future of constitutional government, enlightened criticism was essentially a matter of consolidation. "In England [...] the realization of Enlightenment hopes was not thwarted at every turn by the existing order of state and society. Quite the reverse. In England after 1688 the constitution itself incorporated central Enlightenment demands, such as personal freedom under *Habeas Corpus*, representative government, religious toleration and the sanctity of property." (Roy Porter).[5] In France, on the other hand, "the *philosophes* saw themselves as a kind of perpetual opposition" (Norman

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4 Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, Princeton, 1951; Peter Gay, *The Englightenment: An interpretation* (The Rise of Modern Paganism), New York, 1975, see in particular pp.127-59.

5 Roy Porter, "The Enlightenment in England", in *The Enlightenment in National Context*, ed. R. Porter and M. Teich, Cambridge, 1980, pp.7-8.

Hampson).[6] According to Montesquieu, Richelieu and Louis XIV had entirely overturned the French constitution, turning monarchy into despotism. The French Enlightenment was an essentially revolutionary movement, even though it would ultimately disown its hybrid progeny, 1789. Many of the qualitative differences between the English and French Enlightenments can be traced back to their respective background of critical consolidation and oppositional confrontation. While 18th century English criticism is characterised by a spirit of pervasive *empiricism* - a critical concern with what is, rather than wat might be - critics of social reality in Frence were drawn to *rationalism* in the construction of alternative political philosophies. Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*, published in 1690, represent in essence an abservation or summary of the new state of affairs which had come into being two years earlier. Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* and Rousseau's *Du contract social*, on the other hand, envisage political ideals yet to be realized. If these ideals had been realized anywhere in 18th century Europe, that place was England. The French *philosophes* were the first to acknowledge this, and both the author of the *Lettres philosophiques* and the author of *De l'esprit des lois* would serely have agreed with Diderot when he claimed: "Without the English, reason and philosophy would still be in the most despicable infancy in France".[7] What was so distinctive about 18th century England is summed up eloquently by E. P. Thompson in *The Poverty of Theory*:

> The English experience centainly did not encourage sustained efforts of synthesis; since few intellectuals were thrown into prominence in a conflict with authority, few felt the need to develop a systematic critique. They thought of themselves rather as exchanging specialized products in a market which was tolerably free and the sum of whose intellectual commodities made up the sum total of knowledge.[8]

"Free" and "market" in this passage are important terms. For it was, of course, no coincidence that the nation which supplied the period's model of philosophical and constitutional Enlightenment was also Europe's leading trading nation. The ideological connection is made by Voltaire in his *Lettres philosophiques*: "Commerce, which has enriched English citizens, has helped to make them free, and this freedom in its turn has extended commerce, and

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6 Ibid., p.45.

7 Ibid., p.2.

8 Cited in Porter, p.7.

that has made the greatness of the nation".[9] Indeed the theoretical cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment tended to see one of its most venerable and *practical* embodiments in the exploits of merchants and entrepreneurs towards the creation of a world market. In his *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité*, even Rousseau finds praise for the merchants of the 18th century, calling them "those cosmopolites who break down all the imaginary barriers which separate peoples, and who, by their example, serve a state which embraces all mankind".[10] Nothing, however, could better illustrate the significance of the Enlightenment's progressive social and economic background than the following statements on the Royal Exchange in London by Addison and Voltaire:

> Sometimes I am justled among a body of Armenians; sometimes I am lost in a Crowd of Jews, and sometimes in a Group of Dutch-men. I am a Dane, a Swede, or Frenchman at different times, or rather fancy myself like the old Philosopher, who upon being asked what country-man he was, replied that he was a Citizen of the World. (Addison, *Spectator* 19 May 1711)[11]

> Go to the London Stock Exchange - a more respectable place than many a court - and you will see representatives from all nations gathered together for the utility of men. Here Jew, Mohammedan and Christian deal with each other as though they were all of the same faith, and only apply the word infidel to people who go bankrupt. Here the Presbyterian trusts the Anabaptist and the Anglican accepts a promise from the Quaker [...] and everybody is happy. *(Lettres philosophiques)*[12]

The state and pace of social development in Central and Eastern Europe during the course of the 18th century provides a context very different from that experienced by the likes of Addison and Voltaire. Germany still consisted of a handful of separate states and a few hundred independent feudal principalities. Voltaire's ironic description of Candide's master, the Baron of Thunder-ten-Trockh, as "one of the most mighty lords of Westphalia, for his

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9 Voltaire, *Letters on England*, translated by Leonard Tancock, Harmondsworth, 1980, p.51.

10 Cited in T. J. Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Throught*, Notre Dame, 1977, p.101.

11 Addison, *The Spectator*, May 19 1711, in *The Spectator* (in 5 vols) ed. D. F. Bond, Oxford, 1965, vol I, p.294.

12 Voltaire, *Letters on England*, p.41.

castle had a door and windows"[13] is not without some basis in reality. The hereditary lands of the Habsburg Empire, with the striking exception of the Austrian Netherlands and Milan, were economically underdeveloped with a system of social stratification that was still essentially feudal, while Poland continued to possess the largest nobility in Europe (between 8 and 10 per cent of the total population). Hungary - whose medieval capital, Buda, had been liberated from the Turks in ruins only one year before the appearance of Newton's *Principia* - came second some 4-500,000 inhabitants (ie. 5 per cent of the population) claiming noble birth. It was from the largest section of this nobility (the predominantly Calvinist "third estate") that the crucial basis for both literary renewal and increasing political and cultural opposition to Vienna was to come.

The values of the Hungarian nobility in the 18th century were essentially feudal and conservative. Its most jealously guarded privilege was an exemption from taxation which had been reconfirmed as a constitutional right at the Treaty of Szatmár in 1711 and again at the diet of 1722-3 which ratified the Pragmatic Sanction. Maria Theresa, whose very right to rule depended in part on her recognition of the privileges of the Hungarian estates, left the sensitive issue of taxation untouched, compensating for the resultant loss to imperial revenue not only by improving the lot of the tax-paying peasantry through her Urbarium of 1765 (a characteristically "enlightened" fusion of benevolence and utilitarianism), but also by extending the already crippling tariffs on Hungarian manufacture, thus further contributing to the preservation of feudal conditions in Hungary. The empress's "respect" for the privileges of the Hungarian estates, together with her more enlightened cultural initiatives (the creation of the noble Hungarian Bodyguard in 1760, the transfer of Hungary's only university from Nagyszombat to Buda in 1777,[14] and, if more controversial from a Hungarian point of view, the *Ratio educationis* of 1777) won her considerable support from the most educated section of the Hungarian nobility.

The same cannot be said of the more zealously rationalising and centralising reforms of her son, Joseph II, who provoked increasing opposition from all but the most enlightened representatives of Hungarian society. Aiming radically to modernise and unify his empire in the spirit of

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13 Voltaire, *Candide*, translated and edited by R. M. Adams, New York, 1966, p.1.

14 The university was actually re-founded in Buda in 1777. At Nagyszombat it had functioned in the form of a Jesuit college, and Maria Theresa abolished the Jesuit order in 1773.

enlightened absolutism, Joseph attacked the feudal privileges of the Hungarian nobility on several fronts. He refused to be crowned king of Hungary (thus avoiding a pledge to uphold the privileges of the estates), abolished the autonomy of the county system, replacing it with an administrative network of his own, held a census in 1784 as a preliminary step towards universal taxation, and never once convened the diet throughout his reign. Culturally, he threatened the growing national consciousness of the Hungarian estates with his Language Decree of 1784, introducing German (to replace Latin) as the official language of the whole empire. The retrospective response of József Péczeli, the editor of *Mindenes Gyűjtemény* in Komárom, to this measure is characteristic of the educated stratum of the lesser nobility he represented:

> Ha a korona Bécsben maradott volna is, ha a nemesség adó alá vettetett volna is, mégis csak megmaradott volna a mi magyar nemzetünk. De ha az iskolák németül taníttattak, s a törvényszékek németül folytattak volna, úgy a magyarság az európai nemzeteknek lajstromokból végképp kitöröltetett volna.[15]

By the time of his death in 1790, Joseph II had been forced to revoke almost all of his 6000 acts of reform, with the revolutionary events of the previous year in France only adding to the reluctance of the estates to contemplate radical change. The dominant attitude of the Hungarian nobility at this time is summed up by the title of a pamphlet which appeared in Nyitra county in the year of Joseph's death: *Omnis mutatio periculosa.*

The significant shift in the sympathies of the Hungarian nobility (or rather, of the relatively small group of somewhat isolated individuals who took any interest at all in cultural affairs at this time) caused by the more belligerently "enlightened" absolutism of Joseph II is well documented in the poetry of the period. The work of Pál Ányos provides perhaps the most striking example of this. At the most obvious level, we can contrast is his *Az Orvosi Oktatások' szerzőjéhez* (written in 1778 to Samuel Rácz, the first professor of medicine at

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[15] Cited in János Barta (Jnr), "Felvilágosodás és nemzetkép Magyarországon", in *Irodalomtörténet*, vol LXVIII, no 2, Budapest, 1986, p.338. One of the few members of the Hungarian *literati* who continued to support Joseph II after his Language Decree of 1784 was Ferenc Kazinczy, who retained his official position as schools' inspector. Kazinczy's attitude remained throughout his career considerably more enlightened and cosmopolitan than that of most of his contemporaries. This is borne out, for example, by the debate which ensued Kazinczy's translation in the early 1830s of a German heroic poem *(Perlen der heiligen Vorzeit)* by the Hungarian bishop, László Pyrker. This was seen by younger critics, such as Toldy and Bajza, as a highly unpatriotic gesture.

the Royal University of Buda) with his more famous *Kalapos király*, without doubt the most vehement attack on Joseph II to have been formulated in Hungarian verse.[16] In the former poem, the appearance of Rácz's *Orvosi Oktatások* (the second edition of which was published in Pozsony and Kassa in 1778), serves as the pretext for a paean to Maria Theresa who brought the university to Buda and who is referred to as "Felséges Asszonyunk, (inkább mondom Anyánk!) ...Nagy Theresia".[17] In the latter poem, on the other hand, Ányos addresses Joseph II directly as "...véred gyalázattya / Gyilkossa népednek, nem pediglen attya."[18]

Still more revealing, however, is the effect of Joseph's reforms on Ányos's attitude to science and learning. *A szép tudományoknak áldozott versek* was published to coincide with the official inauguration of the university in Buda, three years after it was actually opened, on 25 June 1780 (which also marked the 39th anniversary of Maria Theresa's coronation). Together with characteristic praise for the empress ("Ó mennyi áldozat esik *Tresiának*"), Ányos also celebrates Hungary's imminent future as a nation of science:

> Boldog haza, ahol Minerva székéből,
> Polgárok nőnek fel Muzsák kebeléből;
> Hol tudományoknak szeléd virágjából,
> Bokréták fonyatnak borostyán ágából!
>
> [...] Hát kik felesküsznek Newton oszlopára,
> Kit ő érdemeivel London piacára
> Épitett, hogy fogják nézni egeinket,
> Kik gyengén aztottyák gazdag mezeinket?
>
> [...] Szóval: tudományok mindegyik neméből,
> Részesül nemzetünk dicsőség fénnyéből.[19]

By 1782, the year in which he began writing *Kalapos király*, Ányos has serious doubts about the value and human consequences of unbridled scientific progress. In a poetic epistle to his friend and confidant Ábrahám Barcsay, *Barcsaynak* ("Rendes! míg én..." 1782) he praises the latter for drawing attention to the fate of African peoples colonised, oppressed and exploited by the "enlightened" nations of Europe. Enlightenment is now

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16 The poem was not, of course, published during Ányos's lifetime.

17 Pál Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, ed. I. Lökös, Budapest, 1984, pp.37-8.

18 Ányos, p.108.

19 Ányos, pp.72-3.

referred to as "bűnös fényesség" which, in its unfeeling quest for "vad nyeresség", has degenerated into "gazdagság bálványa, haszon dühössége".[20] Ányos sums up his doubts and disillusion in the following questions:

Mi szükség volt tehát London piacára
Kastélyt építteni Minerva számára,
Vagy büszke Leidennek szabad tájékára
Annyi tudóst hozni Rajnának partyára?

Ha csak ezt tanulják Lock s Newton könyvéből,
Miként lehet hizni embernek véréből?
S efölött dühösség gazdag méhelyeből
Új s meg új bűnöket szedni kebeléből:

Iszonyú vadságok! fene emberségek!
Rémittő undokság! gyilkos mesterségek!
Cudor juhászodás! vétkes nyereségek!
Ó hát már reánk is néz kegyetlenségek?[21]

This last line suggests the immediate context in which Ányos's doubts are founded: is Hungary too, under the "enlightened" rule of Joseph II, to become no more than an exploited colony of an absolutist Austria?

Although this poem is almost certainly a direct response to Barcsay's *A háborúskodás ellen* (1782), in which the poet directly alludes to the exploits of the Dutch and English in Africa, Barcsay's own attitude to colonialism is most succinctly and powerfully summed up in *A kávéra*:

Rab szerecsen véres veríték-gyümölcse,
Melyet, hogy ládáit arannyal megtöltse,
Fösvény ánglus elküld messze nemzeteknek,
Nádméz! mennyi kincset olvasztod ezeknek.
Hát te, rég csak Mokka táján termett kis bab,
Mennyit szenved érted nyugoton is a rab.
A bölcs iszonyodik, látván, egy csészéből
Mint hörpöl ő is részt ánglus bűnéből.[22]

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20 Ányos, p.218.

21 Ányos, pp.218-9. Like most Hungarian writers of his day, Ányos *initially* welcomed the succession of Joseph II with an expression of loyalty and enthusiasm. See, for example, his poem *Battyáni Károly Őhercegsége halála*, in Ányos pp.95-7.

22 Ábrahám Barcsay, *Költeményei*, Budapest, 1933, p.45. A very different approach to the politics of the coffee trade - and one more consistent with the ideology of

It is interesting to contrast the views of Ányos and Barcsay on the injustices of commercial expansion with Hume's confident justification in *Of the Jealousy of Trade* (1753):

> I will venture to assert, that the increase of riches and commerce in any one nation, instead of hurting, commonly promotes the riches and commerce of all its neighbours; and that a state can scarcely carry its trade and industry very far, where all the surrounding states are buried in ignorance, sloth, and barbarism [...] that where an open communication is preserved among nations, it is impossible but the domestic industry of every one must receive an increase from the improvements of the others.[23]

Considering Hungary's disadvantages as a trading nation (caused in part by the repressive policies of Vienna, which denied Hungary precisely the kind of "open communication" to which Hume refers) it is not hard to understand why the likes of Ányos and Barcsay could not share the faith of a representative of a powerful and expanding trading nation in the inherent rationalism of the (international) market.

For Hungary in the late 18th century still lacked not only the social and material forces required for rapid social and economic change, but also, arguably, the desire for such change. "Illik-e magyarhoz csalfa kereskedés?" asked Lőrincz Orczy (usually numbered among the most "enlightened" of the 18th century Hungarian *literati*), expressing a popularly held doubt, "mivel ebből jöhet erkölcsvetemedés."[24] Irrespective of such doubts, Hungary was anyway effectively barred from foreign trade by the cripplingly prohibitive tariffs set by Vienna, and the restriction of manufacturing licence to prevent Hungarian competition. By 1787, the year in which Joseph II's census was

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the West European Enlightenment - can be found in an anonymous article entitled "A kafféval való kereskedés" published in *Mindenes Gyűjtemény* (ed. József Péczeli), Első negyed, Komárom, 1789. Here it is argued that "mennél több kaffét isznak, [...] annál több emberek kereshetnek kenyeret." This principle is seen to outweigh the injustices of exploitation to which Barcsay refers. The article continues: "Ha meg-esik is hát, hogy a sok kaffé ital miatt némelyik el-szegényednek; mindazáltal igaz az, hogy az el-szegényedteknél sokkal többen keresik a kaffé után élelmeket. Jobb hát arra vigyázni, hogy a kaffé után sok szegények élhessenek, mint arra, hogy valaki pénzét a kafféra ne vesztegesse." (p.429).

23 David Hume, *The Philosophical Works*, (in 4 vols) ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, London, 1882, vol III, p.345.

24 Orczy, *Tokajban való érkezés telén*, in *Magyar költők 18. század*, Budapest, 1983, p.134.

completed, there were still only 31,000 individuals engaged in industrial manufacture in the whole of Hungary (with a total population of some 9.5 million).

Hungarian historians continue to debate the size and significance of the urban bourgoisie in late 18th century Hungary. Most would now agree that "compared with its western counterparts at this time, which played a special role in the Enlightenment, [the] Hungarian bourgeoisie was rather small, underdeveloped and weak."[25] This is, if anything, an understatement. Estimates as to the total proportion of the population living in the Royal Free towns - the main centres of the middle class - range from 1.5 to 5.2 per cent, compared with 20 per cent in France. The significance of such statistics becomes clear when they are seen in a comparative context. "As late as 1780 the combined population of all the towns of Hungary was no more than 356,000; stightly more than half that of Paris, and considerably less than half that of London."[26] The largest section of the urban population was anyway German speaking, and contributed relatively little to the Hungarian literary renewal at the end of the century. The nation had no urban cultural centre and even the diet sat in the border town of Pozsony (Bratislava) rather than in the medieval capital, Buda, where only 4.58 per cent of the inhabitants were Hungarian speaking. While the development of Buda and Pest was undoubtedly accelerated by the transfer of the Royal University to the former in 1777 and to the latter (by Joseph II) in 1784, it none the less took nearly another half century for this development to produce concrete cultural results. The Hungarian Academy was not founded until 1825, the first permanent national theatre was not established in the capital until 1837, the first literary society to survive longer than five years was the Kisfaludy Társaság, founded in 1836, and the first Hungarian cultural periodical which could boast of over a thousand subscribers was *Athenaeum*, launched in 1837. The fate of József Kármán's short-lived journal, *Uránia* (1792-4), which had been intended as a contribution towards the promotion of Pest as the nation's cultural capital, is typical of the period. *Uránia* never had more than 142 subscribers, in spite of an editorial appeal to raise this figure to at least 289 if the periodical was to survive. At this time, of course, the Hungarian press was still very much in its infancy; the first Hungarian language newspaper, *Magyar Hírmondó*, did not

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25 Domokos Kosáry, *Culture and Society in Eighteenth Century Hungary*, Budapest, 1987, p.25.

26 Horman Hampson, *The Enlightenment*, London, 1968, p.45.

appear until 1780 and had only 320 subscribers. The first Hungarian cultural journal, the *Kassai Magyar Museum*, was, in spite of its relatively short life (1788-93), the most widely read Hungarian journal of its kind in the 18th century with subscribers reaching about 600. József Péczeli's *Mindenes Gyűjtemény* (1789-92) had only 137 subscribers in 1790 (40 of whom lived in Péczeli's home town of Komárom, where the journal was published) and this figure includes readers to whom copies were sent free of charge.

One need only compare the fate of these ventures with that of probably the most characteristic, popular and widely imitated organ of enlightened journalism in Western Europe, Addison and Steele's *Spectator*, to appreciate the extent to which the cultural contexts differed. Sales of the *Spectator* had risen to 30,000 by the time of its demise at the end of 1714,[27] 164 years before the appearance of the first Hungarian language newspaper. By then there were nearly 2,000 coffeehouses in London alone, and all are thought to have taken the paper,[28] which inspired some 227 imitators in England and 559 in the rest of Europe during the course of the 18th century.[29] These differences are not merely quantitative (indicating the respective "sizes" of the Enlightenment in Hungary and England), but qualitative, in that - like all the other examples given so far - they reflect two sets of fundamentally incompatible and discontinuous social and cultural conditions. These discrepencies in *context* alone should already suffice to suggest that the comparative cultural connotations and pretensions of the term "Hungarian Enlightenment" are likey to be highly artifical.

Turning to the *content* of the Hungarian literary renewal at the end of the 18th century, the critical lack of continuity with the West European Enlightenment is no less obvious. The remainder of this section will focus on just one crucial area of discontinuity by proposing a contrast between the cosmopolitanism and philosophical universalism of the Enlightenment on the one hand, and emergent national consciousness and cultural relativism in 18th Hungary on the other.

As suggested earlier, the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment had its roots in the most progressive social and economic values of the period. The

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27 See Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, Harmondsworth, 1979, p.105.

28 Ibid., p.233.

29 See *A magyar sajtó története*, vol I (1705-1848), ed. György Kókay, Budapest, 1979, p.26.

philosophes would have found much with which to identify in Marx's rhetorical description of the bourgeoisie as a force which:

> has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors' [...] has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour [...] has at last compelled [man] to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind [...] has given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country [...has made] national one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible [...has drawn] all, even the most barbarous nations into civilisation [and has ensured that] from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.[30]

The *philosophes* sought to liberate rational man from the shackles of feudal irrationalism, to divest him of all his national, social and cultural prejudices and to rediscover him in his natural essence. This was the project of Rousseau's second Discourse: to "strip [man] of all the supernatural gifts that he may have received, and of all the artificial faculties that he can have acquired only through a long process of time [...and to] consider him, in a word, as he must have emerged from the hands of nature".[31] The Enlightenment's conception of this essential and natural man was unequivocally universalist; not only in anthropological, but also in political and cultural, terms.

Hume provided the most eloquent summary of the key anthropological assumptions of the mid-18th century (assumptions which would be increasingly challenged as the century drew to a close) in his *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748):

> It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the acts of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains the same in its principles and operations [...] Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature.[32]

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30 *The Communist Manifesto*, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, London, 1968, pp.38-40.

31 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, translated by Maurice Cranston, Harmondsworth, 1984, p.81.

32 David Hume, *The Philosophical Works*, vol V, p.68.

Voltaire echoed this position in his *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations:* "Everything immediately connected with human nature is alike, from one end of the universe to the other".[33]

These fundamental assumptions led the *philosophes* to an attitude highly critical of nationalism and patriotism. Voltaire spoke of the nation as a "corps artificiel" and lamented that the "good patriot" is often "the enemy of the rest of humanity" (in an entry under "Patrie" in the *Dictionnaire philosophique*, 1764), Pope considered a patriot "a fool in any age" while Johnson, according to Boswell, defined patriotism as "the last refuge of a scoundrel". In fact the essence of the Enlightenment's *theoretical* critique of ideas of nationality (which the *philosophes* themselves were wont to contravene in practice) was already set out in Locke's philosophical rationalization of 1688:

> all the rest of *Mankind are one Community*, [and] make up one Society distinct from all other Creatures. And were it not for the corruption and viciousness of degenerate Men, there would be no need of any other [...][34]

The same cosmopolitanism tended to inform enlightened thinking on the arts. Hume sought to lay the foundations of a universal aesthetic in *The Standard of Taste* (1757) and, just as the Hungarians were striving to create their own national literature, Goethe was already arguing that: "National literature is now a rather unmeaning truth; the epoch of World literature is at hand and everyone must strive to hasten its approach".[35] Nor was this mere wishful thinking on Goethe's part: in the first twenty-six years after the publication of *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774) no fewer than twenty-six separate editions of the work appeared in English (based on a French translation!). Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), meanwhile, had a direct influence not only on Goethe, but on, among innumerable others, Rousseau and Diderot ("O Richardson, Richardson," wrote the latter, "man unique in my eyes, thou shalt be my reading at all times."[36]). The themes of "enlightened" 18th century literature, furthermore, would often reflect the cosmopolitanism of their authors. To mention only two of the most obvious examples, Voltaire wrote plays about Spaniards, Moroccans, Arabs, Romans and orientals, while

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33 Cited in Friedrich Meinecke, *Historism*, London, 1972, pp.69-70.

34 John Locke, *Two Treatises on Government*, ed. P. Laslett, Cambridge, 1964, p.370.

35 Cited in Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal*, p.18.

36 Cited in Porter and Teich, *The Enlightenment in National Context*, p.3.

Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes* (1721) brings two Persian travellers to Paris. Montesquieu may never have visited Persia, nor Voltaire China, but both travelled widely in Europe, sharing an admiration for London which, ironically, mirrored Hume's preference for Paris. The 18th century Hungarian nobleman, on the other hand, was hardly a citizen of the same world as that inhabited by Hume and Voltaire, and his values were far from cosmopolitan. Even if he managed to break from the dull but congenial world of his provincial estate to join Maria Theresa's Noble Hungarian Bodyguard in Vienna, his most formative experience when he got there would still be one of intellectual isolation rather than of cultural community. In his *A holmi* (Vienna, 1779), György Bessenyei is quite candid about the feelings of inferiority which drove him to self-improvement (Section XI "Oskola"). Returning to Hungary, he was forced to become increasingly aware of the need to create - from next to nothing - a national culture capable not primarily of competing, but of *surviving* in the modern world of reason and science. Even before the offending Language Decree of Joseph II, the task of renewing the national language and of forging a coherent national cultural identity already figured as the central preocupation of the late 18th century Hungarian *literati*.

This is well illustrated by various attempts at founding learned societies in Hungary during this period, where, without exception, the cultivation of the national language was the key concern. Although Bessenyei's most famous call for the creation of such a society was not published until 1790 (*Egy magyar társaság iránt való jámbor szándék*, written in 1781), he had already been thinking along similar lines in the 1770s. The character of the kind of society he envisaged is made quite clear in section 27 of the Vienna *Holmi*:

> Mikor fogják tiszta magyar Akadémiát tsinálni? vagy olly tudós Társaságot öszveszerezni, mellynek más kötelessége, hivatala szerint ne lenne, hanem hogy magyarul írjon?[37]

Only weeks after the publication of this work, Bessenyei took part in the first preparatory meeting (May 10 1779) of the planned Hazafiui Magyar Társaság in the Pest residence of General Miklós Beleznay on the initiative of his indefatigable wife Countess Anna Mária Podmaniczky. What Bessenyei

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[37] György Bessenyei, *A holmi* (ed. Ferenc Bíró), Budapest, 1983, p.3. Mátyás Béla had already called for the foundation of a scholarly society in 1718. The first such Hungarian society to function, however, was the "Pressburger Gesellschaft der Freunde der Wissenschaften" (1752; 1758-62). As its German name suggests, the aims of this society were not yet those of Bessenyei and his followers.

understood by the term "hazafiui" is also evident from an entry under "Haza fiuság" in the *Holmi*:

> E szó *Hazafiúság* olly kötelességet tészen, melly alól a világon semmi némű dolog, ok, idő alkalmatosság fel nem szabadíthat. [...] Az emberi élet magába is veszendő dolog, veszszen hát leg aláb ditsősséggel. Tudod pedig, hogy a leg nagyob ditsősséget e földön, mindég az igaz Hazafiúság szokta szülni.[38]

Joseph II, however, refused to grant the planned association a royal sanction and when Bessenyei formulated his *Jámbor szándék* two years later, Hungary was still without a single scholarly society of its own. In spite of the pamphlet's ostensibly "enlightened" opening - "Az Ország boldogságának egyik legfőbb Eszköze a Tudomány"[39], a claim Bessenyei would later reject - many of Bessenyei's proposals in his *Jámbor szándék* are considerably less "modest" than that title might suggest. At one point, for example, Bessenyei argues that:

> a' köztünk lakó Németeket és Tótokat is Magyarokká kellene tennünk. Mert meg érdemli azt az az áldott Haza az idegen Nemzetektől, melylyeket a' maga kebelébenn táplál, hogy annak Nyelvét és szokásait is be vegyék, valamint annak Iavaival és szabadságaival élni nem iszonyodnak.[40]

This argument anticipates the initiatives towards "magyarization" of the 1840s - resisted by almost no one but the genuinely cosmopolitan and culturally "enlightened" Count István Széchenyi - the disastrous consequences of which had become only too obvious by the autumn of 1848.[41]

While repeated plans to establish a national Academy in Pest came to nothing until the same Count Széchenyi offered a year's income for the founding of such an institution in 1825, various short-lived societies were formed in major historical Hungarian and Transylvanian towns in the 1780s and 90s. The Kassai Magyar Társaság, founded in 1784, could not, unlike its journal, the *Kassai Magyar Museum*, survive the rift between its two main organisers, Kazinczy and Batsányi, in 1789. The Kormáromi Tudós Társaság, founded in 1789, lasted only three years before folding with the collapse of its periodical, *Mindenes Gyűjtemény* in 1792, and perhaps the most successful of

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38 Bessenyei, *A holmi*, pp.257-8.

39 Bessenyei, *Egy magyar társaság iránt való jámbor szándék*, Vienna, 1790, p.17.

40 Ibid., p.20.

41 The same attitudes would again enjoy active government support in the last two decades of the 19th century.

the late 18th century societies, the Erdélyi Magyar Nyelvmívelő Társaság, under the guidance of György Aranka in Kolozsvár, itself lasted only eight years after its foundation in 1791 due to lack of funds and public interest. While all of these societies aimed to popularize general and scientific knowledge, their key concern was the cultivation of the national language. Admittedly, this was also *one* of the concerns of the Royal Society in London at the time of its establishment in 1660. By the middle of the 18th century, however, its nembers were decidedly "of the opinion that learned men and Philosophers of all nations [...] should consider themselves and each other, as Constituent Parts and Fellow-Members of one and the same illustrious Republik".[42]

The more aware the Hungarian *literati* became of the underdevelopment of their national language, the more they began to fear for the survival of the nation's already precarious culture and identity. When József Gvadányi deplored the imitation of foreign styles of dress in his *Egy falusi nótáriusnak budai utazása* (1787-8), and when Ányos raised similar concerns in *A régi magyar viseletről* (1782), they gave voice to anxieties which ran far deeper than mere provincialism or whimsical nostalgia. Montesquieu and Locke could both write with passion in defence of their countries' respective constitutions, but neither had to entertain fears for the survival of their own nations. Hume could remonstrate against the "jealousies of trade", but he did so as the spokesman of an expanding, rather than a threatened, trading nation. Where national integrity is unchallenged, national consciousness does not require active cultivation; cosmopolitanism is an easily afforded luxury for a world power. The *philosophes* never had to contemplate the choice formulated by one of the Hungarian "Jacobins", József Hajnóczy, in the question "emberbarát vagy hazafi?"[43] For while Louis XIV may have

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42 From a speech by George Parker in awarding the Society's Copely Medal to Benjamin Franklin in 1753. Cited in Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal*, pp.36-7. Schlereth also narrates the highly revealing case of Arthur Lee of Virginia, the only American "Royal Fellow" to resign from the Royal Society during the American War of Independence, considering it his patriotic duty to do so. The then president of the Society, Sir Joseph Banks, argued in his reply to Lee that "natural philosophers" were above the pragmatic politics of national allegiance and belonged to one cosmopolitan "Republik of Letters, and to the Community of Man and Mind." (Schlereth, pp.44-5).

43 See Kálmán Benda, *Emberbarát vagy hazafi? Tanulmányok a felvilágosodás korának magyarországi történeteiből*, Budapest, 1978.

overridden his nation's constitution, this did not make him any less French than Voltaire or Diderot; just as Whig might feud with Tory in England without ever needing to query the other's "Englishness" or without ever being told to conduct their debates in a foreign language.

The situation was clearly quite different in Hungary, and the following lines from Bessenyei's *A természet világa*, written at the turn of the century, provide a good illustration of the fears of the Hungarian nobility:

> Nemzeti személyed a nyelveddel elvész,
> S különös magadbul sanda maskarát tész.
> Vasszer, Croat leszel salakká változva
> S név nélkül a többi nemzet közt habozva.[44]

"Belehalsz az egész emberi nemzetbe", Bessenyei continues, representing as a tragic vision what a true man of the Enlightenment might well have contemplated as a proper end of pure reason.

While these lines clearly echo Herder's "prophecy" concerning the disappearance of the Hungarians from Central Europe as a linguistic and ethnic entity (*Ideen* vol IV), it is unlikely that Bessenyei was familiar with Herder's work. This only makes other parallels between the two writers all the more interesting. Herder's following statement, for example, would surely have been applauded not only Bessenyei, but almost any other champion of language renewal in late 18th Hungary:

> Has any nation anything more precious than the language of its fathers? In it dwell its entire world of tradition, history, religion, principles of existence, its whole heart and soul.[45]

While I shall discuss the influence and significance of Herder's ideas in Hungary in more detail in Chapter Four, it is worth drawing attention in this present context to the following preoccupations - in addition to the question of the national language - he shares with Bessenyei: national character, cultural relativism, emergent primitivism. If anything, Bessenyei actually outstrips Herder in his attitude to national character. While for Herder, whose work never makes a complete break with the thought of the Enlightement, there is to be no "Favoritvolk", for Bessenyei the reverse is true. Although Bessenyei prefaces his discussion of national character in the fifth chapter of *Magyar országnak törvényes állása* with words which echo Voltaire - "Az emberi

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44 In *Magyar felvilágosodás: irodalmi olvasókönyv*, ed. S. V. Kovács and F. Kulin, Budapest, 1984, p.176.

45 In Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder*, London, 1976, p.165.

természet, egész kiterjedésében vetetve, egy"[46] - his section on "A' Tiszta Magyar", which follows a few pages later, forces us to reinterpret his opening statement as little more than an "enlightened" gesture.

> A magyar természetnek [sic] egyik uralkodó vágya a ditsősség, fénnyesség, hír, név [...] A tiszta magyar természet, tsendes és szemérmes: minden széles, esztelen ditsekedő, hazug maga magasztalásának ellensége. Tekintetes maga viseletű; nem tsatsogó. A baj vívást veszedelmet, soha nem kereste, magát tűzzel, vitézséggel viselte [...] A Magyar fő Rendeknél emberségesb, nemesb vérű: méltóságosab tekintetű Nemzet Európában nem találtatot.[47]

Strange claims indeed for "the leading figure of the Enlightenment" in Hungary.

Ironically, the cultural relativism which - with Hamann and Herder as its most articulate representatives - came increasingly to challenge the universalist ideology of the *philosophes* in the second half of the 18th century, was in part a product of the internal contradictions of the Enlightenment itself. The principle of religious toleration championed so vigorously by the *philosophes* involved a recognition of, and respect for, cultural diversity and difference. Even by the middle of the century, however, few enlightened commentators would have sensed any real tension between the implications of Locke's *Letters Concerning Toleration* (1689-90) and the universalist ontology of Hume's *Inquiry*. For it was precisely because of the essential brotherhood of man that intolerance was to be abhorred: "It is clear that every individual who persecutes a man, his brother, because he does not agree with him, is a monster."[48] In the same text - an entry under "Tolerance" in the *Dictionnaire philosophique* - Voltaire makes a characteristic appeal to the social basis for the brotherhood of man provoded by the economic "universalism" of his age:

> The Parsee, the Hindu, the Jew, the Mohammedan, the Chinese deist, the Brahman, the Greek Christian, the Roman Christian, the Protestant Christian, the Quaker Christian trade with each other in the stock exchanges of Amsterdam, London, Surat or Basra: they do not raise their daggers against one another to win souls for their religions.[49]

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46 György Bessenyei, *Prózai munkák*, ed. György Kókay, Budapest, 1986, p.230.

47 Ibid., pp.238-41.

48 Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, edited and translated by Theorode Besterman, Harmondsworth, 1972, p.389.

49 Ibid., pp.387-8.

The principle of religious toleration also played a significant role in the cultural awakening of nations in East Central Europe. Joseph II's Toleration Patent of 1781 paved the way for the entry of not only the protestant Hungarian lesser nobility, but also of Orthodox Serbs and Romanians, into public and political life. In cultural terms, however, toleration was not understood by these nations as a basis for homogeneity, but as a legitimation of difference. While behind Voltaire's plea for tolerance lay a firm faith in the universal rationality and nature of man, affected only superficially by local customs, creeds and traditions, for Bessenyei these considerations constituted the key deteminants of an individual's beliefs: "Azért hiszem hitemet igaznak I-szor Hogy benne nevekedtem, mert ha *Chinába* szüllettem volna, *Confutziust* tisztelném".[50]

Indeed, it might be argued that Bessenyei's whole career can be read as a metaphorical paradigm of the Hungarian encounter with, and retreat from, the cosmopolitanism and rationalism of the Enlightenment. Bessenyei begins his literary career in the illustrious cosmopolitan city of late 18th century Vienna and ends it in gloomy hermitude in Bihar county - "a bihari remete" being Bessenyei's own disillusioned and ironic self-denomination in later years. Initially attracted to the rationalism of Voltaire - "Az Ország boldogságának egyik legfőbb Eszköze a Tudomány" (1781)[51] - he is led finally to the (albeit illnamed) "primitivism" of Rousseau: "Oly igaz az, hogy mentül tanultabb, bölcsebb az ember, annál kevesebb vigsággal élhet; ellenben mentül oktalanabb, annál több örömök közt lakozik" (1804).[52] These are the words of Bessenyei's noble savage, Kirakades, spoken to Trezeni (with obvious echoes of [Maria] Theresa) the ruler of an "enlightened" state, in Bessenyei's last major literary work, *Tariménes utazása*. It is not surprising that, written at the beginning of the 19th century, these words should echo not Locke, Hume, Montesquieu or Voltaire, but Herder:

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50 Bessenyei, *A holmi*, p.277. Bessenyei's position is not, however, far from that of Locke in the *Letters Concerning Toleration* which, characteristically challenging the concept of "innate ideas", insists that beliefs are the products of their contexts. Bessenyei's case for religious toleration also stems from a critique of "innate ideas" based on Locke. See section II of *A holmi*, "Született tudomány vagy idea innata", pp.208-10.

51 Bessenyei, *Jámbor szándék*, p.17.

52 Bessenyei, *Tariménes utazása*, cited in György Bessenyei, *Válogatott írásai*, Budapest, 1961, p.160.

> The savage who loves himself, his wife and his child [...] and works for the good of his tribe as for his own [...] is in my view more genuine than that human ghost, the [...] citizen of the world, who, burning with love for all his fellow ghosts, loves a chimera.[53]

ii). Essaying Man

When the literary historian, Ferenc Toldy (1805-75) first proposed the year 1772 to mark the birth of modern Hungarian literature, he did so with reference to the publication in that year of four texts by György Bessenyei - *Ágis tragédiája, Hunyadi László tragédiája, Eszterházi vigasságok* and *Az embernek próbája*. While most subsequent Hungarian literary historians have accepted and adopted Toldy's periodization, there has been a tendency to neglect three of the above works and to focus exclusively on *Ágis tragédiája* as the text which heralds the beginning of the literary "Enlightenment" in Hungary. The value of epoch-marking dates like 1772 can never lie in their historical accuracy (the inception of movements in the history of ideas can rarely ever be traced back to a single year), but rather in the kind of historical understanding they render possible. For this reason, I have no wish to challenge the proposition of 1772 as a point of departure, but should like instead to reinterpret its significance by focusing on one of Bessenyei's texts of that year which has been unduly neglected. Bessenyei's *Az embernek próbája*, in its attempt to rework and interpret the ideas of Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733) on which it is based, serves as perhaps the best possible illustration of both the attempt of late 18th Hungarian literature to assimilate the ideas of the Enlightenment, and the reasons for its failure to do so.

The text of *Az embernek próbája* is actually based on a French translation of Pope's *Essay on Man*. While we still possess no conclusive evidence as to the exact identity and authorship of the French text, there are good reasons for supposing that Bessenyei may have been working from a translation by Abbe Millot entitled *Essai sur l'homme* and published in Lyon in 1761.[54] As

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53 Cited in Berlin, *Herder and Vico*, p.178.

54 See R. Gálos, *Bessenyei György életrajza*, Budapest, 1951, p.62. One point Gálos does not make is that Bessenyei's *Rómának viselt dolgai* is actually a translation of part of Millot's *Éléments d'histoire générale*.

Bessenyei's text itself, however, is not offered as a translation, but as an attempt to reproduce, interpret and embellish the essential ideas of Pope's work, the identity of his French source is ultimately of less importance than the conceptual relationship between the Hungarian "interpretation" and the English original. Considering the privileged position Pope's *Essay on Man* occupies as nothing short of a compendium of some of the most elemental and widely held ideas of the Enlightenment,[55] this conceptual relationship, of adoption and adaptation, is of crucial importance to our understanding of the character of early modern Hungarian literature, precisely at the moment of its inception.

Before embarking upon a comparison of the claims of Bessenyei and Pope, it should be noted that Bessenyei published two substantively different versions of his text. In 1803 he produced a second "reworking" of Pope's *Essay* considerably longer (by 530 lines) than the first. The second version is furnished with an introduction (Jegyzés) in which Bessenyei makes some very interesting comments about his aims and methods (to which I shall return later). In the first draft of this introduction (Világosítás), which Bessenyei rejected, he comes close to an admission of the fact that his title - which none the less remains unchanged in the revised and extended version - is actually a mistranslation of the French *Essai sur l'homme*. Bessenyei's title, *Az embernek próbája*, suggests the sense "the trial[s] of man", or rather, the "essai[s] *de* l'homme", rather than "*sur* l'homme". In his rejected "Világosítás", Bessenyei attempts to explain (away) the problematic inflection of his title in terms of mere stylistic economy. Here, he acknowledges that the proper meaning of the French "essai sur l'homme" would have to be given in Hungarian as: "Az embernek vizsgálása, tulajdonságainak próbákra tétele, szemlélése sat. Hogy állapottyában, természetiben, ki és mi."[56] But, Bessenyei continues, "köny[v]nek, kivált Poémának, hosszú nevezetet adni nem lehet [...] Külömben a nevezet leg kisebb: a benne és alatta fekvő dolgok határozzák meg a munkának semmiségét, vagy érdemét."[57] This retrospective justification, however, conceals one of the most crucial differences of attitude between his "essay" and the of Pope. For Bessenyei's title is actually a very apt

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[55] See, for example, Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, "Pope gave brief and pregnant expression to the feeling of the age in the line: 'The proper study of mankind is man.'" p.5.

[56] Bessenyei, *Az embernek próbája*, ed. István Harsányi, Budapest, 1912, p.103.

[57] *Az embernek próbája*, p.103.

description of the concerns of his poem. As will become clear during the course of the following analysis, Bessenyei, in a manner quite alien to the pragmatic optimism of Pope, really does describe man's existence on earth as a "trial", an existence of inevitable suffering. And this very act of ideologically charged *misreading* can itself be read as a highly suggestive metaphor for the aspirations and limitations of the Hungarian literary awakening.

Like Pope's *Essay*, Bessenyei's *Az embernek próbája* consists of four epistles (levél). Bessenyei makes further subdivisions within each epistle, generally according to the numbered points listed in the "Arguments" with which Pope prefaces each epistle in the English text. Bessenyei's subsections are generally, however, substantially longer than Pope's, for reasons which will be considered at the end of this chapter.

Pope's first epistle offers a fairly conventional and summarial statement of the essence of Enlightenment epistemology. Man cannot, nor should he seek to, comprehend all the systems of the universe, but should be content with a full understanding of the rationality and essential rightness of his own. Human knowledge is limited in a metaphysical sense, but perfectly equipped to understand all that is necassary to man's own existence. Man is in every way suited to his immediate life on earth, even if its ultimate purpose lies beyond his comprehension: "man's as perfect as he ought" (I, 70).[58]

Bessenyei's first epistle already adds important inflections to this argument. For Bessenyei, not only the logic of "worlds unnumbered", but also man's own world lies beyond the realm of human understanding: "Az ember magát tökéletesen magyarázni elégtelen" (first argument of Első Levél).[59] Man is not, furthermore, created "as perfect as he ought", but only "olly tökélletes [...] a' mint lehetett". (115)[60] The difference in emphasis between these two statements is significant. Pope's "ought" reflects not a moral, but a pragmatic attitude to perfection. Perfection is not an abstract moral standard, but a relative value - relative, that is, to man's absolute appropriateness to his own natural system. Bessenyei's "possible", on the other hand, admits of a higher realm of perfection denied to man, and does not reproduce or corroborate Pope's confidence in man's rightness for his tasks on earth.

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58 *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, line 70, in Alexander Pope, *Collected Epistles, Poems and Satires*, London, 1924, p.184.

59 *Az embernek próbája*, p.28.

60 *Az embernek próbája*, p.31.

Pope can conclude from this that man should not struggle against his own (fully sufficient, rational, "perfect" nature), but should submit himself to the rational and natural laws of the world for which he has been perfectly equipped. In his Argument to the first epistle, Pope appeals to "the absolute submission due to Providence",[61] returning to this point in the closing section of the epistle with the words: "Submit, in this or any other sphere", (I, 285), because "Whatever is, is right." (I, 294).[62] Bessenyei's first epistle shows none of this optimistic resignation. Throughout, the higher perfection of God and Nature is contrasted with the suffering (trials) of man on earth. Bessenyei's closing couplet has none of the reassuring finality of Pope's last line ("Whatever is, is right"):

> Egy ember magába halálig szenyvedhet,
> De a' természetbe hiba még sem lehet. (I, 509-10)[63]

That it is Bessenyei rather than Pope speaking in this lines is made still more apparent by recalling the closing couplet of an slightly later poem, *Bessenyei György Magához* (1777):

> Csak az Isten maga örökös igazság,
> Többi mind szenvedés, árnyék s mulandóság.64

Pope's second epistle is concerned with the "two principles of man", self-love and reason. His argument here (expressed most tersely in its aphoristic recapitulation at the end of Epistle IV: "true self-love and social are the same"),[65] rehearses one of the central arguments of 18th century English moral and political thought. Pope draws directly here on Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit* (1699), which was widely admired in the period. Shaftesbury had claimed: "the Wisdom of what rules, and is First and Chief in Nature, has made it to be according to the *private Interest* and *Good* of everyone, to work towards the *general Good*".[66] Man is both naturally selfish and naturally social; Nature, as the highest expression of Reason, ensures that these two tendencies are fully compatible, that "true self-love and social are

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61 *Essay on Man*, p.182.

62 *Essay on Man*, p.189.

63 *Az embernek próbája*, p.46.

64 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, ed. Márta Mezei, Budapest, 1983, p.101.

65 *Essay on Man*, p.215.

66 Cited in Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background*, London, 1986, p.74.

the same". This argument - the philosophical justification of "possessive individualism" (C. B. Macpherson)[67] - developed in England in and through a polemic against the Hobbesian view of the "state of nature" as a "state of war". The refutation of Hobbes's postulation of the essentially anti-social nature of man formed one of the key premises of Locke's philosophical justification of 1688. With Locke, nature was no longer "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish" (Hobbes), but "peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and cooperation". The optimism the new position represented was, in the words of Basil Willey, "in essence an apologia for the status quo".[68] As nature is both sufficiently wise and sufficiently benign to have linked indivisibly man's private interests with the public good, the absolutist state was essentially superfluous to the rational organisation of a society's affairs. Born in exactly 1688, Pope was himself a child of the new status quo, and an *Essay on Man* is perhaps its most articulate poetic justification.

For Bessenyei, of course, this backgound was not only unknown, but would have anyway been historically alien. Unable to interpret the notion of self-love in Shaftesbury's utilitarian terms, he dilutes the concept into a kind of individual consolation for the trials of human existence: "Magamat kell szeretnem nyugodalmomért."[69] In fact, the concept of "self-love" presented him with so many problems that he actually abandoned it in the 1803 edition of *Az embernek próbája*, replacing it with the more morally neutral "élet-szeretet" (love of life) and adding the following footnote:

> Jegyezd meg, hogy a *maga szeretet* két féle: egyik bűnös, mikor más romlásával dolgozik részemre; a másik ártatlan, mikor mások pusztulása nélkül sorsomat jobbíttva. *Élet-szeretet*-nek nevezem hát az ártatlan maga szeretetet. (135)[70]

This division of self-love into good and bad completely misses the point of Pope's proposition - following Shaftesbury - of a relationship of rational (and thus natural) necessity between private interest and public good. It is, most crucially, this relationship of *necessity* that Bessenyei is unable to reproduce. While the sixth point in Pope's Argument to Epistle II states that "the ends of Providence and general good are answered in our passions and

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67 See C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, Oxford, 1962.

68 *The Eighteenth Century Background*, p.48.

69 *Az embernek próbája*, p.51.

70 *Az embernek próbája*, p.135.

imperfections",[71] Bessenyei's fifth (but corresponding) argument in the 1772 edition reads: "Minden indulat hasznos eszköz *lehet* az ember boldogságára".[72] Unable to follow Pope's transformation of self-love into social virtue, Bessenyei is left to face the problem of human vice. While Pope ends his second epistle contrasting the limits of human knowledge with the omniscience of God ("though man's a fool, yet God is wise"),[73] Bessenyei closes with a contrast between man's *vice* and God's virtue:

> Valljuk-meg hát, hogy az Istenség igazság,
> És tsak halandótul származhat gonoszság. (1055-5)[74]

In his third epistle, Bessenyei follows Pope more closely than anywhere else in the text. Pope's Epistle III, "Of the Nature and State of Man with Respect to Society", offers a potted history of man"s social development from the state of nature through various forms of civil society and political government, highly characteristic of the 18th century. Pope's starting point is, once again, an implicit refutation of the social cynicism of Hobbes. For while Pope's history leads us through various perversions of just government (tyrannies based on fear and superstition, two popular demons of the Enlightenment), it ultimately reaches a description of the present in which the "influence of self-love operating to the social and public good" has restored "true religion and government on their first principle".[75] Pope's complete faith in the concord of self-love and Reason, when they are not perverted by fear and superstition, leads him to a highly pragmatic conclusion:

> For forms of government let fools contest:
> Whate'er is best administered is best" (III, 303-4)[76]

The function of government is not to interfere with or constrict the interests of the individual in the name of the public good, but to provide effective administration to ensure the *free* development of self-interest as a natural and rational condition of social welfare. This argument is profoundly

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71 *Essay on Man*, p.189.

72 *Az embernek próbája*, p.52. (My emphasis).

73 *Essay on Man*, p.196.

74 *Az embernek próbája*, p.65.

75 "Argument" of Epistle III, *Essay on Man*, p.197.

76 *Essay on Man*, p.204.

characteristic of the political thinking of the Enlightenment and finds its fullest expression, of course, in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776).

Again Bessenyei is forced to interpret Pope's highly aphoristic reformulation of a set of fairly well established and widely held ideas without any experience of the social reality those ideas seek to justify, and without any knowledge of the ideological tradition they represent. Initially, Bessenyei follows Pope's social history quite closely, adding and embellishing, rather than omitting from the story. When he comes to the restoration of natural law, however, his version becomes increasingly vague. A footnote to the closing lines of his third epistle, clearly intended to address this obscurity, actually reveals that Bessenyei's interpretation is the very opposite of the nascent liberalism of the likes of Pope and Adam Smith: "Az igaz maga-szeretet [...] igaz és jó törvény maradhat, tsak rendes mértékbe tartasson-meg."[77] Bessenyei, as we have seen, can conceive of no internal, necessary and rational relationship between private interest and public good; instead he must posit an external, contingent and moral relationship. The restoration of natural law, which for Pope is effected through the free play of self-love and reason, can for Bessenyei only be achieved by *restraining* the claims of self interest through the application of moral values based on the worship of God: "Mind Istentül jön mi hasznos életünknek, / Ő lehet törvénye tsak nemes Lelkünknek." (1613-14)[78]

The relative cynicism of Bessenyei's position concerning contemprary society (his recognition of the need for constraints) is already anticipated in his description of the "original" state of nature. Rhetorically he seems to echo Pope:

> Nor think, in Nature's state they blindly trod;
> The state of Nature was the reign of God;
> Self-love and social at her birth began,
> Union the bond of all things and, of man. (III, 147-50)[79]

> Ne gondoljuk, hogy a' Világ dühösködött,
> Alkottatásakor'; 's mint ma úgy öldöklött.

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[77] *Az embernek próbája*, p.86.

[78] *Az embernek próbája*, p.85.

[79] *Essay on Man*, p.201.

Az ember életét természet oktatta,
Melly a' gonoszt, mint ma a'ként nem tudhatta.(1337-40)[80]

The obvious difference between these two accounts is Bessenyei's contrast of the state of nature with the present state of society. While it is true that Pope goes on to make similarly critical references to "the man of times to come", he still sees the present as an age of Reason which actually restores the "first principles" of nature. For Bessenyei, the state of nature figures as a lost idyll rather than the model of a triumphant present. Writing in Hungary in 1772, Bessenyei could hardly share Pope's confident faith that "Whatever is, is right."[81] Sixteen years after the Libson earthquake, which elicited Voltaire's most scathing attacks on 18th century optimism - from the *Počme sur Lisbonne* to *Bein, Tout est Bien*, with its direct criticism of Pope's *Essay* (not to mention the emergence of the nature/garden idyll at the end of *Candide*) - "whatever was" seemed a lot less "right" than it had once seemed to the likes of Pope. By the times Bessenyei produced his second version of *Az embernek próbája* in 1803 - one year before he was to celebrate the values of the "noble savage" in *Tariménes utazása* - his attitude to both the claims of reason and the state of nature was becoming increasingly Romantic: "Boldog tudatlanság! vígan múlsz életeddel!" (*Az embernek próbája* 1803, line 190).[82]

Perhaps the most significant of Bessenyei's divergences from Pope's text and the values it represents comes in the closing section of the fourth and final epistle. After following quite closely the first six points of Pope's Argument, Bessenyei's text suddenly breaks off, completely ignoring Pope's seventh and concluding contention. The sixth, penultimate, argument of Pope's fourth epistle sets out to show "that external goods are not the proper rewards, but often inconsistent with, or destructive of virtue", and provides six instances with which to illustrate his case (riches, honours, nobility, greatness, fame, superior talents).[83] Bessenyei offers four loosely corresponding headings ("Nemesi születés", "Nagyság", "Hír, világi ditsőség", "Nagy tudomány, böltsesség, 's belső érdemek"),[84] before closing with two further sections of his own invention, which have no counterpart whatsoever

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80 *Az embernek próbája*, p.75.

81 *Essay on Man*, p.215.

82 *Az embernek próbája*, p.117.

83 *Essay on Man*, p.205.

84 *Az embernek próbája*, pp.96-9.

in Pope's text. Pope's closing section (point seven in his Argument) calls for "conformity" and "resignation" to the order of Providence, both "here and hereafter".[85] The concluding lines of the *Essay* then go on to restate Pope's central claims; that:

- Whatever is, is right!
That reason, passion, answer one great aim;
That true self-love and social are the same;
That virtue only makes our bliss below;
And all our knowledge is, - Ourselves to know. (IV, 394-8)[86]

Bessenyei's closing statements are of a very different order:

Boldogságunkat itt élvén, ne reméljük [...]
Hagyjuk-el e' Világ' veszélyes lármáját [...]
A' nap fénye felé tsendesen lebegjünk,
Földünktül rettegjünk, 's az Égtől reméljünk,
Alattunk ütközet, hartz, lármák, hallatnak,
Felettünk az Egek tsendesen álhatnak.
Minden véres tsata lett földünknek színén,
Midőn minden öröm lesz Istenünk Egén.
Jövel erre Lelkem éneklő Múszáddal,
Hozd-el törvényeidet szárnyaknak magaddal.
Hagyjuk itt a' véres nagy emberi Nemet,
'S öleljük felettünk a' ditsőült Eget:
Lássák, hogy Istenünk jó 's szent mindenekbe,
És tsak tudatlanság Zúg az emberekbe. (2007-2056)[87]

From the outset, Pope's message had been one of "absolute submission" and "resignation" to an existence ordained by Providence and to which man is perfectly suited. Bessenyei's text turns resignation into retreat. Pope's faith in the inherent rightness of "whatever is", becomes a full scale rejection of the present order of existence which is no more than the site of irrational conflict and chaos. Pope's exuberant confidence in the rational nature of man, and in man's capacity for self-knowledge, turns into a diatribe against "a véres nagy emberi Nem" in which "tsak tudatlanság Zúg". The optimism of the Enlightenment becomes the nascent misanthropy of the "bihari remete". For already in 1772 - the year which is supposed to mark the inception of the Englightenment in Hungarian literature - we have a clear image of the world-

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85 *Essay on Man*, p.205.

86 *Essay on Man*, p.215.

87 *Az embernek próbája*, pp.99-100.

weary, retreating, even "pre-romantic" Bessenyei, who will turn a Voltairian *Staatsroman* into a Rousseauian yearning for a lost and idyllic Nature in *Tariménes utazása* some three decades later.

Bessenyei's second version of *Az embernek próbája* (1803) is almost twice as long as Pope's *Essay on Man*. In his introduction to the second edition, Bessenyei provides two explanations for this. First, he admits that he has been unable to reproduce the accuracy of the French translation because "a magyar nyelv, verselésre alkalmatlan, e miat, hogy rend kivül hosszú szavakkal él".[88] "A Frantzia nyelv", on the other hand,

> rövid szavainál és azoknak szélessen kiterjedet értelmeinél fogva, két versben mond annyit, a mennyit mi négyben, hatban mondhatunk.[89]

Bessenyei's second reason for the relative length of his text is perhaps more telling. It concerns the relationship between style and audience.

> Póp, egyik nagy tárgyrul a másikra sebes szökéssel ugrál által, mivel böltseknek írt, kik a hizakot által láttyák. De nékem ezen üregeket bé kellet gondolatokkal, versekkel tsinálnom, hogy a gyenge olvasó egyik dologrúl a másikra, köteseken lépésrűl lépésre botsátkozhasson, mivel nagy ugrást nem tehet: sem, a sok ki rakot tzégerekrűl meg sem ismerheti, mit árulnak alattok".[90]

In a footnote to line 982 of his second version of *Az embernek próbája*, Bessenyei, in explaining why he has added a number of examples and lines to Pope's text, also indicates the identity of the "gyenge olvasó" he sees himself as addressing:

> E példák, dolgok és versek Pópban nintsenek, de én kéntelen vagyok értelmét tzéllyában világositani, mert nem Anglusoknak fordítok, hanem Magyar *falusi nemeseknek*."[91]

Pope's ellipsis is not, however, merely an indication of the erudition or intelligence of his projected audience; it also reflects the poet's own attitude towards the nature and status of his claims. Pope can afford the "luxury" of aphorism because essentially he is saying nothing new. As suggested earlier, the *Essay on Man* is little more than a dazzlingly terse and eloquent compendium of some of the key political and philosophical axioms of its time. It is remarkable not as a work of discovery or originality - as critics have been

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88 *Az embernek próbája*, p.106.

89 *Az embernek próbája*, p.106.

90 *Az embernek próbája*, p.108.

91 *Az embernek próbája*, p.143. (My emphasis).

quick to point out ever since Samuel Johnson - but as a work of compression and consolidation. The compact and epigrammatic logic of its form - immortalising contemporary values as timeless and universal truths - mirrors the "Cosmic Torysm" (Basil Willey) of its content. If Locke's *Two Treatises on Government* (1690) and his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* of the same year represented the first major political and philosophical justification of 1688, Pope (who was quite literally a child of the English Revolution) provided the first major justification and popularisation of all it stood for in verse.

Even if Bessenyei had been writing for the most learned of his Hungarian contemporaries, he could not, of course, have assumed the same ideological background and competence that Pope was able to address. The philosophical optimism of the Enlightenment, its faith in reason and in the indivisibility of private and public interest, could find no foundation in 18th century Hungarian thought. Nor was there in 18th century Hungary a community of *philosophes* whose intellectual aspirations not only corresponded to the material initiatives of the forces of social "progress", but could also be summarised and immortalised in verse. It was only in the following decades that the small and isolated Hungarian *literati* began, primarily under the organisation of the far more enlightened Kazinczy, to seek and create opportunities for collaboration. By the time these initiatives produced concrete results in the 1830s, however, they had come to represent predominantly national concerns very different from those of Alexander Pope, living and writing a whole century before.

Chapter Two

The Crisis of the Enlightenment

One might argue, with little fear of exaggeration, that the most accomplished and enduring work of art to come out of Hungary in the year 1772 was not Bessenyei's *Ágis tragédiája*, but Haydn's 45th Symphony, the "Farewell" in F sharp minor, composed, as anecdote has it, to prompt Prince Esterházy to return with his musicians from Esterháza to Eisenstadt. This concurrence is, for the history of Hungarian literature, more significant than it might at first sight appear. For Haydn's "Farewell" symphony - like the String Quartets Op. 20 and the Piano Sonata in C minor Hob. 20. composed in the same year - is already a highly characteristic, articulate and mature product of the radical and broadly European cultural context in which modern Hungarian literature was born. Most music historians now seem to agree that 1772 represents the climax of Haydn's "Sturm und Drang" period. One does not need fully to endorse this denomination to recognise that the development of Haydn's musical idiom in the years 1768-1772 constitutes a new departure in the history of music, itself closely related to a number of more protracted and perhaps more formative developments in the other arts.

It has been estimated that approximately 95% of all music composed in the third quarter of the 18th century was written in major keys, including the (30-40) symphonies Haydn composed for the Esterházys between 1760 and 1768.[1] Almost half the symphonies Haydn completed over the next five years, on the other hand, are in minor keys, traditionally reserved for "music of a passionate, angry or sometimes sad character."[2] Like Mozart's early G minor Symphony (K183) composed in 1773, Haydn's minor symphonies of the early 1770s all embody "a quality of personal expression that is far removed from *galant* entertainment and different again from the classical spirit of the

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1 Stanley Sadie (ed.) *The Cambridge Music Guide*, Cambridge, 1985, p.234.

2 Ibid., p.234.

1780s".[3] These works are characterised by their celebration of a unique and individual sensibility over the expectations generated by an established and ordered musical convention. In addition to their use of uncommon keys, their new interest in distinctly un-Baroque forms of counterpoint, their incorporation of unexpected breaks and leaps, and the liberties they take with the conventional relationship between exposition and development, their power to move and disturb lies in their emphasis on sudden, unpredictable and dramatic changes of mood which anticipate the romantic individualism of the mature Beethoven. Seen in this light, the implications of the melancholy fading away of the last movement of Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony - when considered alongside the passionate eruptions of the opening Allegro and the emotional complexity of the Adagio - extend way beyond the circumstantial anecdotes by which the work is surrounded.

In literature, as in music, the first half of the 1770s witnessed a consolidation of new initiatives which had been taking shape since the middle of the century. 1770 saw the completion of Rousseau's unique and revolutionary project of self-discovery, the *Confessions*; 1771 the publication of Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*; 1772 the founding of the Göttinger Hainbund; 1773 the last canto of Klopstock's *Messias* and the radical collection of essays edited by Herder, *Von Deutscher Art und Kunst*; while 1774 marked the appearance of the most influential novel of the last third of the century, Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. The concerns and aspirations behind all these events have - as I shall attempt to illustrate in this chapter - roots which go much deeper than the relatively local, polemical and somewhat shortlived adventure of the German "Sturm und Drang"; they also exercised a profound and formative influence on the direction of late 18th century Hungarian literature. Not only was the young Kazinczy, for example, an avid reader of the *Göttinger Musenalmanach*, he also translated works by the group's idol, Klopstock, and by one of its most eminent members, J. H. Miller. In other cases a contiguity of interests and concerns is less apparently the product of direct influence. In the same year that Herder wrote "I am not

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3 Hugh Ottaway, "From *Empfindsamkeit* to *Sturm und Drang*" in *The Pelican History of Music*, vol 3, ed. A. Robertson and D. Stevens, Harmondworth, 1968, p.60. See also, H. C. Robbins Landon, *The Symphonies of Joseph Haydn*, London, 1955, pp.307-341. On Haydn's Piano Sonata in C Minor, No 33 (Hob.20) - also composed in 1772 - see John McCabe *Haydn: Piano Sonatas*, London, 1986, pp.40-46.

here to think" but to be! to feel!"[4] (1772), Bessenyei - who seems to have been unaware of Herder's work - would write in a similar vein: "Minek van az elme egyébért, hanem hogy szívünknek érzékenységeit [...] mindenek előtt szabadosan festhesse?"[5] Bessenyei continues - in an appendix to the 1772 edition of *Az embernek próbája*, entitled *Szív, mu'zika, szerelem* - "Úgy tetszik, mintha a' szív a' természet leg-első szülötje volna; ki töb testet csak azért vett magára, hogy köntöse legyen, mellybe akaratja szerént járhasson",[6] suggesting that we have already come a long way from the enlightened mentality with which Bessenyei's work is conventionally associated.

The intellectual context into which Hungarian literature comes to consciousness in the last third of the 18th century is no longer fashioned by the rationalism of Voltaire, the empiricism of Locke or the social optimism of Pope. The cultural legacy Hungarian writers inherit in the 1770s is no longer that of the Enlightenment, but that of its crisis. In Hungary, 1772 sees the appearance not only of Bessenyei's *Ágis*, but also of Ignác Mészáros's *Kartigám*, the first Hungarian sentimental novel, and it is, as I shall attempt to show, the latter work which most fully reflects the aspirations and self-image of its age.

The Enlightenment, for all the common premises it assumed, by no means constituted a hermetic and homogeneous "movement" in the history of ideas. Pope and La Mettrie might agree on the incontrovertible primacy of reason, but the deism of the former was totally incommensurable with the materialism of the latter. The empiricism of Newton and Locke which informed Condillac's great assault on the "esprit de systeme" of the 17th century, *Traité des systčmes* (1749), would not prevent Baron D'Holbach, the chief patron of the *philosophes*, from publishing his *Systčme de la Nature* in 1770. Indeed, as Voltaire reminds us, heterogeneity was of the essence of the Enlightenment:

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4 From the poem *St. Johanns Nachtstraum* in a letter to Caroline Flachsland, 11 July 1772, cited in Roy Pascal, *The German Sturm und Drang*, Manchester, 1953, p.135.

5 Bessenyei, *Szív, mu'zika, szerelem*, an appendix to *Az embernek próbája*, Vienna, 1772, p.158.

6 Ibid., p.158.

"I have always been an eclectic; I have taken from all the different schools whatever struck me as having the most likelihood about it."[7]

The internal tensions and contradictions in the thought of the Enlightenment, however, run much deeper than mere philosophical eclecticism. As Friedrich Meinecke argues in his comprehensive study of the genealogy of 19th century historicism, "The eighteenth century provides one of the greatest examples of the process whereby a new intellectual and spiritual force appears to effect an absolute conquest for a certain period, yet is accompanied from the very start by an opposite tendency which later causes its dissolution."[8] Three such "tendencies", or internal tensions, are particularly crucial to our understanding of the crisis-ridden legacy of the Enlightenment which Hungarian literature inherits at the end of the century. Being directly related to the historicist project, the first is identified by Meinecke himself: the "strong urge of the Enlightenment towards universal enquiry, the impulse to capture humanity in all its manifestations, was [...] likely to lead to a relativist outlook because of the sheer vastness of the variety it revealed."[9]

The origins of this relativism can in part be traced back to a fundamental tension in Enlightenment logic between the theoretical assumptions of universalism and the methodological demands of empiricism. For an age which claimed to eschew hypothetical speculation and insist upon empirical demonstration it was clearly unacceptable to posit the universal nature of man as no more than an *a priori* essence or ideal. Natural man had to be sought, found and studied in his concrete reality, located either historically, in the pre-social "state of nature", or enthnographically, in those distant lands where nature's laws had been preserved from the corrupting influence of social custom and superstition. Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* draws upon both sources, embellishing a heuristic fiction of the life of man "as he must have emerged from the hands of nature"[10] with the first-hand anthropological accounts of 18th century merchants, missionaries and travellers like Francois Coreal, Peter Kolben, Le Pere du Tertre and Jean Chardin. Both emphases were to exercise considerable influence by the beginning of the 19th century

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7 Cited in Paul Hazard, *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, Harmondsworth, 1965, p.331.

8 Meinecke, *Historism*, p.199.

9 Ibid., p.70.

10 Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, p.81.

in forms which had little in common with the socil and intellectual aspirations of the Enlightenment; the first in the cult of primitivism, and the second in the form of cultural relativism. Even as early as the second *Discourse*, however, Rousseau himself is inclined to doubt the objectivity of his sources:

> In the two or three centuries since the inhabitants of Europe have been flooding into other parts of the world, endlessly publishing new collections of voyages and travel, I am persuaded that we have come to know no other men except Europeans; moreover it appears [...] that every author produces under the pompous name of the study of man nothing much more than a study of the men of his own country. Individuals go here and there in vain; it seems that philosophy does not travel and that the philosophy of one nation is little suited to another. [11],

In his "Last Reply to M. Bordes" (1752), later added as a supplement to the first *Discourse*, Rousseau goes a good deal further:

> If I were the leader of one of the peoples of Nigritia, I declare that I would set up on the frontier of the country a gallows where I would hang without appeal the first European who dared to venture in, and the first citizen who would dare to venture out. [12]

By the time he came to write his *Considerations on the Government of Poland* in 1770-71 (parts of which were translated by Kazinczy some 20 years later), Rousseau had already developed a highly positive attitude towards a more Romantic notion of national character:

> It is national institutions which shape the genius, the character, the tastes and morals of a people; which give it an individuality of its own [...] Each country has advantages which are peculiar to itself, and which should be extended and fostered by its constitution. Husband and cultivate those of Poland, and she will have few other nations to envy. [13]

Herder adopted Rousseau's equation of the natural with the presocial, but tended more regularly to change the subject in question from man in general to the *"Volk"* in particular, with this *Volk* bearing the same relation to the State as Rousseau's "original man" had borne to "man is society". In both cases the former terms implied authenticity and the latter terms artificiality. As Herder claimed: "Nature creates nations, not states".[14] Herder's

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[11] Ibid., 159.

[12] *The Indispensible Rousseau*, compiled by J. H. Mason, London 1979, p.47.

[13] Ibid., pp.296-7.

[14] Cited in Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder*, p.163.

collectivisation of the Enlightenment's individual subject, and his scorn for the artificiality of the state are not difficult to understand in historical terms. While the individual (as entrepreneur) was indeed the direct agent of progress in 18th England, Holland or France, Herder's immediate national experience was of a collection of predominantly feudal principalities which required unification under a principle of *collective* identity far stronger and more organic than that of the State. It should be no harder to appreciate why Herder's "national subject", and not the individual subject of the Enlightenment, was ultimately to gain greater currency in Hungary, whose national integrity had for three centuries been continually challenged. This is, however, to anticipate a cultural moment which takes us beyond the crisis of the Enlightenment towards a kind of "resolution", which will be discussed in more detail in my fourth chapter.

The Enlightenment's insistence upon empiricism not only produced a tension with the claims of universalism, but also with the claims of reason itself - a tension which would only be transcended in Kant's magisterial rehabilitation of metaphysics at the end of the century. The "exact analysis of things" Voltaire had called for in his (negative) *Treatise on Metaphysics* precluded the possibility of absolute knowledge independent of sense perception. The problem is already faced - and left unresolved - in Locke's seminal exposition of philosophical empiricism, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, where its author contemplates the two fundamental notions of "substance" and "spirit". Discussing the futility of endeavouring to define substance - that which "stands under", "upholds" or "supports" the "common qualities produced by sensation" - Locke compares such endeavours to the predicament of the "poor Indian philosopher" who

> saying that the world was supported by a great Elephant, was asked, what the Elephant rested on; to which his answer was, a great Tortoise: but being again pressed to know what gave support to the broad-back'd Tortoise, replied, something, he knew not what.[15]

Bessenyei clearly has Locke in mind when he deals with the other side of the same question - "mitsoda a' *matéria, substantia* vagy a látható világnak *teste*?[16] - in the *"Ősholmi"* of 1773-5:

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[15] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P. H. Nidditch, Oxford, 1975, p.296.

[16] *A holmi*, p.121.

> Kérlek minek gondolod te azt, a' mi nem test? te, ki testenn kívül edj gondolatot sem adhatsz. A' mi nem test, annak sem képe sem színe, sem semmi szaga nintsen; minek gondolod hát? Azt kell felelned: *tsak valaminek.*[17]

The same problem resurfaces in Locke's later discussion of "spirit" in Chapter 3 of Book IV, "On the Extent of Human Knowledge". Is the soul, asks Locke, material, and if so, can matter think? Locke' answer is characteristic of the Enlightenment in its acceptance both of the viability of the question and of the futility of seeking an answer within the confines of human reason. It is, Locke claims,

> impossible for us, by the contemplation of our own Ideas without revelation, to discover whether Omnipotency has not given to some Systems of Matter, fitly disposed, a power to perceive and think, or else joined and fixed to Matter, so disposed, a thinking immaterial Substance.[18]

This problem of the materiality (or immateriality) of the soul remained a bugbear for the Enlightenment. In his *Lettres philosophiques*, Voltaire could do no more, in attempting to rescue Locke from misplaced accusations of atheism, than restate the problem: Locke had not "sought to overthrow religion", but merely to demonstrate "the non-existence of human knowledge[19] When seeking to justify his defence in a letter to M. de La Condamine of June 22 1734, Voltaire - in a rhetorical *coup de grace* which goes to the very heart of the Enlightenment's remarkably resigned and pragmatic acceptence of its own epistemological limitations - turns Locke's disturbing expression of doubt into a triumphant and comforting statement of certainty:

> My letter to Locke simply amounts to this: human reason is powerless to demonstrate that it is impossible for God to endow matter with the power of thought, a proposition which, I imagine, is as true as this one: triangles whose heights and bases are equal are equal to one another.[20]

Bessenyei and his Hungarian contemporaries could, for their part, find no such comfort in the absolute certainty of the powerlessness of human reason. Bessenyei himself was plagued throughout his career by this problem of the materiality of the soul - initially as a point of theology, but increasingly as a

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17 Ibid., p.122.

18 Locke, op.cit., pp.540-41.

19 Voltaire, *Letters on England*, p.64.

20 Cited in Hazard, *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, p.134.

problem of knowledge. In one of his shorter contributions to the volume *Bessenyei György társasága* (1777), Bessenyei criticises the notion of the immortality of the soul and answers the Lockean question "az Isten matériális dolognak gondolkodásra való erőt adhat e, vagy nem?"[21] with a definite *yes*. In another work of the same year, however, *A filozófus* - Bessenyei's only literary work to win popularity in his own lifetime - the protagonist Palmeno is already given the line: "Ez a Lokk tsak a sok kéttséget tsinálja."[22] Similar doubts return in the Viennese *Holmi* of 1779:

> Ki tudhattya már hogy az Isten az örök testnek adhate gondolkodásra, és értelemre való erőt, tehetséget: ismerszik az oktalan állatokba mellyekbe értelmet tapasztalunk. Innen vette *Lok* is magának, ezen nagy Anglus Filosofus azt a szabadságot melly szerint kérdésbe vészi, hogy ha az Isten örök testnek adhaté gondolkodásra való erőt, vagy nem. Mondani sem lehet hogy nem adhat. Az Isten hatalmának határt nem szabhatunk, de ki probállya meg ellenbe, hogy adot bizonyosan?"[23]

By the time Bessenyei comes to write *Az értelemnek keresése* in 1804, the theological aspect of this question serves only as a cue for a discussion of its broader epistemological implications. The fifth section of this work - whose title, "Az értelemnek végső határa", is significantly reminiscent of the title of Locke's crucial chapter "Of the Extent of Human Understanding" - is, in emphasis at least, more radically and uncompromisingly empiricist than Locke's *Essay* in its conclusions:

> Az értelemnek gondolkodó, és fontolkodó ereje, tuttodra, egyedül tapasztalás által származik benne. Lehetetlen valamire gondolnod, hogy fejedben színt, és formát ne lás. Mihent értelmedet e világnak testén kívül teszed, értelmedben többé semmi féle dolgot nem találsz [...] A mit értelmedbe, sem látás sem hallás, sem érzés s át nem adot, nints ot.[24]

What is particularly interesting about Bessenyei's treatment of the limits of human understanding - and what places him in the crisis, rather than in the "mainstream", of the Enlightenment - is his *attitude* to these limits. Already in 1777, in the poem *Bessenyei György magához*, he had spoken of being a

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21 Cited in F. Bíró's introduction to his edition of *A holmi*, p.54.

22 Ibid., p.54.

23 Ibid., p.215.

24 Bessenyei, *Az értelemnek keresése e" világnak testében és határa, annak ismeretiben* (1804) in György Bessenyei, *Prózai munkák*, ed. G. Kókay, Budapest, 1986, pp.524-5.

slave to the senses ("Érzékenségeimnek rabságában vagyok").[25] In the sixth section of *Az értelemnek keresése* his language is still more despairing and pessimistic. When it comes to questions of origin and absolute certainty, "lábolhatatlan tudtalanságra vagy átkozva". [26] The consequences of this extreme position actually involve a wholesale rejection of the project which gives the book its title "az értelemnek keresése": "Hiában olvasod öszve e világnak minden könyvét, mert mihent egy verébre, tsigára, rákra s.a.t. reá tekintesz, minden okoskodásod füstöt vet."[27] Or, in words which more closely resemble the attitude of the "noble savage" in *Tariménes utazása* (written in the same year): "Mentül többet okosjodol, tanulsz, gondolokodol; e világnak állásra és természetre nézve, annál nagyob tudatlanságra vettetel." [28]

If Bessenyei had reached this pessimistic conclusion through a long and bitter struggle with the contradictions of Enlightenment thinking, his younger friend and - for a short time at least - "disciple", Pál Ányos, being able to benefit from the example of his master, was far quicker to discover the limits, and indeed what he saw as the futility, of rational inquiry. "Mit nyertél nagy elméd hánykolódásával?"[29] he wrote to Bessenyei in 1779; "mit nyersz végtére mélly gondolataiddal?"[30] he would repeat in a second poetic epistle written some five days later. By 1782 Ányos has reached the conclusion that the quest for knowledge leads only to despair; addressing himself in *A világi gyönyörûségeknek haszontalnsága*, he writes:

> Benyargaltad e földet; s már most sem valóságot, sem örömöt, sem állandóságot, sem bizonyos rendeket, Istenem, Természeten kivül, mellynek magyarázására mégis elégtelen minden fárodságod, nem találhatván, hallgass magánosságodban [...][31]

Ányos could also draw upon the conclusions of his closer friend, Ábrahám Barcsay, and upon the work of the latter's fellow officer and confidant, Lőrinc Orczy. While Barcsay considered scientific knowledge to be at best "Csak

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25 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.101.

26 Bessenyei, *Prózai munkák*, p.541.

27 Ibid., p.541.

28 Ibid., p.541.

29 Pál Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, p.176.

30 Pál Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, p.176.

31 Ányos, p.180.

füst, álomnál is kevesebb valóság" *(Az igaz boldogságot hol leli meg az ember)*[32] and at worst a vessel containing "Nemzeteket vesztő kovász" (poetic epistle to Ányos, December 1779),[33] Orczy would repeatedly argue that the two central objects of philosophical inquiry proposed by the Enlightenment - Nature and Man - lay beyond the scope of human reason:

Természet rendének setét homályában,
Eredvén az ember mely vizsgálásában,
Sokezer esztendőt tölte tanulásban,
Nem sokat ment elől mégis munkájában...
(Szívbél sóhajtás a bölcsesség után)[34]

Oldhatatlan mese az ember az embernek,
Sokféle rejteke van a teremtésnek,
Nem lehet feljutni messze értelemnek,
Határt tett alkotó halandó elmének.
(A megismerés határairól)[35]

What the Enlightenment had been content to accept as the "limits" of human reason would be seen, increasingly as the second half of the century progressed, as sufficient cause to abandon the futile rigours of rational inquiry altogether. For D'Alembert these limits, rationalised as the "lot of humanity", necessitated no greater sacrifice than a relinquishment of the aery and, from the point of view of *practical* reason, even superfluous, claims of metaphysics:

> the supreme Intelligence has drawn a veil before our feeble vision which we try in vain to remove. It is a sad lot for curiosity and our pride, but it is the lot of humanity [...] the systems, or rather the dreams of the philosophers on most metaphysical questions deserve no place in a work exclusively intended to contain the real knowledge acquired by the mind.[36]

For the generation which succeeded him, however, D'Alembert's "veil" no longer represented the inscrutible periphery of human inquiry, but its central focus. "Wo viel Licht ist, da ist auch viel Schatten", we read on the title page of Alberich Christoph Kayser's *Adolfs gesammelte Briefe* - "ein schön

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32 Ábrahám Barcsay, *Költemények*, Budapest, 1933, p.118.

33 Barcsay, p.78.

34 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.137.

35 Cited in Márta Mezei *Történetszemlélet a magyar felvilágosodás irodalmában*, Budapest, 1958, p.77.

36 Cited in Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p.56.

geschriebener Roman in dem Geschmack der Leiden Werthers",[37] published in 1778, which, while completely forgotten in Germany, is remembered in Hungarian literary history as the source of Kazinczy's *Bácsmegyey összeszedett levelei* of 1789 - before the author turns his back upon the light of reason to dwell among the shadows of the heart.

If Newton could look up at the heavens and see order, reason and light, Edward Young would voice the doubts of a later age in finding in the stars "comprehension's absolute defeat" (*Night Thoughts*, IX).[38] This transition is registered in miniature - with direct reference to Young - by Ányos in the second of his poetic epistles to Bessenyei mentioned above:

> Szépen gondolkozol természet sorsáról,
> Szépen Prométheus éltető lángjáról;-
> Mosolygó fényt küldesz érzések honnyáról.
>
> De tudom, rövid lesz szíved nyájossága,
> Megszomorít ismét véred bágyodtsága,
> S elsüllesztvén elméd mélységes nagysága
> Felvesz karjaira *Jung* szomorúsága.[39]

Young's *Night Thoughts* explored a whole new emotional and philosophical universe whose objects - unlike those of a Pope, a Voltaire or a D'Alembert - were "Not to the limits of one world confin'd" (V),[40] and whose description provided a comprehensive lexicon of obscurity which was remarkably quick to win widespread currency all over Europe. If the Enlightenment's faith in the knowable was rapidly being engulfed in a new cloud of unknowing, the twilight of reason was soon to be received not with mourning, but with a certain cultish reverence or approval which even finds expression in Rousseau: "The darkness of ignorance", he wrote in 1767, "is worth more than the false light of error."[41] From the "graveyard poetry" of Gray's *Elegy* and Hervey's *Meditations*, through the celebrated cloudiness of Ossian to the ultimate statement of the inexpressible in the black pages of Sterne's *Tristram*

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37 Cited in Gusztáv Heinrich's introduction to his 1878 edition of Kazinczy's *Bácsmegyey*, Budapest, 1878, p.5.

38 *The Poetical Works of Edward Young* (in 2 vols) London, 1896, vol I, p.258.

39 Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, p.180.

40 Young, op.cit., p.81.

41 In his *Lettre a Christophe de Beaumont* (1767), cited in Mason, *The Indispensible Rousseau*, p.311.

Shandy, the unknowable increasingly undermines the century's confidence in the certainty of the known.

The extent of Young's influence in Hungary - and that of the new values his poetry represented - has never been fully recognised. In addition to József Péczeli's complete translation of *Night Thoughts* which appeared in 1787, György Bessenyei, Sándor Báróczi, Ferenc Kazinczy and József Naláczi all published their own versions of various parts of Young's text. Bessenyei, who held that "*Yungnak* száz versébe töb böltsesség van mint *Virgiliusnak* ezerbe találtathatik",[42] revealingly closes his discussion of *Night Thoughts* in the Viennese *Holmi* with a comment on the vanity of trying to understand the world through human reason:

> Induly el tsak a tsupa természetet vizsgálni ha tanult, és erős gondolkodású ember vagy, majd fogad tapasztolni, hogy ollyan dologra jösz, mellyekre fel borzad hajad fejeden, végre pedig tellyességgel úgy el vesztesz világosságot, igasságot, hogy magadra is alig tanálhatsz.[43]

Péczeli's complete translation of *Night Thoughts* ran to three editions between the years 1787 and 1815 - as many editions, that is, as András Dugonics's *Etelka* (generally considered the most popular novel of the period) saw in the same space of time. In spite of Kazinczy's preference for his own iambic version, Péczeli's prose translation from the French of M. le Tourneur (*Les Nuits d'Young*, Paris, 1783) was immensely popular among the Hungarian *literati* ever since extracts first appeared in the *Magyar Hírmondó* in 1784. Even the "traditionalist" József Gvadányi was moved to write the following to Péczeli on May 10 1788:

> De csak egy Yung és egy Sarasa írhatnak ily érzékeny és hathatós elmélkedéseket, és hizelkedés nélkül írom, hogy csak egy Péczeli József fordíthatta oly igaz és szépen folyó magyarsággal nemzetünk javára. Ha Rousseau, Lessing és azon lipsiai professor, az ki Horáczot kiadta, Yungot figyelmetesen olvasták volna, tudom, oly botránkoztató és lelkeket vesztő munkákat nem szültek volna ez világra. Az grófném [...] Yungot minden nap kezébe veszi, és tám az halált is jobban szereti már, mint engemet.[44]

In the only substantial study of Péczeli's work ever to have been published in Hungary, Ferenc Bíró has also demonstrated the influence of Young's "Night

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42 Bessenyei, *A holmi*, p.355.

43 Ibid., p.373.

44 Cited in Károly Széchy, *Gróf Gvadányi József*, Budapest, 1894, pp.296-7.

I" on two poems by Ányos and János Batsányi. Concerned essentially with the opening five lines of Young's text:

> Tir'd Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep!
> He, like the world, his ready visit pays
> Where fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes;
> Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
> And lights on lids unsullied with a tear.[45]

Bíró first compares the following lines from le Tourneur's translation: *Doux sommeil...*

> il évite d'une aile rapide la deumeure
> ou il entend gémir, et va se reposer sur
> des yeux qui ne sont point trempés de larmes.

with these from Ányos's Egy boldogtalannak panaszai a halavány holdnál (1780):

> Nints *álom* ezeknek [a boldogtalanoknak) gyászos *kunyhójában*
> *Eltűnt, eltávozott boldogabb hazában.*

Then he compares the following from Báróczi's translation (published in the first volume of *Magyar Museum*, 1788):

> *Tsendes álom* te, kinek elevenítő *balzsamja*
> elveszti a természetet...
> *ó jaj, elhagy engemet...*
> *Kerüli a boldogtalanokat*
> Eltökéllett oda *sietni*
> *hol a szerencse* mosolyog.

With these lines from Batsányi's *Tűnődés* (1795):

> *A tsendes álom...*
> *Ah, elkerül és messze hagy engemet...*
> Sajnálja tőlem *balzsamja* cseppjeit
> *Csak boldogokhoz* megyen és azt
>
> Nézi, hova *siet a szerencse.*[46]

The influence of the "cult of obscurity", however - of which *Night Thoughts* is among the most characteristic and formative representatives - was much more than a matter of translation and imitation. While Csokonai, for

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45 Young, op.cit., p.1.

46 Ferenc Bíró *Péczeli József*, in *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények*, vol LXIX, No 4, Budapest, 1965, p.417. (Emphasis supplied by Bíró).

example, could, in his lighter moments, deplore the "mord anglus" graveyard poetry of Young and Hervey, even he tended to fall back or their post-Enlightenment vocabulary in his most powerful and philosophical poems (such as *Az estve, Az álom, Az álom leírása, A magányosságról, Halotti versek, Tüdőgyuladásomról*). This new vocabulary - evoking the obscurity, ambiguity and uncertainty of the perceivable world, and focussing on states of half-knowledge and semi-consciousness in the perceiver - enjoyed a remarkably wide currency in late 18th century Hungarian writing, where adjectives like "homályos" (together with its most frequent variants, "setét", "árnyékos" and "felleges"), "rejtett" and "titkos" were among the most common keywords of the period. The following short extract from the third section of József Kármán's novel *Fanni hagyományai* (1794) will serve not only as a particularly rich and full illustration of the new lexicon, but also as an indication of how this lexicon is related to both the period's profound awareness of the limitations of human reason, and to its complex and contradictory sense of the human self:

> TELHETETLEN SZÍV! [...] Mit kívánsz, mit óhajtasz?
>
> Valamely édes, nehéz, titkos, nem tudom mely érzés fekszik kifejtetlen, homályosan mellyem rejtekében! Ha az éj titkokkal teljes árnyéka beteríti a földet, midőn a természet elszenderedett és innepel - akkor támadnak fel leghatalmasabban érzései... Oly édes, bájláló érzés - és mégis fájdalmas. Az örömtül dobog szívem - és mégis könnyel telik szemem.
>
> Megfoghatatlan maganak is az ember![47]

The melancholy which pervades the poetry of Gábor Dayka is equally "unfathomable", as is suggested by the very title of one of his most famous lyrics, *Titkos bú*. The first stanza of this poem is worth quoting in full, emphasising those items which contribute most effectively to the overall sense of uncertainty:

> *Homályos* bánat dúlja lelkemet,
> *Talán* újulnak régi szenvedéseim;
> *Talán* tündér előreérzéseim
> Rémítenek, és új lest hány a végezet.
> *Sírnek*: de csak *elfojtott* sóhajtások
> Emelkednek *kétséges* szívemből;

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[47] József Kármán *Válogatott művei*, Budapest, 1955, p.102.

Csak *rejtett* ah, csak *néma* jajgatások
Váltják egymást, s a *titkos* bú elől.[48]

Ányos makes the same repeated use of adverbs of doubt to evoke a similar sense of uncertainty in *Egy boldogtalannak panaszai a halavány holdnál*:

Egy fehér árnyékot szemlélek sírjából,
Suhogva felkelni, hallotas honnyából -
Vallyon nem lesz-e ez azoknak számából,
Kik mint én, könyveztek szívek fájdalmából? [...]

[...] Jaj de ismét eltűnt... ez is fűt engemet!...
Talám észre vette hullani könyvemet [...]

[...] *Talám* majd valaki jön sírom széllyére [...][49]

The vocabulary of obscurity and uncertainty is by no means confined to those writers conventionally seen to represent the "sentimental school" in late 18th century Hungarian literature. Its beginnings can already be identified in the poetry of the Bodyguard writers:

Csak az Isten maga örökös igazság
Többi mind senyvedés, árnyék s mulandóság.
(Bessenyei György magához)[50]

Ó! múlt s következő időknek homálya,
Halandó titkodat hasztalan vizsgálja.
(Barcsay, *Tudományok nevelkedéséről budai ferdőben)*[51]

Among the so-called "classicist" poets, the Youngian lexis is most prominent in the work of Miklós Révai. In *Szomorú indulat*, for example, unable to answer a question that would not be out of place in one of Dayka's poems - "Mi kesergő sok gondolat / Terheli bús fejemet?" - Révai is only able to identify the effects, but not the cause, of his condition: "Homályt látok a napfényben."[52] In a meditation on the nature of time *(Az időrül új esztendő alkalmatosságával)*, both Révai's diction and his sentiments suggest parallels with writers like Kármán, Ányos and Dayka that are generally overlooked:

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48 Gábor Dayka, *Költeményei*, Budapest, 1879, p.17.

49 Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, pp.63-4.

50 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.101.

51 *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.160.

52 *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.395.

Mennyi usz habzik kimeríthetetlen
Rejtek öblében, s rohan a jövőre
Szent Atyánk minden tehető kezéből
Titkos homállyal.[53]

Even the "enlightened" Batsányi, who had once triumphantly exclaimed "Ím, az igazság terjednek sugárai" *(A látó)*, would, upon finding himself divorced from his earlier hopes in the prison of Kufstein, fall back upon similar diction in the following invocation to the moon:

[...] Jersze már,
Fájdalmim érzékeny tanúja!
Verd el az éj szomorú homályát.
(Tűnődés)[54]

Images of night and darkness are nor always associated with sorrow and powerlessness. As Young himself suggests, they can also feature positively as stimulants to the imagination:

Let Indians, and the gay, like Indians, fond
Of feather'd fopperies, the sun adore:
Darkness has more divinity for me;
It strikes thought inward; it drives back the soul
To settle on herself, our point supreme![55]

The same emphasis can be detected in one of Ádám Horváth's comments upon first reading Kazinczy's *Bácsmegyey*:

az ablakomon függő vékony szőnyegek olyan homályossá teszik szobámat, hogy minden szempillantásban, még fényes nappal is, érzékenyül képzelhessem, miként fogunk mindnyájan az örökös álomnak sötétes árnyékában haza fele ballagni a szerencsétlen Bácsmegyey után [...][56]

This association of darkness and death is, of course, quite characteristic of the *topos* we have been describing - the former term taking us beyond "the limits of one world" into the realm of the latter. For Young, life was meaningless without some notion of what becomes of the human soul in death, and in Night V he repeatedly stresses "Th' importance of

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53 *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.396.

54 *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.624.

55 Young, op.cit., p.81.

56 In a letter to Kazinczy of 18 June 1789. In *Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése* (vols I-XXII) ed. János Váczy, Budapest, 1896-1911, vol I, p.389-90.

contemplating the tomb" and "Th' importance of our end survey'd".[57] His attempt

> [...] to bind
> By soft affection's ties, on heavenly hearts,
> The thought of death, which reason, too supine,
> Or misemploy'd, so rarely fastens there[58]

was directly related to his awareness of the Enlightenment's shortcomings in key questions of religious faith. "Few ages", Young comments in his Preface to Night VI, "have been deeper in dispute about religion, than this". For Young, this dispute can be reduced to a single question: "Is man immortal, or is he not?".[59] This was, of course, little more than an extension of the question of the immateriality of the soul which marked, for the Enlightenment, the very limits of human understanding.

Enlightened deism could deduce a rational God from the order of nature, but could not, by means of the limited methods it prescribed for itself, speculate on that God's purposes with the human soul after death. "Of man, what see we but his station here?" asked Pope in the first epistle of his *Essay on Man*; "Through worlds unnumbered, though the God be known, / 'Tis our to trace him only in our own."[60] Young's emphasis on thoughts which are "Not to the limits of one world confin'd" reads as a direct challenge to Pope, and it is significant that Night VII opens with a reference to Pope's recent death.

The literary preoccupation with death in the second half of the 18th century is not only significant as further evidence of an attempt to defy reason by taking a look behind D'Alembert's aptly named "veil". It also serves to undermine the teleological confidence of the Enlightenment concerning the purposiveness and perfectibility of human existence. "Can you say, 'This is!' when everything is transitory? when everything rolls by with lightning speed and so seldom expands the entire potential of its existence, ah! is swept away in the stream, sucked under, and dashed to bits on the rocks?"[61] asks Goethe's

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57 Young, op.cit., p.86.

58 Young, pp.88-9.

59 Young, (Preface to Night VI), p.110.

60 Pope, *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, in *Collected Poems, Epistles and Satires*, p.182.

61 Goethe, *The Sufferings of Young Werther*, translated by Bayard Quincy Morgan, London, 1976, p.70.

Werther. I shall develop this point in discussing some late 18th century Hungarian attitudes to history in the next chapter; all that should be mentioned here is one key aspect of the distinctly Youngian metaphorical framework in which the encounter with the thought of mortality tends to take place. A few pages after Werther's above meditation on mutability, Lotte will make the metonymical connection, so characteristic of the age, betweem moonlight and the transitoriness of human life: "I never go walking in the moonlight, never, without encountering the thought of my departed ones, without having the feeling of death [...] come over me."[62]

In late 18th century Hungarian literature, this association is not only to be found (where it might be expected) in the prose of Kármán and in the poetry of Ányos (eg. *Egy boldogtalannak panaszai a halavány holdnál*) and Dayka (eg. *A rettenetes éj*), but also in the work of, among others, a "classicist" like Dávid Baróti-Szabó, who, gazing up at the waning moon in *A holdhoz* (1791), asks:

> [...] Sorsomot
> Látom-e tebenned? ah, közelget nekem is
> Elköltözésem!... Nyugtomot
> Ismét merő baj, gond, teher cseréli fel. -
> Oh hold, felépülsz ujra te;
> És mit reményljek? Ősszel illyenkor talán
> Sír-halmomon fogsz fényleni.[63]

The third important tension in Enlightenment thinking upon which I should like to focus concerns the privileging of the human subject - as opposed to the system of the universe, or the Great Chain of Being - as the central object of intellectual inquiry. As Ernst Cassirer argues at the beginning of his *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*: "Pope gave brief and pregnant expression to the feeling of he age in the line 'The proper study of mankind is man'".[64] Rousseau was to echo this emphasis in his second *Discourse*: "The most useful and the least developed of all the sciences seems to me to be that of man, and I venture to suggest that the inscription on the Temple of Delphi [Know Thyself] alone contains a precept which is more important and more challenging than all the heavy tomes of moralists."[65] The

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62 *Werther*, p.76.

63 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.324.

64 Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p.5.

65 Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, p.67.

closer the 18th century looked at the self, however, the more problematic they would find it. In his last work, the *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, for example, Rousseau could reflect: "the 'Know Thyself' of the Temple of Delphi was nor such an easy precept to follow as I had thought in my *Confessions*";[66] and even Pope was inclined to admit that: "The more I examine my own mind, the more romantic I find myself."[67] The complexities of the self and the problems of self-knowledge that became increasingly apparent the more the century attempted to pursue "the proper study of mankind" are well illustrated by Young:

> How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
> How complicate, how wonderful, is man!
> How passing wonder he who made him such!
> Who centred in our make such strange extremes!
> [...] Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
> A worm! a god! - I tremble at myself,
> And in myself am lost! at home a stranger,
> Thought wanders up and down, surpris'd aghast,
> And wond' ring at her own: how reason reels!
> O what a miracle to man is man [...] (Night I)[68]

The "self" Rousseau sought to expose in the *Confessions* was in fact already substantively different from the more abstract and universal concept he had proposed in the second *Discourse* some fifteen years before. The project of the *Confessions*, as summed up in Rousseau's opening words, represents a radically new preoccupation with the uniqueness of the individual psyche, already in stark tension with the rationalism and universalism of the Enlightenment:

> I have resolved on an enterprise which has no precedent, and which once completed, will have no imitator. My purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be myself.

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66 Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, translated by Peter France, Harmondsworth, 1979, p.63.

67 Cited in Meinecke, *Historism*, p.200.

68 Young, op.cit., pp.3-4.

> Simply myself. I know my own heart and I understand my fellow man. But I am made unlike any one I have ever met. I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the ehole world. I may be no better, but at least I am different.[69]

Three crucial developments in the 18th century's changing conception of selfhood should be outlined here, before being considered in greater detail in the more specific context of Chapter Three. The first is the growing preoccupation with the self as a receptacle not of reason, but of feeling, whose centre is not the head, but the heart. Rousseau's emphasis on this is well known: "To exist for us is to feel; and our sensibility is incontestably anterior to our reason."[70] For Rousseau and his followers, this position had crucial moral implications: "All the evil I ever did in my life was the result of reflection; and the little good I have been abe to do was the result of impulse."[71] In a similar vein, Young modified Pope's maxim on the centrality of the human sciences to suit his own "sentimental" purposes: "Man's science is the culture of his heart" (Night IX).[72] This premise, as we shall see, lies behind the project of the 18th century epistolary novel; Kayser's *Adolfs gesammelte Briefe* is not only a treatise "über die Fülle des Herzens", but also aims to cultivate the hearts it touches, just as Dusch's *Moralische Briefe* of 1762 - translated by Báróczi in the 1770s - are proffered, as their full title explains, "zur Bildung des Herzens".

This notion of cultivating or ennobling the heart ("szívképzés", in Kazinczy's term), rather than appealing directly to the head, also forms the cornerstone of Ferenc Verseghy's important treatise on poetics, *Mi a poézis? és ki az igaz poéta?* (1793): "A szépmesterségek legközelebb való céllyok az: hogy a *szíveket hathatósan megillessék.*"[73] While Barcsay, in discommending scientific knowledge to Orczy in *Az igaz boldogság hol leli meg az ember*, exclaimed "egyedül szivedben / Lelheted szerencsédet egész

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69 Rousseau, *Confessions*, Harmondsworth, 1953, p.17. See also Kazinczy's letter to János Szántó, July 4 1782, *Kazinczy levelezése*, XXII, p.10.

70 From the *Lettres morales*, cited in Asher Horowitz, *Rousseau, Nature and History*, Toronto, 1987, p.142.

71 Ibid., p.141.

72 Young, op.cit., p.280.

73 Verseghy, *Mi a poézis? és ki az igaz poéta?*in *A magyar kritika évszázadai*, ed. I. Sőtér, vol I. *Rendszerek*, Budapest, 1981, p.333.

életedben",[74]Kazinczy himself, referring to the moral and didactic value of his massive correspondence in 1810, would declare that "Az én leveleimnek minden érdemek abban áll, hogy őket lángoló szívvel írom; 's ki nem érzi, hogy inkább szívből mint fejből jőnek gondolataim?"[75]

A second, and more substantial, development in 18th century notions of selfhood concerns the growing challenge to Pope's triumphant conclusion, reached on the basis of Shaftesbury's concept of beneficent self-interest, that "true self-love and social are the same". The "self" of Rousseau is already characterised by its uniqueness - this is, indeed, what makes it an object worthy of observation - rather than by being representative of some universal natural law. Increasingly, however, for the second half of the 18th century, the relationship betweem self and society becomes not merely one of "difference", but one of open hostility. In the novels of Richardson, Rousseau, Goethe, and Kármán, for example, it is precisely the conflict between a "feeling heart" and the arbitrary laws of an insensitive society around which the drama revolves. The growing "cult of solitude" in 18th century poetry - which, as we shall see, finds in Hungarian literature its most articulate expression in the poetry of Csokonai - also takes its bearings from the same dichotomy, albeit at a higher level of abstraction.

The third development can be seen more as a matter of disposition than of straightforward conviction. In its foregrounding of the "science of man", the Enlightenment gave birth to a new kind of reflexivity and, as a result of this, to a new kind of divided, self-communing subject. In his *Conjectures on Original Composition*, Young urges the reader to "dive deep into thy bosom... [and] contract full intimacy with the stranger within thee."[76] Adam Smith amplifies this sense of a split or double subject in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*:

> When I endeavour to examine my own conduct, when I endeavour to pass sentence upon it, it is evident that, in all such cases, I divide myself as it were, into two persons [...] The first is the spectator, whose sentiments with regard to my own conduct I endeavour to enter into, by placing myself in his situation, and by considering how it would appear to me, when seen from that particular point of view. The second is the agent, the person whom I properly call myself,

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[74] In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.183.

[75] *Kazinczy levelezése*, op.cit., vol VII, p.21.

[76] Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition*, ed. E. J. Morley, London, 1918, p.24.

> of whose conduct, under the character of a spectator, I am endeavouring to form some opinion.[77]

Just as the subject becomes the new object of analysis, the object world is itself being rendered subjective. In the nature imagery of a whole range of poets from Young to Wordsworth and from Barcsay to Dayka, for example, the scene perceived becomes saturated with the response of the perceiver. We are no longer dealing with a Lockean hierarchy of "sensation" and "reflection" - whose confident separation of the outer (objective) world from the inner (subjective) world finds its poetic counterpart in the conventional relationship between *pictura* and *sententia* - but with the beginnings of a breakdown in stable subject-object relations. The experience of reality is continually upstaged or overshadowed by the writing subject's *response* to that experience. The function of writing becomes less one of *reference*, than one of *performance*, in which the subject no longer describes the world, but offers a dramatic display of his own responsiveness to it. For the cultural moment born of the crisis of the Enlightenment, the two key pillars of Locke's epistemology are shifted and modified (without, however, being transformed beyond all recognition): "sensation and reflection" become "sensibility and reflexivity".

Historians of culture continue to debate the character, periodization and conceptual definition of this new cultural moment. What tends, however, to receive insufficient emphasis in such discussions is the essentially emergent and inchoate character of the configuration in question. For we are concerned here less with a coherent period, movement or formation in the history of ideas, than with an incipient form of experience, drawing for self-expression on a broadly common vocabulary and an, if only tentative, sense of shared anxieties, crises and dilemmas. The terms most commonly employed to denote this new form of experience or "structure of feeling"[78] - all of which

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77 Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie, Oxford, 1976, p.133.

78 The phrase "structure of feeling" was coined by Raymond Williams. It first appears in *Preface to Film* (London, 1954) and is elaborated in *The Long Revolution* (London, 1961). In a chapter entitled "Structures of Feeling" in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977), Williams describes the concept as a "cultural hypothesis" which seeks to characterise "a social experience still *in process*" (p.132). For a critical discussion of the concept, see also Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters*, London, 1979.

reflect a somewhat contrived emphasis on conscious movements or tendencies - have been *Sturm und Drang*, the "Age of Sensibility" and, more notoriously, "Pre-romanticism".

As suggested earlier, the set of initiatives and aspirations denoted by the term *Sturm und Drang* is too locally and historically specific to characterise the far broader, more enduring and more diversified structure of feeling of which the German *Sturm und Drang* was itself only a *symptom*. The various continuities we have been tracing between Young's *Night Thoughts* (published 1742-4) and a text like Kármán's *Fanni hagyományai* (1794) may *include* elements characteristic of German literature in the 1770s, but are not exhaustively *explained* by this conjunction. Similarly, "Sensibility", while clearly a key term in the lexicon of the new cultural moment, is no more satisfactory as an overall characterisation. What is, after all at stake, is a *new kind* of sensibility.

The term "pre-romanticism" has perhaps had more than its fair share of critical derision since its brief period of hegemony in the 1920s and 30s. The fact that it still crops quite frequently (albeit in embarrassed inverted commas) in more recent works of literary scholarship on the second half of the 18th century strongly suggests, however, that rejection has still not led to satisfactory replacement. The difficulty with "pre-romanticism" stems largely from the teleology it inevitably proposes by reading the second half of the 18th century through the achievements of the first half of the 19th. As Northrop Frye has argued: "Not only did the 'pre-romantics' not know that the Romantic movement was going to succeed them, but there has probably never been a case on record of a poet's having regarded a later poet's work as the fulfilment of his own."[79] In the Hungarian context, the label "pre-romanticism" - championed most interestingly and productively by Antal Szerb[80] - is still more problematic in that the teleology it proposes is not only theoretically suspect, but historically inaccurate. In Hungarian literature there would never be a conscious and coherent "Romantic movement" comparable to that in England, Germany or even France. Indeed the case of Hungary serves as a highly instructive control to certain comparative literary preconceptions about the internal dynamics of literary development in late 18th century Europe. For while the structure of feeling "pre-romanticism"

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[79] Northrop Frye, "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility", in *Eighteenth Century Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. J. L. Clifford, Oxford, 1959, p.311.

[80] See Antal Szerb, *Magyar preromantika*, Budapest, 1929.

seeks to denote certainly played a dicisive role in Hungarian literature during the closing decades of the century, it was *not* succeeded by the very formation that term suggests as its necessary corollary. If we are none the less to understand this structure of feeling in supra-national terms, therefore, we will require an alternative comparative literary concept capable of characterising its initiatives withour relying on those cultural develpments which followed in some, but not all, national contexts.

The concept I have in mind is Schiller's notion of the "sentimental" as developed in his remarkable essay, *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795). Schiller differentiates between two types of poet: poets "will either *be* nature, or they will *look for* lost nature."[81] In the first case their poetry will be "naive" - a term I shall consider in Chapter Four - while in the second case it will be "sentimental". We can identify, Schiller argues, three types of sentimental poetry; the satiric, the elegiac and the idyllic. "A [sentimental] poet is satirical when he takes as his object the distance from nature and the contradiction between reality and the ideal [...] In satire, reality as a deficiency is set against the ideal as the highest reality."[82] Sentimental poetry is elegiac where "nature and the ideal are an object of sorrow" insofar as "the former is represented as lost and the latter as unattained."[83] Furthermore, the "elegiac poet seeks nature, but as an ideal and in a perfection in which it never existed, while at the same time mourning it as something which had once existed and was now lost."[84] When, on the other hand, nature and the

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81 "Werden entweder Natur *seyn*, oder die werden die verlorene *suchen*." In *Schillers Werke* (Nationalausgabe) vol XX, *Philosophische Schriften*, Erster Teil, Weimar, 1962, p.432 (All translations from Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* are my own).

82 "Satyrisch ist der Dichter, wenn er die Entfernung von der Natur und den Widerspruch der Wirklichkeit mit dem Ideale [...] zu seinem Gegenstande macht. [...] In der Satyre wird die Wirlichkeit als Mangel, dem Ideal als höchsten Realität gestellt."

Schiller, p.442.

83 "ist die Natur und das Ideal ein Gegenstand der Trauer"; "jene als verloren, dieses als unerreicht dargestellt wird."

Schiller, p.448.

84 "Der elegische Dichter sucht die Natur, aber als eine Idee und in einer Vollkommenheit, in der sie nie existiert hat, wenn er sie gleich als etwas da Gewesenes und nun Verlorenes beweint."

ideal are represented not as lost, but as "actual" and as "an object of joy" we have to do with sentimental idyll, "to whose essence it belongs that nature will be set against art and the ideal set against reality."[85]

I do not wish to dwell upon Schiller's three types - which Schiller himself admits are not intended to correspond to the conventional generic senses of the terms in question - but rather to focus on what Schiller sees as essentially "sentimental" in all three. It should already be apparent that Schiller's concept of sentimentality relates primarily to the experience of, and the dilemmas facing, the poets of the modern age: the "loss" of nature and the "deficiency" of contemporary reality. While "naive" and "sentimental" are proposed as essentially transhistorical terms, Schiller none the less tends quite consistently to equate the former with antiquity and the latter with modernity. While the ancients "felt in a natural way" and were fully at home in their own human world, "we, in discord with ourselves and unhappy in our experience of humanity, have no more urgent interest than to flee out of it and to remove such an unsuccessful form from uor eyes."[86]

René Wellek has claimed, with good reason, that "Schiller has a feeling, extraordinary for his time, of the alienation of the artist from his age."[87] Schiller's modern artist is not only alienated from nature - "Our feeling for nature is like that of the sick man for health"[88] - but also from society. For it is social, rather than natural, reality which, for Goethe's Werther, is "so little to be recommended, indeed so hostile" as to "drive the tormented [Werther]

Schiller, pp.450-1. Schiller's examples of the elegiac poet are Ossian and Rousseau.

85 "wirklich"; "ein Gegenstand der Freude" (p.448). "zu dessen Wesen es gehört, dass die Natur der Kunst und das Ideal der Wirklichkeit *entgegen gesetzt werde.*"

Schiller, p.449.

86 "empfanden natürlich"; "wir, uneinig mit uns selbst, und unglücklich in unsern Erfahrung von Menschheit, kein dringenderes Interesse haben, als aus derselben herauszufliehen, und eine so mislungene Form aus unsern Augen zu rücken."

Schiller, p.431.

87 Rene Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950*, London, 1955, vol I, "The Later Eighteenth Century", p.239.

88 "Unser Gefühl für Natur gleicht der Empfindung des Kranken für die Gesundheit."

Schiller, op. cit., p.431.

back into his ideal world".[89] And the same reality also lies behind the modern cult of solitude and retreat: "Sentimental poetry is the birth of isolation, and stillness and it also invites us to seek these".[90]

There is, however, a third level of alienation in Schiller's concept of the sentimental. Whereas naive poetry embodies the full immediacy of nature through "a pure unity of its origin and effect"[91] in which the creator "is the Creation and the Creation is He",[92] the art of the sentimental poet is *doubly* meditated. In addition to the sentimental poet's "distance" from nature, he also "*reflects* on the impression which objects make on him, and in that reflection alone is based the feeling into which he himself is transposed and into which he transposes us."[93] Concerned about the pejorative implications of our present day use of the word "sentimental", one commentator has suggested that "we cannot do better than to take the word 'reflective', as the equivalent for our present use of Schiller's 'sentimentalisch'".[94] Considering, however, our earlier comments on the new, divided subject born of the crisis of the Enlightenment, *reflexive* might be a better term. This emphasis is corroborated by Schiller himself when he develops his idea of reflection some ten pages later in his essay: "The mind [of the sentimental poet] can suffer no impression without at the same time *observing its own operation* and what is

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89 "wie wenig empfehlend, ja wie feindlich"; "die Gequälten in seine Idealwelt zurückzudrängen."

Schiller, p.459.

90 "Die sentimentalische Dichtung ist die Geburt der Abgezogenheit und Stille, und dazu ladet sie auch ein."

Schiller, p.475.

91 "reine Einheit ihres Ursprungs und ihres Effekts"

Schiller, p.441.

92 "Er ist das Werk und das Werk ist Er."

Schiller, p.433.

93 "*reflektiert* über den Eindruck, den die Gegenstände auf ihn machen und nur auf jene Reflexion ist die Rührung gegründet, in der er selbst versetzt wird, und uns versetzt."

Schiller, p.441.

94 W. F. Mainland, *Schiller and the Changing Past*, London, 1957, p.141.

contains, without placing it *opposite and outside itself* by means of reflection."[95]

There is, of course, no reason to abandon the term "sentimental" as a historical label merely because of the more trivial inflexions it has acquired in current usage (any more than we should stop speaking of Shakespearean tragedy because of the way newspaper headlines use the term "tragic"). If Schiller's use of "sentimentalisch" seems, on the other hand, to burden the term with almost too much meaning - or rather, with too many interrelated meanings - this may be taken as an index of both the centrality and the complexity of the concept in the second half of the 18th century. For "sentimental" rises to prominence in this period precisely as a site of semantic struggle or exploration, a heuristic, much debated, but never fully defined fashion-word for the experience of modernity. As early as 1749, Lady Bradshaigh could write the following perplexed lines to Samuel Richardson:

> What, in your opinion, is the meaning of the word *sentimental*, so much in vogue among the polite [...] Everything clever and agreeable is comprehended in that word [...] I am frequently astonished to hear such a one is a *sentimental* man; we were at a *sentimental* party; I have been taking a *sentimental* walk [...][96]

Schiller was not unaware of the fashionable senses of the term referred to by Lady Bradshaigh, and himself makes reference in *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* to such phrases as "sentimental garden" and "sentimental journey". His great achievement, however, was to furnish the term with a degree of self-consciousness it had hitherto lacked. Instead of being merely the fashionable expression for a new, and still essentially undefinable, experience, "sentimental" graduates, with Schiller, from the status of *symptom* to that of *diagnosis*.

In English, the word's etymology reads like a metaphor for its conceptual history. In 1783 the Chambers *Universal Dictionary* added the following note to its 1738 entry on the word: "sentiment":

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95 "Das Gemüth kann keinen Eindruck erleiden, ohne sogleich seinem eigenen Spiel zuzustehen, und was er in sich hat, durch Reflexion sich gegenüber und aus sich herauszustellen."

Schiller, p.452. (My emphasis).

96 *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. A. L. Barbauld, London, 1804, vol IV, pp.282-3.

> The word *sentiment* in its true and old English sense signifies a formed opinion, notion or principle; but of late years, it has been much used by some writers to denote an internal impulse of passion, affection, fancy or intellect, which is considered rather as the cause or occasion of our forming an opinion, rather than the real opinion itself.[97]

Again the processes of an individual sensibility upstage the objects with which that sensibility is concerned; and again the shift of emphasis from opinion to impulse, from the head to the heart, takes place *within* a rational term, rather than through its straightforward rejection. As Erik Erametsa has shown in his study of the word, by the 1760s "the meaning of 'sentimental' was undergoing a change from 'highly moral', 'sententious', implying a refined action of thought, to 'sympathetic', 'elevated', with the implication of refined action of *both thought and feeling*, possibly with the preponderance of the latter."[98]

It is almost impossible to provide a coherent etymology of Hungarian terms used in the 18th century to suggest the meanings of "sentimental" - not least because of the complete absence of any work comparable to the Chambers *Universal Dictionary* in Hungarian before the 1860s. Furthermore, even by the end of the 18th century, we can speak of no such thing as "standard" Hungarian, and the highly idiosyncratic usage of individual writers complicates any attempt to delimit the signification of any widely used term. Three points may, however, be made with some authority.

First, the range of meanings activated by the term sentimental in English was covered most fully in 18th century Hungarian by the adjective *érzékeny*, while the nominal form, *érzékenység*, approximates most accurately to the meanings suggested by the equally fashionable English "sensibility". The Hungarian use of a common root to form both the adjectival and nominal senses throws interesting light upon the similarly - if less obviously - adjectival/nominal relationship between the two separate terms, sentimental and sensibility, in 18th century English. For authors of sensibility would write *sentimental*, rather than "sensible" works; and these works would demonstrate their author's *sensibility* rather than his "sentimentality". Recent Hungarian literary historians have generally resisted any identification of the term "érzékeny" with those values conventionally associated with the

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97 Ephraim Chambers, *Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1783 Supplement). Cited in Erik Erametsa, *A Study of the Word 'Sentimental' and of other Linguistic Characteristics of 18th Century Sentimentalism in England*, Helsinki, 1951, p.24.

98 Ibid., p.39.

"sentimental".[99] Their reasons for doing so, however, are somewhat unhistorical. In correctly insisting on the difference between "érzékeny" and "érzelmes" (a term which corresponds to today's more maudlin sense of "sentimental", but which was not actually current in 18th century Hungarian), they have tended to focus almost exclusively on the use of the former term to signify little more than sensory perception. That such an emphasis is unsatisfactory should be clear from the fact that Kazinczy translated Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* as *Érzékeny utazások*, Ányos wrote texts with the titles *Érzékeny gondolatok* and *Érzékeny levelek*, while Batsányi admired all that was "érzékeny és felséges"[100] in Ossian, and Ádám Horváth praised Kazinczy's *Bácsmegyey* for its "érzékeny kifejezések".[101]

Secondly, the term "érzékenység" in late 18th century Hungarian has the same embivalence as "sensibility" in English during the same period. It can signify not only the passive reception of feelings and perceptions, but also an active *susceptibility* on the part of the individual to (typically, fine or subtle) feelings and perceptions. Thus "érzékenység" in Csokonai's *A versengő érzékenységek* refers unequivocally to the five senses named in the poem, whereas the use of the term in the following lines by Ányos, addressed to Bessenyei in 1779, clearly refer to the *qualities* of a man with a feeling heart:

> [...] én is sírok keserűségeden,
> S így majd két szív vérzik érzékenységeden![102]

Thirdly, "érzékeny" features in late 18th Hungarian letters as one of the most widespread and fashionable adjectives used to signify a quality of positive value. In a letter dated August 18 1789, Imre Vitéz addresses Kazinczy as "Dusch' munkájának érzékeny tisztelője",[103] while Kazinczy, in his reply of August 23, distinguishes between the "érzékeny olvasó" and the mere *"Criticaster"*.[104] In accounting for the success of *Bácsmegyey* in *Pályám*

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99 See, for example, Ferenc Bíró, *A fiatal Bessenyei és íróbarátai*, Budapest, 1974, p.25; István Lökös's introduction to Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, Budapest, 1984; László Bóka, "Ányos Pál emlékezete" in *Válogatott tanulmányok*, Budapest, 1966.

100 János Batsányi, *Összes művei*, vol I, Budapest, 1953, p.179.

101 Horváth to Kazinczy, June 18 1789, in *Kazinczy levelezése* op. cit., p.389.

102 Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, p.178.

103 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol I, p.434.

104 Ibid., p.439.

emlékezete, Kazinczy stresses the fact that "némely érzékeny és poétai képű szóllásokat hoztam folyamatba, melyekkel előttem nálunk senki sem élt."[105] István Csiszi's poem, *Az érzékenységről*, emphasises the positive value of sensibility over reason - "Az okos embert okkal meghajthatom. / De aki érzékeny el nem csábíthatom"[106] - while, as an indication of the enormous range of the term's signification, we can find in the work of Ányos alone the following nouns predicated by "érzékeny": "szív", "síp", "öl", "eset", "csöp", "hívség".

The inherent association - recognised by Schiller - of the sentimental with the modern, inevitably had a profound effect on a national literature that was just becoming aware of the need to emulate and assimilate the latest achievements of the time-honoured cultures of Western Europe. This is particularly evident in the highly coherent translation project of the young Kazinczy. Kazinczy begins with Gessner's *Idyllen*, which Schiller singles out in his *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* as an example of the sentimental idyll.[107] Then he turns to J. M. Miller's *Siegwart*, again given special mention by Schiller as an example of sentimental elegy, "estimable" because it contains "true feeling, although overdone."[108] He also translates various texts by Wieland, whom Schiller cites in the context of sentimental satire, praising him for his "seriousness of feeling" in contrast to the excess of "intellect" we meet in the satire of Voltaire.[109] Kazinczy had, of course, also intended to translate Goethe's *Werther*, considered by Schiller to be the text in which "everything which gives nourishment to the sentimental character is concentrated".[110] It was, as we know from Kazinczy's preface to *Bácsmegyey*,

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105 In Ferenc Kazinczy *Művei*, ed. M. Szauder, Budapest, 1979, vol I, p.345.

106 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.419.

107 Schiller, op. cit., p.470.

108 "schätzbar"; "wahre, obgleich überspannte Empfindung."

Schiller, p.461.

109 "Ernst des Gefühls"; "Verstande".

Schiller, p.447; p.448.

110 "alles, was dem sentimentalischen Charakter Nahrung giebt, in Werther zusammengedrangt ist."

Schiller, p.459.

only circiumstance which forced him to translate Kayser's "Roman in dem Geschmack der Leiden Werthers" instead:

> Ez a magyarrá tett román egy falun töltött kedvtelen novemberemnek köszönheti lételét [...] ahol Werther helyett, kire már azelőtt régen kitettem a célt, az Adolf levelei akadtam kezembe. Ha Werther kezemnél lett volna, Adolf, vagy inkább Mácsmegyey nem feslett volna ki soha a nem-lét méhéből.[111]

No less modern and revealing is Kazinczy's choice of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a text for translation. *Hamlet* had been widely disapproved of by the Enlightenment: Voltaire thought it "a vulgar and barbarous drama which would not be tolerated by the viles populace of France or Italy",[112] while Dr. Johnson censured its author for "having show little regard to poetical justice, and [...] equal neglect of poetical probability."[113] For the sentimental writers of the last third of the century, however, *Hamlet* was not only Shakespeare's masterpiece, but also something approaching a manifesto for the concerns of their own age. Goethe devotes most of Book V of *Wilhelm Meister* to a discussion of the play that is intimately related to the immediate experience of his own characters, and Henry Mackenzie's discussion of Hamlet's melancholy in *The Minnor* of April 22 1780 is so full of insights into the sentimental mentality that it is worth quoting at some lenght:

> That sort of melancholy which is the most genuine, as well as the most amiable of any, neither arising from natural sourness of temper, nor prompted by accidental chagrin, but the effect of delicate sensibility, impressed with a sense of sorrow, or a feeling of its own weakness, will, I believe, often be found indulging itself in a sportfulness of external behaviour, amidst the pressure of a sad, or even the anguish of a broken heart [...] The melancholy man feels in himself (if I may be allowed the expression) a sort of double person; one which, covered with the darkness of its imagination, looks not forth into the world, nor takes any concern in vulgar objects or frivolous pursuits [...][114]

That these earlier influences were formative in Kazinczy's development is born out by the sentimental character of much of his later work, both as a writer and as an arbiter of literary taste. This can be seen, for example, in Kazinczy's reaction to Ferenc Kölcsey's early (sentimental) poetry.

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111 Kazinczy, *Művei*, vol I, p.108.

112 in *Dissertation sur la Tragedie*, in *Semiramis*, 1748. Cited in *Hamlet: A Casebook*, ed. John Jump, London, 1968, p.23.

113 Ibid., p.24.

114 Ibid., p.25.

Responding to a number of the latter's poems, including *A nyugodáshoz*, in a letter written in 1810, Kazinczy comments: "Higyje-el Uram Öcsém, hogy az efféle darabjait gyönyörűséggel fogom mindég olvasni, és nekem kedvesebb dolgot alig tehet, mintha édes melancholiájinak illyetén ömledezéseit velem olvastatja. Epurált ízlés van rajtok, és bájlaló édesség."[115] Concerning the sentimental character of Kazinczy's own work in the 19th century, we can cite a letter from Pál Szemere of May 6 1817, commending Kazinczy's *Erdélyi levelek* which had been published the previous year. Szemere clearly has Schiller in mind when he writes: "melly scénák! melly romantisch scénák, minden affectált romantismus nélkül! s a tónban, mint van ott sentimentál és naív öszveolvasztva!"[116]

> A szentimentalizmus iránt époly igaztalanok vagyunk, mint a romantika iránt. Nagyon gazdag fogalmat egyszerűsítünk le torzképpé. Mintha a strassburgi dómot a vele szemben futó szűk utcácska mélyéről fényképeznénk.[117]

The situation has, to some extent, improved since the eminent Hungarian comparativist, János Hankiss, wrote these lines in 1942. The 1960s saw a considerable renewal of scholarly interest in the characterisation of Hungarian sentimentalism, largely as a result of the debate that followed József Szauder's programmatic essay *A magyar szentimentalizmus problémái* which appeared in *Irodalomtörténeti közlemények* in 1963. This new interest, however, has continued to focus on sentimentalism as essentially no more than one of three (or, in older interpretations, four) distinguishable "schools" in late 18th century Hungarian literature, and Lóránt Czigány's recent depiction of sentimentalism as the least significant of these schools is still broadly representative.[118]

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115 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol VI, p.183.

116 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol XV, p.178.

117 János Hankiss, *Európa és a magyar irodalom*, Budapest, 1942, pp.223-4.

118 Lóránt Czigány, *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature*, Oxford, 1984, p.89.

This "schools" approach to the period was first developed in the 1860s by Ferenc Toldy, who distinguished between four major trends: the "franciás iskola" (French School), "klasszikai iskola" (Classical School), "népies iskola" (Populist School) and "új iskola" (New School), with the term "new" significantly covering those writers now conventionally referred to as "sentimental".[119] The notion of a French School was largely based on the fact that a number of its proposed members (in particular Bessenyei, Báróczi and Péczeli) produced translations from the French, with figures like Barcsay and Ányos included mainly on account of their personal association with the "Bessenyei György Társaság". This highly artifical grouping has now been rejected by Hungarian literary historians and makes no appearance either in the Academy's six volume *A magyar irodalom története* or in Czigány's *The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature*. The notion of a Classical School, still accepted today, is, if considerably more meaningful, still somewhat superficial. While it is perfectly true that "Rajnis, Baróti és Révai a római versformákat nagyobb kiterjedésben tüzetesen és szerencsésen be kezték hozni a magyar költészetbe" (Toldy),[120] it should also be remembered that "A klasszicizmus izlésirányzata nem klasszikus értékekkel jelentkezik nálunk, hanem szerény próbálkozásokban, melyeknek legfőbb eredménye az, hogy meghódítják e elterjesztik a klasszikus időmértékes verselést." (Pál Pándi).[121] Considering the thematic and rhetorical preoccupations, rather than purely the prosody, of much of the "classical" verse of Baróti-Szabó and Révai, one can surely identify more continuity with Young and Klopstock than with Racine and Pope. As Antal Weber argued in one of the more perceptive recent discussions of 18th century Hungarian classicism: "a szentimentális érzelmi színezet hatja át, illetve honosítja magához a 'görögös' műveltséganyagot, s az abból elvont motívum- és jelképrendszert."[122]

Even the project of the Populist School - referred to as the "hagyományőrző" (traditionalist) group in the Academy's *A magyar irodalom története*, or the "magyaros iskola" (Hungarian School) in Jenő Pintér's earlier eight volume literary history - can be interpreted as a symptomatic product of

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[119] Ferenc Toldy, *A magyar nemzeti irodalom története*, 1864-5, and *A magyar költészet története*, 1867.

[120] Ferenc Toldy, *A magyar nemzeti irodalom története*, 1864-5 (reprinted, Budapest, 1987) p.149.

[121] *A magyar irodalom története*, ed. I. Sőtér, Vol III (1772-1849), p.88.

[122] Antal Weber, *Irodalmi irányok, távlatból*, Budapest, 1974, p.34.

the structure of feeling we have been describing. For it represents, as I hope to show in Chapter Four, an essentially *sentimental* identification with the *naive* immediacy of folk culture. This identification was to have profound and lasting implications for the historical development of Hungarian literature, and indeed continues to play a major role in the national culture today. Before turning our attention to Hungarian literature's decisive recognition of the linguistic, cultural and ideological potential of folk poetry, however, we must consider in more detail the crisis of national and personal identity it sought to resolve.

Chapter Three

The Sentimental Dilemma

In emphasising the centrality of Schiller's concept of the sentimental in late 18th century Hungarian literature, I do not propose merely to replace four 'schools" with one. My purpose is rather to identify a configuration of historically related concerns which informs a large corpus of writing, whose coherence extends beyond the confines of such categories as theme, form, prosody and genre. Having attempted in the previous chapter to show how these concerns were born not of the Enlightenment itself, but rather of those fundamental tensions and contradictions which would ultimately undermine both its central premises and its proverbial self-confidence, and having illustrated the way in which Hungarian literature adopts the fashionable lexicon of the Enlightenment's (sentimental) crisis, I should now like to consider in more detail the problems of identity which lie beneath that lexicon. The "sentimental dilemma" which forms the focus of this chapter will be interpreted primarily in terms of the tacit notion of *alienation* which emerges from Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*. This notion will be considered in what follows on five levels: alienation from society, from nature, from history as a teleological process, from the objects of literary discourse, and the alienation of literary discourse itself.

The Enlightenment's promotion of the Scienes of Man finds its literary corollary in the novel of character, confession and individual psychology. This is reflected in the very titles of some of the major novels of the 18th century: from Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa* and Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* to Prevost's *Manon Lescaut* and Rousseau's *Julie*; from Goethe's *Werther* to Kármán's *Fanni*. What is particularly interesting about the protagonists of all these novels is not only their propensity for feeling over and above reason, but also the way in which this propensity leads them into an inevitable conflict with the demands and limitations of the social order. For Werther, just as for Pamela, Julie, St Preux and Fanni, the other world is one of arbitrary and hostile rules and regulations. In their own lives at least, self-interest and social harmony are experienced as essentially irreconcilable, in that heightened sensibility and alienation from society appear to them to be

little more than two sides of the same coin. "Que c'est un fatal présent du ciel qu'une ame sensible!" writes Rousseau in *La Nouvelle Héloise*, "Celui qui l'a recu doit s'attendre a n'avoir que peine et douleur sur la terre."[1] The happiness of Julie and St. Preux at the beginning of the novel seems to depend greatly upon their relative isolation; it is only after the appearance of Claire and other members of Julie's family that problems begin and the lovers are forced to find the "sanctuaire" of Julie's bedroom. Throughout the novel, however, their love is represented as lying somehow beyond the artificial laws of social morality. As Edward Bomston says to St. Preux: "Vos deux ames sont si extraordinaires qu'on n'en peut juger par les régles communes".[2] Werther is equally dismissive of these "régles communes": "One can say much in favour of rules, about the same things as can be said of civil society [...] any 'rule', say what you like, will destroy the true feeling for nature and the true expression of her!"[3]

Nowhere is this dichotomy between the natural, feeling heart and the artificiality of social law more uneqivocally expressed than in Kármán's *Fanni hagyományai*: "mit tehetek róla", asks Fanni in section XXXIX, "hogy azt a szorongatást, mely a társaságban körülvesz, le nem vetkezhetem?" "Oh mely más vagyok én különösen",[4] she is forced to conclude, echoing the opening words of Rousseau's *Confessions*. Left to take refuge behind the closed gates of her garden, where her only visitors are the bees - "Nem félek én fulánkodtól... oh mérgesebb annál az embereké"[5] - she contrasts her garden to the outside world and the bees to her fellow human beings: "Az ember [...] az embernek teszi napjait keserűkké... Itt távol vagyok tőlök... Azért, oh azért oly igen jó itt!" Or again: "Ez a hely engem oly jó szívvel fogad, mások - tőlem mind idegenek."[6]

That the letter-writing subject of *Fanni hagyományai* should be a woman suggests more immediate parallels with the epistolary novels of Richardson,

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1 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloise* in *Oeuvres Completes* (Pleiade edition) Paris, 1959- , vol II, p.89.

2 *La Nouvelle Héloise*, p.165.

3 Goethe *The Sufferings of Young Werther*, translated by B. Q. Morgan, London, 1976, p.23.

4 József Kármán *Fanni hagyományai*, in *Válogatott művei*, Budapest, 1955, p.122.

5 Kármán, p.101.

6 Kármán, p.101.

than with Goethe's *Werther* (of which several Hungarian critics have, unjustly, considered Kármán's novel to be an imitation). In his *Jelentés a magyar asszonyi nemhez* - an advertisement for Kármán's new periodical, *Uránia* published in *Magyar Hírmondó* on February 28 1794 - Kármán claimed that: "A jó anyatermészet különös szorgalommal formálta az asszonyt [...] az a gyenge és mély érzés, az a titkos elértése a szív leglassúb rezgésének, az az édes hozzánkkapcsolás [...] mind ugyanannyi tulajdoni az asszonyi szívnek."[7] These gendered qualities of sympathy and sensibility are also seen by Kármán to have moral implications; as he argues in his introduction to the first number of *Uránia*: "Az ízlés a jó erkölcsök szülőanyja" and "a szépnem az ízlés uralkodónéja".[8] Richardson was no less convinced of the moral superiority of female sensibility, believing that "there is nothing either improving or delightful outside of the company of intelligent women",[9] and characterising the "feeling heart" as a "moral security of innocence; since the heart that is able to partake of the distress of another, cannot willfully give it."[10] Similar arguments are used by Ányos in his attempt to demonstrate "Hogy az asszonyi személyek emberek" in *Egy kiasszonynak levele a kedveséhez* (1783).[11]

Ignác Mészáros's novel *Kartigám* (1772) should also be mentioned in this context, not only because of the sex of its protagonist, nor even merely because of its repeated emphasis on the heroine's sensibility ("érzékenység"), but also because of its treatment of the crucial question of social mobility raised in Richardson's novels. What troubles Richardson's Pamela, for example, about the "sport" of Mr B. is not only the threat is represents to her innocence, but also the fact that his behaviour "is not a jest that becomes the distance between a master and a servant."[12] The moral basis for overcoming this social dilemma resides in Pamela's belief "That VIRTUE *is the only*

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7 Kármán, p.65.

8 Kármán, p.73.

9 Cited in Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, Harmondsworth, 1963, p.172.

10 In *Sir Charles Grandison*. Cited in Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction*, London, 1986, p.77. Richardson also claims that "The cause of virtue and of the sex, can hardly be separated." (In Janet Todd, p.80).

11 Pál Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, p.234.

12 Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded*, Harmondsworth, 1987, p.67.

nobility."[13] Similarly, the marriage of Krisztina (as Kartigám is renamed after her capture from the Turks) to Prince Sándor of Tuszánó is based, in Mészáros's novel, on "egyenlő érzékenységek" and moral parity:

> És noha bár e mostani időben ritkán történő dolog, hogy ama förendő személyek náloknál alacsonyabb rendbeliekkel házassági szövetségbe ereszkedjenek, hanem inkább hasznokra és nemzetségekre nézve magokhoz hasonlókhoz tartózkodnak, mindazáltal ha velősebb fontolásba vetettetik, úgy tetszik, a förendű születés és méltóság alacsonyabb nemű társ által meg nem sértődik, hogy ha oly hasonlatlan házaság csupán az erkölcsre céloz és az erkölcsben a hasonlatosságot keresi. Erre nézv tuszánói hercegnek is páros erkölcshez szivárkodott szerelme kisebbségének, illetlenségnek vagy megfelelhetetlen hirtelenkedésnek nem tulajdoníttatik.[14]

Kartigám, which has been almost totally neglected by Hungarian literary historians, was remarkably popular in its own time, running to five editions - two more than Dugonics's *Etelka* - by the end of the 18th century. Ányos celebrated the novel in a poetic epistle addressed *Kartigám nevezetes írójához* (1780), while in his *Pályám emlékezete* (1828) Kazinczy wrote: "Nem volt szebben írt magyar könyv, nem volt lelkesebb, nem volt inkább gyönyörködtető román széles e világon."[15]

Three other late 18th century Hungarian novels (of which two are translations) should be mentioned in the context of the conflict between the individual and the rules of society. While no social explanation is given in Kazinczy's *Bácsmegyey* for Manczi's choice of Szentpéteri over the novel's narrator, Bácsmegyey himself repeatedly comments on his own antipathy towards society, as in the following letter to Marosi of July 29: "sem én nem békélhetek meg a világgal, sem a világ nem velem [...] ah! azok a ti együttléteitek nem nyugtathatják annak meg szívét, a ki hidegen borzad vissza, midőn az örök tolongásban embert keres s vázat lel."[16] In Johann Martin Miller's "Klostergeschichte" *Siegwart* (1776), on the other hand - translated by Kazinczy as *Szegvári* and by Dávid Barczafalvi Szabó as *Szigvárt klastromi történetei* (1787) - the antinomies of a sensitive and passionate soul in a world of rigid prejudice inform the central events of the

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13 *Pamela*, p.83.

14 Ignác Mészáros, *Kartigám*, in *Magyar felvilágosodás: irodalmi olvasókönyv*, pp.119-20.

15 Kazinczy, *Művei*, vol. I., p.126.

16 Kazinczy, *Bácsmegyey*, ed. Gusztáv Heinrich, Budapest, 1878, p.113.

plot. Even when Siegwart gives up his chosen and cherished priestly vocation to study law, the father of his beloved Marianne still refuses to give away his daughter, and, after beating her, has her locked away in a convent. Similarly, in Ádám Horváth's original sentimental novel, *A felfedezett titok* (1792), the protagonist is required by the parents of his beloved to deny his secret identification with freemasonry if he is to marry their daughter. In both cases the conflict with social prejudice ultimately deprives the sentimental hero of both his beloved and his cherished vocation. That the nature of this conflict is seen in terms of a confrontation between the essential and authentic nature of man and the artificial laws of society is made quite clear by the narrator of *A felfedezett titok* long before his downfall:

> Mennyit keseregtem azon, hogy mióta a régi együgyű élet nemét erre a városi s nagyobb társaságokban való élet módjára cseréltük, azóta tulajdon természetünket láttatunk levetkezni, és a társaságnak, melly egymáson való segítség végett állíttatott fel, éppen eredeti valósága és állatja ellen vétkezünk mindnyájan és közönségesen.[17]

In 18th century poetry social alienation does not generally take the form of a direct conflict between individual feelings and social expectations, but finds expression in the celebration of solitude. In *Night Thoughts* Young had written:

> Virtue, for ever frail, as fair, below,
> Her tender nature suffers in the crowd,
> Nor touches on the world, without a stain:
> The world's infectious [...]
> We see, we hear with peril; safety dwells
> Remote from multitude; the world's a school
> Of wrong [...]
> [...] hence reason has been smit
> With sweet recess, and languisht for the shade.
> This sacred shade, and solitude, what is it?
> 'Tis the felt presence of the deity. (Night V)[18]

In his short biography of Young, *Yung élete*, József Péczeli, the poet's most prolific Hungarian translator, projects this same attitude onto the life of his master as a kind of moral example: "Egész életében szerette ugyan ő a'

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[17] Ádám Horváth, *A felfedezett titok*, Budapest, 1988, pp.172-3.

[18] Young, op. cit., pp.81-2.

magányosságot 's a tsendességet, a' mellyet természet szerént kedvellenek az érzékeny szívek 's tanuló emberek."[19]

This association of solitude, nature and sensibility formed one of the most central and widespread *topoi* of late 18th century Hungarian poetry. As early as 1772, the hermetic attitude of the mature Bessenyei is anticipated by his closest Bodyguard compation, Ábrahám Barcsay, whose poem *Elmélkedés a háborúról* yearns for a life of solitude where the poet can study "az időnek titkos enyészetét".[20] Similarly, for their younger friend, Ányos, solitude is consciously represented as a liberating alternative to the unfeelingness of human society:

Ő boldog szabadság erdők közepében,
Ahol ki-ki bátran sírhat keservében,
Nem úgy, mint halandó társainak ölében,
Kiknek kegyetlenség lakozik szívében!
(*Egy terhes álomtalan éjjelemkor* 1781-2)[21]

It is in the work of Csokonai, however, that the cult of solitude finds its most coherent and aesthetically accomplished expression. Csokonai's attitude is well summarised in a letter to Count György Festetics of December 19 1800:

> Itt a magánosságba eltemetve élek magamnak [...] Érzem, hogy az esmeretlen csendességbe lelkem is, melly a szerencse hányása között törpévé lett, óriáskodni kezd: látom, hogy a nagy lelkek ujjal hívnak magok felé s integetnek, hogy a plebecula zavart sikoltásaival ne gondolkodjak; hiszen már most, hogy életk: oh Rousseaunak boldogult árnyéka, lehelj reám egyet a Montmorency kertek lugasai közzül, vagy az ermenonvillei sírnak hideg nyárfái mellől, hogy az igazság, a Gráciák s annak idejében az örök álom édesdeden szálljanak meg engemet homályos akászom árnyékában.[22]

These references to Rousseau are particularly significant. The forest of Montmorency lay beside the Hermitage on the estate of Madame d'Epinay, where Rousseau began his *La Nouvelle Héloise*, while Ermeninville was the village just outside Paris where Rousseau died while writing his most important meditations on solitude, *Les reveries d'un promeneur solitaire*.

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19 József Péczeli, *Yung' éjtszakáji és egyéb munkáji* (3rd edition) Komárom, 1815. Introductory biographical essay on *Young élete*, unnumbered pages.

20 Barcsay, op. cit., p.50.

21 Ányos, op. cit., pp.86-7.

22 Csokonai, *Minden munkája: Prózai művek*, Budapest, 1981, p.417.

Csokonai again associates himself with the later Rousseau in one of his own most important poetic treatments of solitude, *A tihanyi Ekhóhoz*:

> Itt egy kőben helyt fogok,
> S e szigetnek egy szögében,
> Mint egy *Russzó Ermenonvillében*,
> Ember és polgár leszek.[23]

In *A tihanyi Ekhóhoz* Csokonai characteristically associates the (albeit bleak) natural landscape to which he retreats with the qualities of sympathy and sensibility he finds lacking in his fellow men:

> Zordon erdők, durva bércek, szirtok!
> Harsogjátok jajjaim!
> Tik talám több érzéssel bírtok,
> Mintsem embertársaim,[24]

"Nincsen szív az emberekbe"[25] is the conclusion that Csokonai, like Ányos and Kármán, is forced to reach.

For Csokonai, solitude is also associated with wisdom, virtue and inspiration. In *A tihanyi Ekhóhoz*, for example he declares:

> Itt tanulom rejtek érdememmel
> Ébresztgetni lelkemet.
> A természet majd az értelemmel
> Bölcsebbé tesz engemet.[26]

while in *A Magánosséghoz* he writes "Te szülöd meg a virtust" and:

> Tebenned úgy csap a poéta széjjel,
> Mint a sebes villám setétes éjjel;
> Midőn teremt új dolgokat
> S a semmiből világokat.[27]

The night analogy here is interestingly reminiscent of the association of darkness and inspiration mentioned earlier in connection with Young and Horváth. Csokonai's treatment of solitude is itself consistently related to a positive representation of images of darkness, such as "megfrisselő árnyék" or, in the same poem, the distinctly Youngian lexis of the following lines:

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23 Csokonai, *Minden munkája: Versek*, Budapest, 1981, p.648.

24 Ibid., p.646.

25 Ibid., p.647.

26 Ibid., p.648.

27 Ibid., p.412.

A lenge hold halkan világosítja
A szőke bikkfák oldalát,
Estvéli hűs álommal elborítja
A csendes éjnek angyalát.
Szelíd Magánosság! az illy helyekbe
Gyönyörködöl s mulaszt te; ah, ezekbe
Gyakran vezess be engemet,
Nyugtatni lankadt lelkemet.
(A Magánossághoz)[28]

Csokonai's juxtaposition of images of darkness and solitude with values such as virtue, sensibility and inspiration can be seen at its most powerful in *Az estve*. Here the poet contrasts the world of society, in which he can find no place, to the welcoming refuge of a shady grove at twilight, where even his sorrow seems sweet. Of this solitary retreat he writes in idyllic terms:

Mit érzek?... míg szóllok, egy kis nyájas szellet
Rám gyengén mennyei illatot lehellett.
Suhogó szárnyával a fák árnyékinál
Egy fűszerszámozott teátromot csinál,
Mellybe a gráciák örömmel repülnek,
A gyönyörűségnek lágy karjain ülnek;
Hol a csendes berek barna rajzolatja
Magát a rezgő hold fényénél ingatja.
Egyszóval, e vidám melanchóliának
Kies szállásai örömre nyílanak.[29]

before turning his attention to the very different world of man:

[...] e világba semmi részem nincsen,
Melly bágyadt lelkemre megnyugovást hintsen;
Mikor a világnak lármáját sokallom,
Kevélynek, fösvénynek csörtetését hallom
Mikor az emberek körültem zsibondnak,
S kényektől részegen egymásra tolongnak.[30]

Fleeing from human society thus condemned, the poet's only companion is the same "pale" and "ethereal" moon which had smiled down upon him in *A*

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28 Ibid., p.411.

29 Ibid., pp.185-6.

30 Ibid., p.186.

magánosséghoz and *A tihanyi Ekhóhoz*: "Te vagy még egyedül, oh arany holdvilág".[31]

The cult of solitude in 18th century poetry can also be related to an increasingly valorised opposition of the country to the city. In English poetry this opposition had a very real referential basis in the 18th century experience of enclosure and industrialization. Already in the first half of the century, Thomson is able in *The Seasons* to contemplate the damage to the rural community inflicted by "these Iron Times", which leads him, in Raymond Williams"s phrase, to "rehearse the familiar idyll of retirement":[32]

> Oh knew he but his happiness, of men
> The happiest he! who far from public rage,
> Deep in the vale, with a choice few retir'd,
> Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life [...][33]

Gray's *Elegy* speaks in similar terms of a threatened and disappearing rural retreat "Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife";[34] and by 1769 Goldsmith fancies he can actually "see the rural virtues leave the land", recognising that the "times are alter'd" and that "trade's unfeeling train / Usurp the land and dispossess the swain."[35] In Hungary, of course, due to the backwardness both of urban development and of agricultural capitalism, this process was hardly to begin before the middle of the following century. In spite of this fact, however, we can find several instances of the country/city opposition in late 18th century Hungarian poetry. There are cases, for example, where it represents - as it had for Goldsmith - the observation of a perceptible social process, as in Orczy's most famous celebration of rural simplicity over urban "artificiality", *A bugaci csárdának tiszteletére*, (1772-82), where the poet has the following to say about urban growth:

> Bizony sok hívság van a sok építésben,
> Az ország elmerült ezen betegségben,

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31 Ibid., p.187.

32 Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, London, 1975, p.88.

33 Cited in Williams, *The Country and the City*, p.88.

34 Ibid., p.94.

35 Ibid., p.87; p.95.

Aki lakni akar igaz csendességben,
Szivét szorítsa be kisebb kerítésben.[36]

Barcsay's attitude to the ills of society is also articulated through a similar opposition, as in the poem *Testamentum* (1777):

Távol nyughatatlan roppant városoktól,
Egy szüntelen kies, s tölgyfák árnyékától
Sötét völgyben, hamvam messze elvigyétek [...][37]

More typically, however, the opposition of town and country is employed in the more abstract context of morality and sensibility. Addressing "blessed solitude" in his *A Magánosséghoz*, for example, Csokonai exclaims:

Futsz a zsibongó városok falától:
Honnyod csupán az érző
Szív és szelíd falu és mező.[38]

In *Az estve* the opposition is further abstracted into one between nature and civil society in general. Here the problem centres on man's loss of nature and self-alienation through the development of property relations:

Bódult emberi nem, hát szabad létedre
Mért vertél zárbékót tulajdon kezedre?
Tiéd volt ez a föld, tiéd volt egészen,
Mellyből most a kevély s fösvény dézmát vészen.
[...] Az *enyim*, a *tied* mennyi lármát szüle,
Miolta a *miénk* nevezet elűle.[39]

Csokonai's position here is once again remarkably close to that of Rousseau. The opening words to Part Two of Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* run:

> The first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, throught of saying 'This is mine' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders; how much misery and horror the human race would have been spared if someone had pulled up the stakes and filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men: 'Beware of listening to

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36 *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.132. See also Orczy's poem *Egy ifjúhoz, ki a városi lakást a falusinál inkább szereti* (1762).

37 Barcsay, op. cit., p.51.

38 Csokonai, *Minden munkája: Versek*, p.412.

39 Ibid., p.186.

this imposter. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to everyone and that the earth itself belongs to no one!"[40]

Like Rousseau, Csokonai also attributes the cause of man's present immorality to the ills of civil society:

> Akit tán tolvajjá a tolvaj világ tett,
> Mert gonosz erkölccsel senki sem született.[41]

That social alienation is articulated on a more abstract level in 18th Hungarian poetry than in the epistolary novels of the period is, of course, in part due to the different nature of the two genres. It may also, however, be related to the circumstances and backgrounds of the writers involved. Barcsay, for example, was, like Orczy, a soldier by profession who ended his days on his estate in Piski and never intended his poetry - most of which took the form pf poetic epistles - to be published. Ányos was a Pauline monk, whose poetic endeavours disturbed his superiors, and for whom solitude became a reality during his years of "exile" in the Felsőelefánt monastery in Nyitra Country. By contrast, Kazinczy and Kármán were essentially urban writers who made their living partly through writing and partly through related cultural enterprises like publishing and, in Kazinczy's case, serving as a schools' inspector. Both were freemasons (who at one time even belonged to the same lodge), and both were regular visitors at the fashionable Pest "salon" of General Miklós Beleznai's widow, Anna Mária Podmaniczky. Both showed great interest in the most urban of literary institutions, the theatre - Kazinczy as a translator for the stage and Kármán as an administrator in Hungary's first theatre company under the direction of László Kelemen - and both, at different times, entertained plans for the transformation of Pest into the literary capital of the nation.

These differences should help to explain why the sense of alienation described in the predominantly provincial Hungarian poetry of solitude more often represents, as we have seen, an existential condition than a specific social *problem*. Indeed solitude could be exalted without any reference to the hostility or artificiality of society whatsoever, as in Krisztina Újfalvy's *A magánosséghoz* where the reasons for the poet's invocation are never named:

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40 Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, p.109.

41 Csokonai, *Minden munkája: Versek*, p.187.

Most oh csendes magánosság!
Öleld meg lelkemet;
Életbarát jó reménység!
Most ne hadd szívemet.
Midőn sorsom hideg szele
Kedvemről mindent leszele:
Bennetek találom
Életem és halálom.[42]

For Kármán, on the other hand, solitude only ever figures as a lamentable, if necessary, retreat from social injustice and insensibility. Even Fanni realises that "Szükséges az embernek az ember"[43] and considers the social realities she experiences to be no more than a distortion of a higher social ideal. In the more polemical context of *A nemzet csinosodása*, Kármán is openly critical of those who live their lives in solitude not out of necessity but out of choice or ignorance:

> A magános félre való élet, az elzárkózás a világtól, elzár a gondolkozástól is. Az a kis darab föld, amelyben lakik a mezei ember, az ő egész horizontja. Nem tudja mi történik faluján kivül, és azt hiszi, hogy megyejének határdombjain túl már ott kezdődik a Fekete-tenger.[44]

Similarly, while for the more provincial Orczy, Barcsay, Ányos and Csokonai the simplicity and unaffectedness of nature represented an unequivocal moral value, Kármán's position is already more qualified. In *A nemzet csinosodása* (1794) he is prepared to say of himself - in the phrase Kazinczy would notoriously use of Csokonai - "Et in Arcadia ego", but then goes on:

> A természet együgyű és ízes örömeit szoptam is joltevő emlőiből. Háládatlan lennék ezen jó anya eránt, ha a mezei életnek minden határozás nélkül csak rossz következéseket tulajdonítanék. De hogy a mezei élet nagy részben a tudományok terjesztésében akadály, azt nem lehet meg nem vallanom.[45]

This is, however, to present only one side of Kármán's attitude to nature. For here Kármán is writing as a polemicist in a document aimed at rousing his countrymen from their provincial slumbers in the name of the improvement or "embellishment" of the nation. When, in *Fanni hagyományai*, he comes to

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42 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.477.

43 Kármán, op. cit. p.107.

44 Kármán, p.81.

45 Kármán, p.81.

consider nature from the point of view of a sentimental novelist, however, Kármán's emphasis is substantively different.

Poets "will either *be* nature or they will *look for* lost nature" (Schiller). For the sentimental writer, nature is no longer an immediate, lived reality, but a lost ideal which can only be mourned elegiacally or recreated idyllically. Either the objects and processes of nature are represented as lamentably distant and "other", or they are reappropriated and refashioned as a reflection of the internal state of the alienated subject. Thus, whether the sentimental writer portrays nature as everything he is not, or as nothing that is not he, he lives out the (imagined) crisis of his fall from a state of "naive" harmony in which either strategy would have been equally unthinkable.

Both possibilities are well represented in late 18th century Hungarian literature. The portrayal of the self as isolated from, or in opposition to, nature occurs most frequently in the poetry of Ányos. For example:

Az egész természet készül csendességre,
Csak szívünk intetik elmés ébretségre.
(*A lenyugvó naphoz*, 1778)[46]

A fáradt természet behunyta szemeit,
Szökik a lágy szellők mirtus leveleit;
Álmos ágyán kiki felejti terheit,
Csak egy szerencsétlen nyögi szerelmeit.
(*Érzékeny gondolatok*, 1779)[47]

Employing the same rhetorical isolation of the subject through the abverb "only", Dayka expresses a similar opposition in *Kesergés* (1790-2):

Halotti csendben fekszik az érező
Természet, és a nappali gondokat,
S a bút s az élet aggodalmit
Megfelelő nyugalommal űzi,

Csak én panaszlom régi keservimet [...]

Csak nekem hullnak, fátyolos asszonya
A csendes éjnek, gyöngyeid hasztalan!

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46 Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, p.44.

47 Ányos, p.57.

Csak nekem: ah, mert jőni álmát
Harmatozó szemeimre tiltasz![48]

Once again, we are dealing with the recognition of a dilemma which, together with the rhetorical device through which it finds expression, extends beyond the artificial limitations of any one fixed "school" or tendency. In describing their alienation from the renewal of spring, both Révai and Csokonai employ the same rhetorical strategies to draw the same conclusions:

Víg tavasz, a kerek esztendő szebb része derül fel
S új pompájával tér mezeinkre kiszáll.
Újul a nagy föld, mindent a lágy meleg éleszt,
S könnyű szellőnek lengedezése nevel [...]
Mindenféle madár, öröm új éneknek eredvén,
Hol szép zöldelő ágra, hol égbe repes.
Csak nekem itt egyedül, ó! csak nekem árva szegénynek,
A bús aggodalom szívem epesztve öli.
(Révai, *A kikeletről*)[49]

Az egész világ feléledt.
S az elérkezett tavasznak
Örömére minden örvend;
Csak az egy VITÉZ nem örvend.
(Csokonai, *A tavasz*)[50]

Sándor Kisfaludy complains in a similar manner in song 126 of *A kesergő szerelem* (1796-8):

Erdők, mezők felvidulnak,
Csillagzatok megfordulnak,
A szerencse forgandó -
Csak inségem állandó![51]

as does Krisztina Újfalvy in *Emlékezet*:

Legelő nyájokkal gazdag büszke rétek,
Kiknek a szeretet s barátság nem vétek!!
Árnyékos dombokkal emelkedett halmok,
Került pásztoroknak hűst adó nyugalmok!

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48 Gábor Dayka, *Költeményei*, pp.23-4.

49 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.388.

50 Csokonai, *Minden munkája: Versek*, p.378.

51 Sándor Kisfaludy, *Minden munkája*, Budapest, 1892, vol I, p.106.

Kiterjedett vidék! messzenyúlt helységek!
Ti boldogok vagytok: én epedek s égek.[52]

In *Fanni hagyományai*, Kármán provides an interesting illustration of the contiguity of this form of alienation from nature with its counterpart, the reappropriation of "lost nature" through the subjectivization of natural objects and functions. In her description of the coming of spring in section LI., Fanni opens in a manner reminiscent of Révai and Csokonai on the same theme: "Derül a kikelet. Elevenség és élet terjed mindenfelé tőle. Én bennem az éltető erő napról-napra fogy."[53] After remembering earlier springs where "A pacsirta fennyen járó csavargó éneke örömhírmondó volt",[54] Fanni, however, attempts to overcome her present alienation by instilling nature with her own feelings and moods:

> A pacsirta halálos éneket dalol [...] A tavaszi fellegek, melyeket a magasság üregében a szellő renget, bús árnyékot hánynak a csirádzó mezőre, és széjjel szaladoznak zöld tábláján ... Mint ezek, egy pillanatban úgy múlik el az én életem is.[55]

The nightingale has not, of course, changed its tune; and in making it appear to do so Fanni actually demonstrates her current distance from the meaning of its song. In making this song - together with the rest of nature - reflect her inner state, however, Fanni has also restored the lost harmony between nature and the self by rendering the former totally subjective.

This subjectivization of nature appears, again, most consistently in the poetry of Ányos, where natural objects are regularly predicated by adjectives expressing the feelings of the poet. Thus we find in Ányos common occurences of phrases like "bágyodtt szél", "bágyodtt sugárok", "fáradt természet", "szomorú csillagzat", "szomorú telek", "szomorú hold" etc. Ányos's feelings are not represented as *responses* in any causal sense to natural phenomena in the object world, but rather as the embodiments of a sentimental identification of subject and object. In the lines:

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52 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.479.

53 Kármán, op. cit., p.139.

54 Kármán, p.139.

55 Kármán, p.140.

[...] a szomorú holdnak bágyodtt világára
Könnyves szemmel nézek haldokló lángjára"
(*Érzékenységeim egy kedves atyámfiának időnek előtte történt halálán* 1780-1)[56]

for example, the perceiver and the perceived are almost inseparable.

The same is true of the poetry of Dayka, where both the classical sequence of *pictura* and *sententia* and the stable relationship between subject and object are completely undermined. As the (equally sentimental) poet and critic, József Bajza, recognised in 1834:

> Daykának egész poésise lélekfestés, oly hív és való, hogy nem ismerek magyar költőt, ki őt ebben felülhaladta volna. Míg más lyricusok érzéseik következményeit beszélik, ő előttünk hagyja érzéseit feltámadni, előttünk megyen végbe a küszködés szenvedélyeivel.[57]

In *A rettenetes éj*, for example, Dayka does not merely describe a stormy night before going on to add a personal reflection on the scene, but projects from the outset his own subjective state onto the events and images described. The first directly personal reference does not come until the closing line of the poem - "Ah - holnap ismét hajnalom hasad!"[58] - but by this time it is no longer necessary for the poet to state or explain his relationship to what has gone before. In *A virtus becse*, which contrasts the poet's former happiness with his present gloom, the latter state is similarly projected upon the former through the preservation of a suggestive continuity at the level of verbal metaphor. The sense of a tragic descent evoked in the critical fourth stanza

Ti boldog órák! Hasztalan esdekelem
Utánok. A *bús vízözön* évei
Közt semmiségbe tért időknek
Fejthetetlen zavarába *dőltek*![59]

is already anticipated by the "hűs *pataknak bús zuhanásai*" in stanza two, and by the "*nem magyarázható* / Örömbe *sülyedt* lelkem" and the "Édes *özönbe merült* szemek"[60] in stanza three.

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56 Ányos, op. cit., p.76.

57 József Bajza, *Dayka Gábor (Kritikai lapok*, 1834). Cited in Dezső Baróti *Írók, érzelmek, stílusok*, Budapest, 1971, pp.195-6.

58 Dayka, op. cit., p.33.

59 Dayka, p.15.

60 Dayka, p.15.

Again, this kind of projection is not confined to those poets conventionally associated with the "sentimental school" in late 18th Hungarian literature, as is demonstrated by a poem of Révai's already referred to in a different context:

Megváltozott égen földön
Nekem minden alkotmány:
Nem mosolyog oly szép zöldön
A rét s kerti oltovány:
Elfonyódást veteményben,
Homályt látok a napfényben,
A hajnal is halavány.
(Szomorú indulat)[61]

What distinguishes the sentimentalism of Révai from that of Dayka, however, is the latter's heightened consciousness of the process involved. In his ode *Az esthajnalhoz*, Dayka seems to catch up with his own projections. The opening two stanzas of the poem offer a characteristic contrast between the poet's former experience of twilight ("hajdan örömkövet / Voltál") and his current experience ("nem mosolyog homályba sülyedező szemed").[62] In the third stanza he attempts to understand this transformation in terms which approximate increasingly to his own inner state:

Színed tán örökös gyászba merült? talán
Könyűd árja borít? s átok alatt velem
Kínod súlya s emésztő
Búd zavarja nyugadalmod?[63]

These questions suddenly bring a more disturbing thought to the poet's mind:

Vagy csak tán egyedül én nyögök? Úgy, felelsz,
Gyilkos? Ámde ki kell majd szabadítanod,
Felhozván azon estét,
Melyre nem hasad hajnalom.[64]

Recognising that his vision is no more than his own destructive self-projection, and thus confirmed in his utter solitude and alienation from the world, the poet yearns for death to release him from the prison of his own imagination.

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[61] In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.395.

[62] Dayka, op. cit., p.18.

[63] Dayka, p.19.

[64] Dayka, p.19.

The third form of alienation I should like to consider concerns the loss, in sentimental writing, of any positive sense of history as a progressive or inherently teleological process. Estranged from both nature and society, the sentimental subject is unable to interpret his own existence as part of a meaningful narrative involving a progression towards improvement or perfection.

We have already seen how Bessenyei fails to reproduce Pope's "enlightened" faith in the progress and perfectibility of man in *Az embernek próbája*. For Bessenyei, the present is not the consummation of the past, but its negation, with the golden age of man having been irrevocably lost in the transition from the state of nature to civil society. Ányos would come to a similar conclusion some ten years later. In his *Érzékeny levelek* (1782), he translates a section from Wieland's *Die Grazien* (1769) which focuses on Rousseau's attitude to the state of nature, stressing in his translation a contrast with the present which receives far less emphasis in the original. Here is Wieland's German:

> Ich weiss nicht, *Danae*, wie geneigt Sie sich fühlen, es dem Verfasser der *Neuen Heloise* zu glauben, dass dieses der selige Stand sey, den uns die Natur zugedacht habe. Aber, wenn wir alle die Übel zusammen rechnen, wovon diese Kinder der rohen Natur keinen Begriff hatten, so ist es ünmoglich, ihnen wenigstens eine Art von *negativer* Glückseligkeit abzusprechen.[65]

And here is Ányos's translation:

> Nem tudom, Danae, ha elhiszi-e az *új Heloiz* szerzőjének, hogy ez volt a legboldogabb életmódgya, mellyet számunkra rendelhetett a természet? De ha mindazokat a viszontagságokat számba vesszük, amellyek esméretlenek voltak a míveletlen természet fiainál, meg nem tagadhatyuk tőlök legalább azt a boldogságot, melly a mostani viszontagságok tudtalanságából származott.[66]

Ányos himself goes on to comment:

> Barátom, mint tetszik ez a kis német darab? Melly szépen emlékeztet bennünket azokra az időkre, mellyekben csak az ártatlan természet uralkodott![67]

In a poetic epistle to Barcsay of 27 July 1781, Ányos transposes this broadly philosophical sense of historical development as a loss of value onto the more specific terrain of national history. While the past is highly idealised:

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[65] Cited in a footnote to Ányos's *Érzékeny levelek* in *Válogatott művei*, p.257.

[66] Ányos, op. cit., p.101.

[67] Ányos, p.101.

Ó boldog őseink! hiszen ti tudgyátok,
Szabad kunyhóinkat melly drágán kaptátok.
Rajtok van pecséttye nemes véreteknek,
Rajtok fényes jele vitéz szíveteknek.[68]

the present is represented as bleak and lamentable:

Ideje, hogy fújjuk gyászos furuglánkot,
S egy könyvező szemmel tekintsük hazánkat [...]
Melly setét éjszaka terjedett egünkre!
Mégsem jöhet álom elbágyadt szemünkre.
Ébren sóhajtozunk a nagy éjtszakában!
Mit várhatunk jövő napunk hajnalában?[69]

This sentimental description shares, in both emphasis and diction, much in common with Baróti-Szabó's portrayal of the national present in *Magyarországnak hajdani szomorú sorsa*, where Ányos's metaphor of sleeplessness is intensified into an metaphor of eternal suffering in life:

Nem tud hazánk a homályok után napfényre derülni:
Amit fákláljon s féljen, örökre talál.
Bújában Niobe kővé vált; annak azonban
Megtörlé szemeit nem sok időre halál.
Ez pedig él; ámbátor, hogy él, nem tudja, de mégis
Él, s látván örökös kínjait, egyre zokog.[70]

Both of these poems were written in the early 1780s and take their inspiration from the threat to Hungary's historical integrity represented by the reforms of Joseph II. Like several other poems by Ányos and Barcsay (such as the former's *Igaz hazafi* and *A szép tudományoknak áldozott versek* and the latter's *A magyar ifjúsághoz* and *Énekelek...*) the purpose of the historical comparisons they draw is actually to urge the nation to realise its historical potential. Indeed the closing lines of Ányos's epistle

Térjünk már most vissza Mohács mezejére,
Boruljunk őseink elhullott vérére,
Kérjünk zokogással szent árnyékaikat,
Ne hadják rabságra jutni fiakat![71]

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68 Ányos, p.207.

69 Ányos, p.207.

70 In *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.320.

71 Ányos, *Barcsaynak* (27 July 1781) in *Válogatott művei*, p.207.

clearly anticipate Károly Kisfaludy's great elegy, *Mohács* (1824), which typified the historical rhetoric of the Age of Reform. Ányos was soon, however, to entertain serious doubts about the value of studying the past which are more profoundly characteristic of the sentimental moment his work represents: "Micsoda szükség volt a régi századokba visszamenni, elhullott vitézek koporsóin könyveket hullatni, sok elmúlt nemzeteket hamvai közt sírni és azoknak csalattatásokat, tévelygéseit nézni?"[72]

The same doubts had induced Barcsay to write the following lines some five years earlier:

> Ó! múlt s következő időknek homálya,
> Halandó titkodat hasztalan vizsgálja,
> Mert a történetet akármint csodálja,
> Eseteknek rendít mégis nem találja.
> *(Tudományoknak nevelkedéséről budai ferdőben)*[73]

The loss of the Enlightenment's faith in history as a teleological narrative of progress and perfectibility, however, figures most prominently in sentimental poetry in abstraction from any ettempt to depict the history of the nation or of mankind in general. One the one hand it takes the form of an abstract opposition between the subject's (blissful) former and (melancholy) present states, where this transition is represented not as the effect of some identifiable cause, but as little more than an (inevitable) existential condition. This is, as we have seen, the case in Dayka's *A virtus becse*. On the other hand, the rejection of teleology also finds expression through the extremely widespread literary *topos* of mutability. There are countless examples of this in late 18th century Hungarian poetry, from Barcsay's *Elmélkedés a háborúról* and Ányos's *Egy elenyészendő rózsához* and *A lenyugvó naphoz* to Révai's *Az időről új esztendő alkalmatosságával* and *A haláltól nem rettegő nagy lélek* and Baróti-Szabó's *A mulandóságról, Születésem napjára, Tisztelendő Horváth Mihály úrhoz* and *Nem kimél meg senkit halál*. Perhaps the most articulate expression of this idea is to be found in Csokonai's *Halotti versek*, where the thought of death renders all notions of human enterprise and value entirely meaningless:

> [...] ha el kell múlnom, mi szükség volt élni?
> Egy elveszendőnek miért kell remélni?

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72 Ányos, *A világi gyönyörűségeknek haszontalansága* (1782) in *Válogatott művei*, p.207.

73 Barcsay, op. cit., p.119.

Azért? hogy ezer baj, bú, betegség között
Mint egy számkivetett és mint egy üldözött,
Vágyakozzam dicsőbb rendelésem felé,
Egy méltóbb országba, s mégse menjek belé?
[...] E kerek föld pusztán forog az üregben.
Hordozván a néma halált gyászleplekben,
Bús gyomrába zárta az emberi nemet
S egy sorsra juttatta a vétket s érdemet;
Nagy sír! de amellyre csak ennyit írhatok:
'Itt laktak tollatlan kétlábú állatok.'[74]

At odds with both nature and society, highly cynical regarding the purposiveness of individual, national and human history, the sentimental subject has nowhere to turn but inwards, to a world peopled exclusively by his own feelings and fantasies. "I return into myself and find a world",[75] exclaims Goethe's Werther. Reality for Goethe can only be approached "through the inward world which lays hold of everything, combines it, recreates it and kneads it, and reproduces it in its own form and manner - that remains forever a mystery, God be praised."[76] If with Dayka the sentimental process of self-projection was beginning to show sings of reflexivity, with Goethe it already features as a conscious literary strategy: "Poetry dwells only where dwell intimancy, need and inward feeling [...] spread yourself, if you can, over the whole world."[77]

The discontinuity between these inner and outer worlds for the sentimental writer is well illustrated by Rousseau when he discusses his reasons for writing *La Nouvelle Héloise* in the *Confessions*. Here he explains his compulsion to create a fictional world not as a response to objective events and conditions in his life, but as the product of a subjective state. Rousseau explains that in spite of "leading a life after my own heart in a place of my choice with a person who was dear to me, I nevertheless managed to feel almost isolated".[78] He goes on:

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74 Csokonai, *Minden munkája: Versek*, pp.657-61.

75 *Werther*, p.21.

76 Goethe to F. H. Jacobi, 21 August 1774; cited in Roy Pascal *The German Sturm und Drang*, Manchester, 1953, p.285.

77 Ibid., p.288.

78 Rousseau, *Confessions*, p.392. (The 'person who was dear to me' was Therese Levasseur, whom Rousseau later married.)

> What did I do? My reader has already guessed [...] The impossibility of attaining real persons precipitated me into the land of chimeras; and seeing nothing that existed worthy of my exalted feelings, I fostered them in an ideal world which my creative imagination soon peopled with beings after my own heart.[79]

Rousseau's appeal to the subjective causes of his predicament - together with its proposed resolution through the creative projection of his "chimeras" onto the world - represents one of the most important constituents of the sentimental dilemma. Probably the most concise formulation of this "subjective causality" in late 18th century Hungarian literature is to be found in Dayka's *Titkos bú*. Here the poet recognises that the origin of the "homályos bánat" and "emésztő bú" which torments his soul is not to be sought in the world of objects and experiences, but in his own "sebes szív" which has become "önnyugatának gyilkolója".[80] The wounded heart embodies both cause and effect. The objects to which it relates are of interest only insofar as they constitute reflections or projections of its torment. The world of objects, that is to say, is from the outset displaced by the world of subjective responses or reflections. What the anonymous reviewer of Frenais's translation of *The Sentimental Journey* said of Sterne in the *Mercure de France* in 1769, could equally be said of Dayka: "Sterne is sensitive by nature and attempts to describe not so much what he sees as the sensations that objects arouse in him."[81] This is, of course, not only the same emphasis that we find in Schiller's discussion of sentimental reflection in *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (see Chapter Two, pages 63-65), but also one which Burke had considered essential to the aims of literary expression in his *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, first published in 1756. "In reality", Burke argues,

> poetry and rhetoric do not succeed in exact description so well as painting does; their business is, to affect rather by sympathy than imitation; to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker [...] than to present a clear idea of the things themselves.[82]

As we have already seen, Young's fascination with night was based in part upon the inspiration he felt it gave to the imagination to roam "not to the

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79 *Confessions*, p.398.

80 Dayka, op. cit., p.17.

81 Cited in A. B. Howes (ed.) *Sterne, the Critical Heritage*, London, 1974, p.398.

82 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beatiful*, London, 1889, p.29.

limits of one world confind'd" and *"from objects free"*.[83] This freedom from the world of objects also modifies the terms of aesthetic evaluation in sentimental writing. A work is not to be judged according to either the propriety or the exact depiction of the objects, events and themes it represents, but rather according to the signs of sensibility it manifests. As Kazinczy would argue, while defending his translation of Klopstock's *Messias* in a letter to Imre Vitéz of August 23 1789:

> Jaj nekem úgy a Messziásommal, ha annak nem az öltözetét, hanem az előadott dolgot nézik. A' Zelóta azzal fog vádolni, hogy a' Szent történetet nem a' Biblia szerint adom-elő; a' Zelóta ellenkezője pedig, (ha csak Philosophus és nem Poéta is) azzal, hogy eggy olyan ízetlen tárgy körül fáradtam.[84]

In the light of this statement, the two key pillars of Kazinczy's famours dictum "jót s jól"[85] should perhaps be seen as overlapping, if not entirely interchangable terms.

Kazinczy's repeated emphasis on style over content is itself a manifestation of the problem of sentimental alienation we have been describing. The world of the sentimental writer is not primarily a world of objects, events and characters, but one of style. This is especially apparent in the epistolary form of the 18th century sentimental novel, which serves as a metaphor not only for the writing subject's loss of direct *communication* with the world, but also for the reflexive process in which the letter - in both senses of the world - actually displaces the world it substitutes. For the central action of the epistolary novel is the act of writing itself. Even Werther's love for Lotte is mediated textually rather than sexually through the ecstasy they share in reading Klopstock, Gessner and Ossian. Similarly, the most critical moment in the relationship between Fanni and Józsi T. in Kármán's *Fanni hagyományai* is mediated through Józsi's reading of Gessner. The letter no longer merely performs a substitutive function in the process of communicating experience: it is now elevated to the level of experience itself. This elevation finds its most extreme expression in Sterne's intensely reflexive novel, *Tristram Shandy*, where we are continually led - in the words of Northrop Frye - not "into a story, but into

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83 Young, op. cit., p.81.

84 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol I, p.440.

85 From the epigram *A nagy titok*, in Kazinczy *Művei*, vol I, p.35.

the process of writing a story".[86] What captivates our attention in Sterne is neither the moral significance of the world described, nor the elegance or even good taste of the description, but rather the indefatigable *sensibility* of the voice doing the describing.

Alienated from the object world, the sentimental subject takes refuge in the empire of the sign. The demonstration of sensibility in sentimental literature is not a matter of portraying appropriate actions or ideas, but of displaying those signs which betray the presence of a feeling heart. All those elements which are conventionally seen to determine a man's identity - such as his deeds, his deliefs, his past ect - are reduced to the system of signs in which he articulates himself; "Szólj! és ki vagy, elmondom" - writes Kazinczy - "Ne tovább! ismerlek egészen".[87]

Words, however, are not the only signs of sensibility; a profusion of tears (themselves, of course, expressed through words) will also signify the same sentimental subject as phrases like "érzékeny szív", "hív magánosság" and "emésztő bú". When Kazinczy writes of J. M. Miller's *Siegwart* "Hányszor hullattak szemeim elgyengülésemben ollyan édes tseppeket írásodra áldott Miller! mellyeken az engemet sírni látó angyalok örömökben talán magok is sírásra fakadtak!"[88] it is not so much Miller's text which is being eulogised as Kazinczy's impassioned response. Similarly, Révai's elegiac lines written to commemorate the death of Zsigmond Orosz do less to preserve the memory of the deceased than to immortalise the poet's own sentimental reaction:

> [...] mi öreg cseppekkel elázik az arcám;
> A sűrű zokogás közbeszakasztja szavam.
> Folyatok, ó keserű könnyek! s ti szóljatok arról:
> Hogy mi atyát vesztek, ó igen édes atyát!
> Folyatok! - Ámde lehet már bús panaszokra fakadnom:
> Engedd meg, dúló fájdalom, ezt az egyet.[89]

In both cases tears are proffered as the "signifiers" of sensibility; like Ányos's "érzékeny csöppei" their ultimate "signified" is always the subject rather than the object of emotion. In sentimental literature, tears are no less

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86 Northorp Frye, "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility", in *Eighteenth Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. J. L. Clifford, London, 1959, p.312.

87 From the epigram *Írói érdem* in Kazinczy *Művei*, p.36.

88 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol XXII, p.11.

89 *Hét évszázad magyar versei*, vol I, Budapest, 1978, p.630.

(self)expressive than words, and weeping and writing ultimately perform the same demonstrative (rather then referential) function. In Hungarian this equation is further prompted by the (albeit fortuitous) phonemic proximity of the two terms; a single morpheme differentiates the verb "to write" *(ír)* from the verb "to weep" *(sír)*.[90] The possibilities this proximity permits are not overlooked by Hungarian sentimental writers at the end of the 18th century. "Írj és sírj!" writes Ányos, after facing up to the futility of seeking to understand the outside world in *A világi gyönyörűségeknek haszontalansága*;[91] "Itt írok, itt sírok", exclaims Fanni in her celebration of the privacy of her garden in the opening paragraph of *Fanni hagyományai*.[92]

The extreme propensity for weeping demonstrated by Werther, Siegwart ("Sziegvart", "Szegvári"), Adolf ("Bácsmegyey"), Fanni, and by the sentimental poets of the 18th century, tended to be read by the 19th century as a sing of moral weakness or sickly, maudlin "sentimentalism" (in the pejorative 19th century sense of that term). For the stucture of feeling we have been describing, however, tears in literature were almost invariably seen as sings of moral virtue. The reasons for this are best understood by considering how the sentimental conception of morality diverges from that of the Enlightenment.

The moral philosohy of the Enlightenment was essentially pragmatic and *social* in emphasis. It took as its basis Shaftesbury's and Pope's equation of self-interest and public good. In the words of D'Alembert:

> The science of morals [...] rests on one single and incontrovertible fact, and that is the need which men have of one another, and the reciprocal obligations that need imposes. [...] our own self-interest [...] is the basic principle of all moral obligations.[93]

If the function of moral law is above all a social one, the source of our "moral sentiments" - to borrow a phrase from Adam Smith - is none the less internal

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90 Perhaps no less fortuitous is the proximity of the terms "könny" (tear) and "könyv" book. *Both* could, in different dialects, be used to signify tears in 18th century Hungarian.

91 Ányos *Válogatott művei*, p.229.

92 Kármán, op. cit., p.100.

93 D'Alembert, *Elements de philosophie*. Cited in Hazard *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, p.183.

and subjective. As D'Alembert claims: "All questions that have to do with morals have a solution ready to hand in the heart of each one of us."[94]

Sentimental literature accepts this latter premise, but, in rejecting the Enlightenment's unproblematic identification of the interests of self and society, actually *opposes* the moral sensibilities of the feeling heart to what it sees as the arbitrary moral laws and demands of society. In this way, the sentimental conception of morality is essentially no less reflexive than the sentimental approach to writing. To be virtuous is not to act in accordance with a codified set of ethical principles, but, once again, to *display* the sings of a feeling heart. Consequently, moral education will consist less in the recognition of the individual's obligations to his fellow men, than in the cultivation of his sensibility. In place of D'Alembert's "science of morals" based on the rational recognition of a necessary obligation, we find - as we have seen - Young's dictum that "Man's science is the culture of his heart", which draws upon Richardson's sentimental belied that "a feeling heart [...] is a moral security of innocence". The moral function of literature cannot be an unambiguosly didactic one; for there is no ethical code of practice to be imparted through instuction. As Miller writes to Kazinczy, as a potential translator of his highly popular sentimental novel:

> Siegwart soll kein *Muster* fur junge Leute seyn: sondern nach meiner Absicht, weiter nichts, als ein treues Gemälde von den Wirkungen der Liebe in einem jungen, empfindungscollen Herzen, von dem Guten, wozu sie das Herz erhöhen, aber auch von den *Verirrungen*, wozu sie das Herz verleiten *könne*.[95]

In place of moral instruction, sentimental literature proposes the cultivation of the heart. Kármán, for example, offers the following characterisation of poetry in *A nemzet csinosodása*: "Mint szíveket készítő, lágyító és szeledítő, áldása a nemzeteknek a poézis."[96] The same purpose also informs Marmontel's *Contes moraux* and Dusch's *Moralische Briefe zur Bildung des Herzens* translated by Báróczi as *Erkölcsi mesék* and *Erkölcsi levelek*. When Kazinczy, who throughout his career greatly admired Báróczi's Marmontel, nevertheless attempted his own translation (published in 1808),

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94 Ibid., p.183. Or, as Adam Smith would argue in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments:* "Morality is not a matter that depends on the approbation or disapprobation of our fellow men, but on a certain emotion that we feel and which finds, or does not find, a like emotion in the hearts of others." Cited in Hazard, p.364.

95 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol I, p.34.

96 Kármán, op. cit., p.87.

he changed the title to *Marmontel szívképző regéi*, indicating his conception of the text's function, and revealing one crucial aspect of his esteem for Báróczi usually overlooked by Hungarian literary historians who tend to see Báróczi's achievement exclusively in terms of stylistic innovation. Kazinczy's dedication of *Bácsmegyey* to "Báróczy tisztelői" should also be read as a recognition of shared *moral* concerns, and not only as a gesture of respect towards Báróczi's linguistic achievements. Similarly, Kazinczy's translation of the likes of Gessner and Miller represent more than mere exercises in Hungarian. Referring directly to these two writers in a letter to János Szánthó, dated July 4 1782, Kazinczy wrote:

> Olvastam Gesznert, kinek az Irásai Nemes Lelket, szín nélkül való Virtust, ártatlan és a' méznél édesebb tiszta szerelmet illatoznak [...] Ő képzette szívemet mely édes tanitásait ki-mondhatatlan készséggel szopta [...] Olvastam annakutánna Siegwartot, ez tőlem szint ollyan kedvességet nyert mint Geszner [...] Ez a' két darab az kedves Barátom! a' mellynek szívem ártatlanságát, tiszta és naponként nevekedő erköltseimet, és így mind világi, mind mennyei boldogságomat köszönhetem.[97]

In the letter to Imre Vitéz already mentioned, Kazinczy argues in similar terms in defense of the increasing popularity of the sentimental novel:

> Tsak az esik nekem ebben nehezen, hogy még a' jó Románoknak is annyi ellensége van. Tanulnak, tanulnak belőle szerelmet a' mi ifjaink és leányaink, az tagadhatatlan: de néha eggy kis morált és egyebecskét is tanulnak. És nem több szükség vagyon e most a' Románokra, hogy azoknak olvasások által a' szollás' és magaviselet' durvasága kedvesebb ízlésre faragodjon, mint a' Kánonok *Molnár'* Physicajára 's *Dugonits'* Algebrajára?[98]

In his *Mi a poézis? és ki az igaz poéta?*, Verseghy extends this defence to even second rate and artificial works of sentimental literature, on the basis of the contribution they may none the less make to the "cultivation of the heart":

> Mert tudgyuk azt, hogy az efféle indulatoskodó vagy enyelgő, vagy a csupa érzékeny szépségnek előadásában akármiképpen foglalatoskodó műdarabocskát vagy az elmét élesitik vagy a szívet érzékenyitik, vagy a jó és helyes izlést gyarapíttyák.[99]

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97 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol XXII, p.11.

98 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol I, p.440.

99 Ferenc Verseghy, *Mi a poézis? és ki az igaz poéta?*, in *A magyar kritika évszázadai*, ed. I. Sőtér, Budapest, 1981, vol I, p.333.

This juxtaposition of morality, sensibility and taste is highly characteristic of the sentimental structure of feeling, and, unsurprisingly, seems to find its origins in the works of the 18th century British moralists. Shaftesbury's view that, in the words of Basil Willey, "then man of virtue [...] recognises what is good by its beauty"[100] is reiterated throughout the century. It appears, for example, in the very title of Francis Hutchenson's *An Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas Beauty and Virtue* (1725), in Hume's claim that morality "is more properly felt than judged of",[101] and still informs Humphrey Repton's famous *The Art of Landscape Gardening* written right at the end of the century: "The man of good taste [...] knows that the same principles which direct taste in the polite arts direct the judgement in morality."[102]

In late 18th century Hungary, the conflation of taste and morality is expressed most unequivocally by Kármán is a statement to which we have already drawn attention: "Az ízlés a jó erkölcsök szülőanyja". This principle informs the whole project of Kármán's *Uránia*, which aims to offer high standards of taste and "a helyes ízlés által meg szebbé tenni, boldogabbá az életet, kellemetesebbé a lételt."[103] In Kármán's first statement of the preoccupations of *Uránia (Jelentés a magyar asszonyi nemhez)*, the category "Erkölcsi tudomány" is listed as the periodical's primary concern, including among its sub-categories "Erkölcsi levelek" and "Kis történetek (Romanze)".[104]

A related equation of beauty and morality remained essential to Kazinczy's aesthetics throughout his career. In *Tövisek és virágok* (1808), for example, we find the poem *A szép és a jó* deploring the amorality of the "új" and "átkozott Aestheszis".[105] Opening with the words "Veszett idő! veszett erkölcs! veszett poésis!", the poem looks back to the days when people still had a proper (aesthetic) sense of morality and accepted the eternal truth that:

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100 Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background*, London, 1986, p.70.

101 Cited in Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction*, p.26.

102 Humphrey Repton, *The Art of Landscape Gardening*, Cambridge, Mass., 1907, p.67.

103 Kármán, op. cit., p.73.

104 Kármán, p.66.

105 Kazinczy, *Művei*, vol I, p.38.

"Egy a szép és a jó."[106] The same point is made in the more epigrammatic poem *A jó és szép* which appeared in *Új tövisek és virágok*:

Egy titkot mondanék neked,
De hinni, félek, nem fogod. -
Ki szól, ki ír *jól*? - A ki *szépen*.
S szépen ki ír? az a ki *jól*.
Ők ketten egyek; háborognak,
Mint olykor férj és feleség:
Uram veszít - győz asszonyom.[107]

In the posthumously published epigram *Kant és Homer*, Kazinczy significantly uses this association of the good and the beautiful to dissociate himself from Kant's categorical imperative:

"Kell! mond Kant hidegen, s "tedd, mert kell!"
- A Maconida:
"Tedd, mert szép, mert jó, mert igaz!" erre tanít.
Angyalokat gyúr majd sárból a celta Prométheus:
Adni nemesb embert a nagy öregnek elég.[108]

What Janet Todd has referred to as "the extraordinary aestheticising of morality"[109]in Shaftesbury is actually fully consistent with the alienated sensibility of sentimental writing. As the world of signs displaces the world of (natural, social and historical) objects, the transitive values of reference and communication become overshadowed by the intransitive, or reflexive, values of aesthetic expression for its own sake. The sign is no longer merely a means, but an end in itself; its function has shifted, in Roman Jakobson's terms, from the "referential" to the "poetic".[110]

It is in this light that we must understand Kazinczy's interest both in the creation of a relatively autonomous *literary* discourse, and in the cultivation and renewal of the national language as a whole. 18th century Hungarian does not yet possess its own term for the idea of literature as "belles lettres". The Latin word *literatura*, as used by Bessenyei and his contemporaties, still stood

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106 Ibid., p.38.

107 Ferenc Kazinczy, *Válogatott munkái*, ed. J. Balassa (Franklin Társulat, undated), p.81.

108 Kazinczy, *Művei*, vol I., p.68.

109 Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction*, p.25.

110 See Roman Jacobson's "Concluding Statement: Linguistics and Poetics" in T. A. Sebeök (ed), *Style in Language*, Cambridge, 1960. See also Note 65 to Chapter 5.

simply for the "science of writing", or for any body of knowledge acquired through writing. In the first ever book-length study of the character and development of Hungarian literature, *A magyar literatura' esmérete* (1808), Samuel Pápay offers both senses in defining the term:

> Ez a' Deák szó *Literatura*, mellyet tsaknem minden Európai Nemzetek felvettek a magok nyelvébe, 's azzal mint sajáttyokkal úgy élnek, általlyában tekintve *Könyvekbül 's írás olvasás által szerzett tudományt tesz*, és így jelenti a' Könyveknek a' benne foglaltt dolgokhoz képest való igaz esméretet [...] A' Literaturát egy Tudósunk *Deákságnak* nevezte magyarul; én azomban, ha magyarul kellene azt kitenni, inkább *Írástudásnak* mondonám, mert a' Régiek is az Írástudónn éppen azt értették, a' mit mi a' Literatusonn.[111]

Even as late as 1821, an advertisement for the new literary almanach, *Aurora*, would refer to its editors as "tudósok", even though, in the same year, the periodical *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* recognised the need for a supplement devoted exclusively to *belles lettres*, and published the first number of *Szépliteraturai Ajándék*. The term "szép literatura" had already been used by Kazinczy seven years earlier in his essay *Báróczy Sándor élete*, where he also makes a valorised distinction between "író" and "tudós" with reference to the work of Bessenyei:

> Bessenyei írónak is, tudósnak is kívánt tartani, s inkább igyekezett igen sokat írni, mint jót; s töretlen lévén az út, melyen ment, s igen is műveletlen mind az ő ízlése, mind a nemzete, meg sem sejdítette, hogy munkáin, hol a hamarkodás, hol valami egyéb gyakorta rettenetes hibákat ejte.[112]

Ironically it was *Aurora* which, in spite of gaining Kazinczy's initial (although not permanent) disapproval after the appearence of its first two volumes, would ultimately realise his cherished aim of securing a lasting autonomy for literature from other branches of "science". It is, however, equally significant that it was another sentimental writer, Pál Szemere - who also broke with *Aurora* after the second volume and did not return until 1829 - who successfully coined the term "irodalom" which continues to serve as the Hungarian equivalent for literature today (together with the equally durable term "regény" to replace the German "román"). In spite of the late appearence of this Hungarian term (estimated at around 1832), it is clear that Kazinczy's condensation of any concept of the genuinely literary into the term "fentebb stíl" was substantively different from the late 18th century Hungarian sense of

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[111] Sámuel Pápay, *A magyar literatura esmerete*, Veszprém, 1808, pp.1-2.

[112] Kazinczy, *Művei*, vol I, p.785.

"literatura". For Kazinczy, it is *style* which constitutes the defining characteristic of literary discourse, and which takes precedence over the nature of any *object* represented within that discourse. A similar point may be made about Kazinczy's attitude to language itself. While for Bessenyei, language features as the "key to science" ("a tudománynak kulcsa", *Egy magyar társaság iránt való jámbor szándék*) and must consequently be cultivated in order to *convey* new ideas, for Kazinczy the cultivation of the language is an end in itself. Kazinczy's preference for Báróczi over Bessenyei, for example, is based not in terms of what each writer had to say, but in terms of how they said it:

> A Báróczy múzsája egy gráczia-alakú s növésű, nagy nevelést nyert leány, kinek még selypítéseit is kellemnek veszszük: a Bessenyeié - ha a kép nem volna illetlen - egy alföldi piros-pozsgás leányasszony, ki ama körül cseledkedik, és a kin az asszonyától el-eltanult városi szólás, az asszonyától ellkopkodott ék sem áll jól, mert a közé a mit felszedett és a mi neki tulajdona, nem tud hozni összeillést.[113]

The precedence of style over content, of the empire of signs over the world of objects or referents, is born, as I have been arguing, of a crisis in the stable relationship between subject and object, a loss of identification between the inner self and the outer world of nature and society. While it was the philosophy of the Enlightenment which foregrounded the study of the self and the question of identity, even the ageing Voltaire had doubts about the possibility of solving some of the problems raised: "Who are you? Where do you come from? What will become of you? This is a question we must put to every living creature in the universe, but none of them gives us any answer." (*Philosophe ignorante*, 1766).[114] The same questions would - in a variety of forms - be raised time and again in late 18th century Hungarian literature, leading to similar doubts concerning the possibility of finding satisfactory answers. Here, for example, is Bessenyei writing in 1777:

> Ki vagyok? mi vagyok? merrül s mibül jöttem?
> Hol voltam? s hogy esett hogy világra lettem?
> [...] Testemben hánykódik valamely valóság;
> Lélek, elme, tűz, ész milyen világosság!

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[113] Ibid., p.795.

[114] Cited in Norman Hampson, *The Enlightenment*, p.122.

Nem tudom érteni; formája se színe
Nincsen, melybe létem valamit meghinne.[115]

And here in a similar vein is Csokonai, in a poem with the distinctly Popean title *Az ember, a poézis első tárgya*, where the poet's peace of mind is suddenly disturbed by the questions of an "ethereal voice":

"Ki vagy, miért vagy, hol lakol? és kinek
Számára mozgasz? s végre mivé leszel?
Míg ezt ki nem vizsgálod, addig
Por vagy, az is leszel." E szavára,
Mint lenge párák éjjeli csillaga,
A tágas éther mennyezetén alól
Sebes bukással földre hullván,
Csak csupa por, hamu lett beleőlem.[116]

With the modest empirical means at the Enlightenment's disposal, the quest for certainty and identity was doomed to failure. In 1782 another "ethereal voice", the voice of nature herself, would tell Ányos of the complete futility of his search for knowledge. To complete an earlier quotation from *A világi gyönyörűségeknek haszontalansága*:

> Benyargaltam e földet; s már most tovább sem valóságot, sem örömöt, sem állandóságot, sem bizonyos rendeket, Istenem, Természeten kivül, mellyeknek magyarázására mégis elégtelen minden fáradságod, nem találhatván, halgass magánosságodban, írj és sírj![117]

In England and Germany, this same sentimental dilemma - the loss of a sense of order and permanence, the breakdown of identity between self and social, the fall from nature, and the loss of any practical sense of man's place and role in changing world - is resolved, or at least transformed, by a still more radical projection of the self which resolutely takes on board its dissonance with the world as a kind of virtue and source of creative vision. The subject of this new projection is the Romantic Hero. In Hungarian literature, however, the sentimental crisis of identitiy is resolved in an altogether different manner. It is to this resolution that we must now turn.

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115 *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.100.

116 Csokonai *Minden munkája: Versek*, p.557.

See also Csokonai's letter to Ferenc Széchenyi of 16 September, 1802 in Csokonai *Minden munkája: Prózai művek*, pp.456-7.

117 Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, p.229.

Chapter Four

Towards a Naive Resolution

Ferenc Kölcsey's claim, in one of the most important aesthetic statements of the Age of Reform, *Nemzeti hagyományok* (National Traditions, 1826), that "a való nemzeti poézis eredeti szikráját a köznépi dalokban kell nyomozni",[1] represented the triumph of a mode of literary and national identification which had been in formation for nearly half a century. For already in the last third of the 18th century the values of folk culture and "national traditions" began to be regarded, together with the renewal of the national language, as crucial to the construction of a coherent national identity capable of ensuring the nation's spiritual survival into the 19th century. While this period in Hungarian literature produced no consciously programmatic or theoretical statements on the importance of folk and national traditions comparable to those of Kölcsey and Bajza in the 1820s and 30s or Erdélyi, Petőfi and Arany in the 1840s, we can none the less identify a configuration of (in Schiller's sense) *naive* aspirations which served - particularly after 1780 - to offer a way out of the "sentimental" dilemmas of alienation we have been describing.

This chapter will focus on the role of three forms of naive "recovery" in late 18th century Hungarian literature. First, the attempt to retrieve the lost or forgotten glories of the national past in order to foster a sense of collective historical purpose in implicit opposition to the anti-teleological representation of historical being primarily in images of transience and mutability ("mulandóság") in sentimental poetry. Secondly, the attempt to recover and cultivate national traditions and customs not only as a further source of historical *continuity*, but also as a source of shared, communal values, potentially transcending the alienation of the (sentimental) individual from his own immediate society. Thirdly, the attempt to restore a lost language of naturalness, simplicity and immediacy - consistently associated with the "humble and rustic life" of the peasantry - as opposed to the "enlightened"

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1 Ferenc Kölcsey, *Nemzeti hagyományok* (1826) in *Kölcsey Ferenc összes művei*, (in one vol) Budapest, 1943, p.369.

language of refinement ("pallérozott nyelv", "fentebb stíl") championed by the likes of Báróczy and Kazinczy. This may be interpreted as a response to the alienation of the sentimental writer from the object world, and in discourse itself.

Schiller's notion of the "naive Gattung" - combining ideas of antiquity, community, lost naturalness and immediacy of expression - is pertinent not only to the objects of all these initiatives, but also to the very imperative of recovery by which they are informed. While the sentimental character is, as we have seen, alienated from nature, society and history, for Schiller the "naive" ancients "felt in a natural way", in direct contact with those objects of nature which "*are* what we *were*" and "what we *should become* again."[2]

The same naive configuration also informs Herder's concept of *Naturpoesie* which was to exercise a more profound - if highly mediated - influence on the development of Hungarian literature in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. For Herder, *Naturpoesie* embodies an organic unity with the poet's immediate community, age and national traditions, lost to the modern *Kunstpoet*, who is the product not of an organic, but an *imitative* culture, devoid of its own coherent and collective identity. Herder and Schiller are - for similar reasons - united in their elevation of the works of Homer and Shakespeare as paradigms of "natural" poetry for the former, and "naive" poetry for the latter. Similarly, both Herder and Schiller are highly critical of the imitative culture of Rome, one of the central targets of Herder's first major published work, *Fragmente über die neuere Deutsche Literatur* (1767), and repeatedly associated with the sentimental character in Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*. While the same opposition between the organic and the imitative in Hellenic and Roman culture will be reproduced most directly and memorably by Kölcsey in his *Nemzeti hagyományok*, the logic by which it is informed is also, in the form of a growing preoccupation with national traditions, crucial to the naive aspirations of late 18th century Hungarian literature.

Before considering these aspirations in detail, it is worth drawing attention to one crucial point on which the positions of Herder and Schiller do not concur: the evaluation of Ossian. While for Herder the assumed author of Macpherson's bardic forgeries was no less than a second Homer, in Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* his work is treated as an example of sentimental poetry. Rather than constituting a major discontinuity between the cultural theory of Herder and Schiller, this evaluative divergence actually

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2 "Sie empfanden naturlich"; "Sie *sind* was wir *waren*; was wir wieder *werden sollen*" Schiller, op. cit., p.431; p.415.

foregrounds the essential proximity of the ideas of naivety and sentimentality. For the 18th century identification with the lost naturalness and naivety of bardic poetry is itself a fundamentally *sentimental* reflex, born of precisely the modern sense of alienation Schiller's latter term seeks to characterise. Most of Herder's more important statements on Ossian - including the seminal *Briefwechsel über Ossian* published in 1772 - were written before he began to doubt the authenticity of Macpherson's "translations" which were, of course, no more than the highly "artificial" projections of an 18th century *Kunstpoet.* After being approached by the Scottish born Baron E. de Harold - who challenged Macpherson in vain to publish the Gaelic originals - Herder's attitude became more ambiguous; we find only three specimens of Ossian in the *Volkslieder* of 1778-9, and in his later writings Herder repeatedly qualifies his comments on the Celtic bard with phrases like "whether Ossian be ancient or modern".[3] Herder's last major statement on Ossian was published in 1795, the year in which Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* appeared; by this time Schiller would probably have realised that, for all their apparent "naivety", Macpherson's bardic fantasies represented a sentimental attempt to recover lost nature, rather than a naive expression of nature itself.

A sense of the contiguity of naive and sentimental aspirations also helps to explain Schiller's at first sight somewhat paradoxical hope that Goethe - whose *Werther* he presents as a paradigm of sentimentalism - may yet bring about a naive renaissance in German poetry. It also plays an important part in informing the growing European interest in folk culture in the second half of the century. As one critic has recently written of Robert Burns's activities in this area: "Burns's ultimate concentration on song-revising - at first glance a 'naive' enterprise - was in Schiller's sense sentimental because it developed as a result of his disillusionment with society and his subsequent wish to recapture simplicity."[4] Herder's similar project to restore "Naivetät und Stärke der Sprache"[5] to German literature through the collection and study of folk poetry is still more clearly the product of a (sentimental) crisis of social and cultural identity, rooted in the problematic absence of "organic" national traditions which confronts the modern German poet:

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3 Cited in R. T. Clarke, *Herder, His Life and Thought*, California, 1955, p.378.

4 Carol McGuirk, *Robert Burns and the Sentimental Era*, Georgia, 1985, p.97.

5 Herder, *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker* in *Von deutscher Art und Kunst*, ed. E Purdie Oxford, 1964, p.79.

> Thus, from ancient times we have absolutely no living poetic literature upon which our modern poetry might grow, as a branch upon a national stem; whereas other nations have progressed with the centuries, and have shaped themselves upon their own soil, from native products, upon the belief and taste of the people, from the remains of the past. In that way their literature and language have become national, the voice of the people has been used and cheriched, they have secured far more of a public in these matters than we Germans have. We poor Germans have been destined from the start never to remain ourselves; ever to be the lawgivers and servants of foreign nationalities, the directors of their fate and their bartered, bleeding, exhausted slaves.[6]

The continuities between Herder's thought and the rise of historicism, traditionalism and literary populism in Hungarian literature are clearly quite considerable, and we shall have frequent occasion to refer to Herder's ideas in the course of this chapter. It should be stressed, however, that these continuities are not for the most part the product of Herder"s *direct* personal influence, which has been greatly exaggerated in Hungarian literary history. In the 18th century relatively few major Hungarian writers demonstrate any substantial familiarity with, or understanding of, Herder's key works of historical and aesthetic philosophy (János Batsányi and Ferenc Verseghy being the two most notable exceptions). In spite of a suggestion in the *Pressburger Zeitung* of September 4 1795 that the *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* was among the most popular books in Hungary, the main interest in that work centred upon what was widely seen as a "prophecy" concerning the "imminent" disappearance of the Hungarian language and people from Central Europe. The relevant passage from the fourth volume of the *Ideen* actually reads:

> die Ungarn oder Madscharen [...] sind [...] jetzt unter Slawen, Deutschen, Wlachen und andern Völkern der geringere Teil der Landeseinwohner und *nach Jahrhunderten* wird man *vielleicht* ihre Sprache kaum finden.[7]

suggesting that few Hungarians had actually read the text - while still fewer were aware of the fact that Herder later retracted this statement. It was anyway not until around 1810 that Herder's "prophecy" was widely debated in Hungary,[8] and the ubiquitous fears for the nation's survival in the 18th

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6 *Herders Werke*, ed. B. Suphan, Berlin, 1877-99, vol IX, p.528.

English translation in A. Gillies, *Herder*, Oxford, 1945, p.52.

7 *Herders Werke*, vol XIV, p.269. (My emphasis).

8 See, for example, *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol VIII.

century - such as those of Bessenyei, mentioned in Chapter One - drew on other political and philological sources, such as a notorious footnote by Ádám Kollár in his 1763 edition of Miklós Oláh's *Hungaria*, quoted by August Ludwig Schlozer in his *Allgemeine nordische Geschichte* of 1771, and taken over almost verbatim by Herder.[9]

The influence of Herder in questions of literary theory and aesthetics was no less mediated in 18th century Hungary. As René Wellek argues in the wider context of his *A History of Modern Criticism*, Herder's "influence was often indirect and anonymous, combined with that of his predecessors, contemporaries and followers; it was almost underground, for reasons which are in part due to the characteristics of Herder's writings and in part to extraneous circimstances".[10] Thus while András Dugonics, for example, is said to have referred to Herder himself as "a' Szamár Német",[11] much of his work is none the less informed by essentially Herderian principles as interpreted by the likes of the Austrian Michael Denis and his Hungarian friends Miksa Hell and Miklós Révai. Perhaps the single most important text to promote Herder's mediated influence in 18th century Hungary was Goethe's *Werther*, written in 1774 when Goethe was still very much Herder's "personal pupil" (Wellek). Little could express Herder's distinction between "natural"

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9 Nicolai Olahi, *Hungaria et Atila* etc, Vindobonae, 1763. Kollár's note, reproduced in Schlözer, is cited by János Rathmann in his *Herder eszméi - a historizmus útján*, Budapest, 1983, pp.133-4: "...a septemtrione et meridie gentes passim Slavicae in ipsa iterum regni viscera revertuntur... Germaniae populi ab occidente sole; Valachi ab oriente suas ad nos colonias mittunt. Minima Hungariae portio est, quae Hungaros, sive populum, Hungarico solum idiomate utentem, habet; verendumque profecto est, ne sermo ipse exolescat, ad eum prorsus modum, quo Cumanos evanuit." See also D. Kosáry *Művelődés a XVIII. századi Magyarországon*, Budapest, 1980, p.295.

10 René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950*, vol I, p.183.

11 According to Cseky József in a letter to Kazinczy of April 9 1811. The letter is representative of the reaction to Herder's "prophecy" in early 19th century Hungary:

"Herder vélekedésében ügye semmiképp nem osztozom és az állítását igen is hazardírozottnak tartom... Egykor deák koromban az Universitas' Bibliotecájában olvasgatám azt a' munkáját: Ideen der Menschlichkeit, különösen a' hol nagy örömérzéssel, és egykori német elbizottsággal hirdeti Nemzetünkre az utolsó ítélet napot; a' midőn bejön Dugonics 's kérdez a' könyv felől; elbeszélem, hogy estve van a' Magyaroknak. Ne hidj neki, azt mondja reá a' szokott manierejában, hazudik a' Szamár Német." *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol VIII, p.449.

and "artifical" poetry more effectively than Werther's sense of his inability to reproduce the immediacy and naturalness of the speech of the "peasant lad" he encounters early in the novel:

> Today I experienced a scene which, written down as it was, would produce the finest idyll in the world; but of what use is poetry, scene, and idyll? must we always start tinkering when we are supposed to share in a phenomenon of nature? [...] I should have to possess the gifts of the greatest poet, in order to give you at the same time a vivid depiction of the expressiveness of his [the peasant lad's] gestures, the harmonious sound of his voice, the hidden fire of his glances [...] Do not chide me when I say that the recollection of this genuine naturalness sets my inmost soul aglow [...][12]

In his *Über den Ursprung der Sprache* - another work to appear in the eventful year 1772 - Herder wrote:

> The more a group is threatened, the more it will turn in upon itself and the closer will be the ties of its members. To avert dispersion they will do everything to strengthen their tribal roots. They will extol the deeds of their forefathers in songs, in patriotic appeals, in monuments and thereby preserve their language and literary traditions for posterity.[13]

These words have considerable bearing on the situation in which the new Hungarian *literati* were to find themselves in the following decade, as they faced the radical, Germanising reforms of Joseph II. Indeed, from as early as 1772, the recorvery of the national past had been, after the improvement of the national language, one of the main preoccupations of the late 18th century Hungarian literary revival. Bessenyei's first two works were national historical tragedies - *Hunyadi László tragédiája* and *Buda tragédiája* - and these were followed by an epic fragment on Mátyás Hunyadi (written in 1771-2, but never published in full) and a work of historical biography entitled *Hunyadi János élete és viselt dolgai*, published in 1778, but written several years earlier.[14] At the beginning of the following decade, Ányos placed the study of

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12 Goethe, *The Sufferings of Young Werther*, pp.26-8.

13 English translation quoted from *Herder on Social and Political Culture*, translated, edited and with an introduction by F. M. Barnard, Cambridge, 1969, p.173.

14 The chronology of Bessenyei's early historical works has been suggested most convincingly by Ferenc Bíró in *A fiatal Bessenyei és íróbarátai* Budapest, 1974. See in particular the footnote to p.96.

history before all the other "enlightened sciences" as a vehicle for strengthening national consciousness in his *A szép tudományoknak aldott versek*:

> Boldog haza, ahol Minerva székéből,
> Polgárok nőnek fel Muzsák kebeléből;
> Hol tudományoknak szeléd virágjából,
> Bokréták fonyatnak borostyán ágából!
> Melly szép lesz majd látni nemes ifjainkat
> Hogy fogják tanulni régi százainkat,
> Hogy beszélik Első Lajos történetit,
> Dicsőség templomán írt fényes esetit.
> Örömmel szóllanak Hunyadi szívéről,
> Ki Budára térvén Erdély védelméről,
> Vaskapunál emelt oszlopot magának,
> Hol népe nevezte hazája attyának [...][15]

while in the 1790s József Gvadányi would argue in the preface to his translation of Voltaire's treatise on *Charles XII* (*Tizenkettődik Károly 'Svétzia országa' királlyának élete*, 1792) that:

> valaki a historia tudományban tudatlan, tudatlan a világi legnagyobb dolgokban is, és nem mérsékelheti a köz-társaságnak javát [...][16]

It was in the 1780s, however, that the literary representation of the national past first began to manifest the characteristics of a "threatened group" as suggested by Herder. Just as we have seen a shift in Hungarian attitudes towards ideas of Enlightenment and the utility of "science" during the reign of Joseph II, we can also identify a new historical interest born of the threat his reforms posed to national integrity.

The impetus behind Bessenyei's dramatic and epic historical writings of the 1770s had been essentially of a political-philosophical, rather than overtly patriotic, nature. His works aim above all to demonstrate, by example, the necessary qualities of the ideal ruler (Mátyás, and even, with reservations, László Hunyadi) and the dangers he faces from the vested interests of bad advisors (Alus for Buda, Gara and Bánfi for László). Bessenyei's historical texts all emphasise the *paternal* role of the monarch and seek to justify the politics - and even excesses - of (enlightened) absolutism on the basis of

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15 Ányos, *Válogatott művei*, p.72.

16 *Tizenkettődik Károly 'Svétzia ország' királlyának élete*, Pozsony, 1792. Cited in Márta Mezei, *Történetszemlélet a magyar felvilágosodás irodalmában*, Budapest, 1958, p.17.

social-contract theory. Indeed the same concerns also inform *Ágis tragédiája* (1772), although here the arguments are more complex and qualified, providing a more convincing basis for a properly tragic conflict. In spite of the sympathetic representation of his cause, Ágis himself is ultimately forced to recognise before his execution that "Aki tud királya ellen rugódni, / Eképen szokott az vérével áldozni, / Rettegi a trónust végre halálába, / Melyet megvetett volna halandóságába",[17] while Leonidas, for all his shortcomings, emerges - from his initial identification with Maria Theresa in Bessenyei's Dedication, to his desire to show mercy to Ágis even after his further attempt at rebellion - as essentially just, and worthy of the contract he represents. That *Ágis tragédiája*, which is undoubtedly the most accomplished of Bessenyei's tragedies, takes as its theme the conflict between two Spartan rulers in the 3rd century BC - however politically significant to 18th century Hungary on an allegorical level - is itself further illustration of the independence of Bessenyei's didactic use of historical material from any straightforwardly exemplary preoccupation with the *national* past.

The emphasis of literary works based on historical themes written in the 1780s is substantially different. Here the national past is evoked not to illustrate abstract points of political theory, but to serve overtly as an example to a present in which national values and historical continuities are being directly challenged. As Ádám Horváth exclaims in the introduction to his *Hunnias* (1787), by far the most popular national historical epic poem of the decade:

> hadd tudnak az idegenek a régiekért is becsülni a mostani magyarokat, a mostani hazafiak pedig igyekeznének követni attyáik nyomdokait.

Not only is Horváth's purpose openly patriotic ("Hazám dicsősége mellett buzgók: és annak örölnék, ha minden hajdani emlékezetű magyar főúr egy illyen oszlopa volna a hazában"), his proposition of historical continuity - almost as a kind of deterministic necessity - is actually incorporated into the scheme of his text:

> úgy hozatik itt be Hunyadnak sok fáradhatatlan iparkodása, mint amely (ámbár az ő tudása nélkül) a fijának királyi-székre leendő emeltetésének ellene állhatatlan eszköze volt.[18]

Similarly exemplary and patriotic aims inform the most popular historical novel of the period, András Dugonics's *Etelka* (1788):

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[17] Bessenyei, *Ágis tragédiája*, Vienna, 1772, (Act V scence vi) p.123.

[18] *Hunnias*, 1787. Cited in Mezei, *Történetszemlélet*, p.33.

> Honnyaim! E Könyvemet Magyarul írtam: mert ezzel csupánn a Magyar Sziveket legeltetni akartam [...] Ki-hoztam e Szüzet a Feledékenségnek Tartományából, a régi Setétségből: hogy a mostani Világ lássa; csudálja; kövesse.[19]

In an essay which sets out to explain his reasons for writing *Etelka - Etelkának kulcsa* (written in 1790) - Dugonics relates his evocation of the national past unequivically to the political dangers of the present: "Ezen könyvem írásának fő oka vala Magyarországnak ekkori siralmas állapota második József igazgatása alatt."[20] Like Bessenyei, Dugonics is unwilling to question the authority and legitimacy of absolutism and attributes travesties of government to the influence of iniquitous advisors, but unlike Bessenyei he presents his examples (Árpád and Róka) as directly relevant to, and with undisguised counterparts in, his own age:

> Niczkitől tehát és Laszczytól, eme róka-tanácsosaitól izgazgattván József császárunk, sok dolgokat cselekedett Magyarországunkban, mellyek régi szabadságunkkal és törvényünkkel meg nem egyezhettenek.[21]

Dugonics even goes so far as to name the offending deeds - such as Joseph's refusal to be crowned king of Hungary, his introduction of laws without the consent of the diet, and his Language Decree of 1784 - together with detailed references to the sections in which they are represented allegorically in his novel.

Dugonics's choice of period - the age of Árpád - is significant as a source not only of historical example, but also of historical *identity*. The considerable corpus of - aesthetically inferior, but none the less historically significant - literary works dealing with the Hungarian conquest which appeared after the publication of *Etelka* and culminated in Mihály Vörösmarty's widely celebrated (if less widely read) epic of 1825, *Zalán futása*, seems to echo Herder's famous dictum from the *Ideen* that "origins show the nature of a thing".[22] In addition to Dugonics's own later works on the period - the drama *Etelka Karjelben* (1794), the novel *Jolánka* (1803) and the historical study *Szittjai történetek* (1806) - mention should also be made of the pioneering epic fragments of Gedeon Ráday (*Árpádról irandó bajnoki énekek kezdete*,

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19 Preface to *Etelka*, 2nd edition, 1791 (unnumbered pages).

20 *Dugonics András följegyzései*, ed. József Szinnyei, Budapest, 1883, p.12.

21 Ibid., p.15.

22 *Herders Werke*, vol XV, p.539.

1787), Csokonai (*Árpád, vagy a magyarok megtelepedése*, 1796) of which, in addition to some 51 lines of poetry, a detailed outline has also survived, and Benedek Virág who completed no more than the 24 hexameters he sent to Kazinczy in 1802, commenting interestingly on an exchange of letters on the subject with Batsányi from 1796:

> Úgy tetszik, 796-ban azt találám írni Batsányinak Bétsbe, hogy jó volna a *Magyar kijöveteléről* egy epikumot készíteni. 'Ez volt, felelé, az egész poétai életemnek célja, s azt Kufsteinben nagyobb részént el is végeztem, de csak fejemben: többé elő se hozd (én ő neki) soha'. Bámultam, s elhallgattam; de azonban ki nem vehettem fejemből az epikumot [...][23]

By 1796, however, the literary interest in the national past had already undergone another significant mutation. While the Hungarian nobility had been united in its celebration of the return of the Hungarian crown in 1790, the wealth of political pamphlets and manuscripts circulated during the crucial Diet of 1790-91 reveal the relative superficiality of this unity. There were, for example, commentators like Péter Ócsai Balogh who argued that, in refusing to accept the Hungarian crown, Joseph II had broken the sacrosanct contract with his subjects, thereby releasing them from their obligations to the Habsburg dynasty. While Ócsai Balogh's vision of an independent Hungary was still informed by a fundamentally feudal conception of the political nation, the more radical writers, like Károly Koppi, Gergely Berzeviczky and, above all, József Hajnóczy (who published the following three pamphlets in 1790: *Gedanken eines Ungarischen Patrioten, Ratio proponendarum in comitiis Hungariae legum*, and *Dissertatio politica publica de regiae potestatis in Hungaria limitibus*) called for the political representation of all classes in society. The greater part of the Hungarian nobility, however, had little sympathy for either of these positions and, opposed to any kind of innovation whatsoever, sought above all to defend those privileges which had been threatened by Joseph II. Their characteristic conservatism was, of course, only reinforced by the troubling example of revolutionary France; most of

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23 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol. II, pp.537-8. It is also worth mentioning in this context László Perecsényi Nagy's often barely reabadle narrative poems *Léta magyar vitéz és Zamira pannonia kisasszony* (1800), *Szakadár esthonnyai magyar fejedelem bujdosásáról* (1802) and *Orithia magyar amazon története* (1804) which, on the basis of János Sajnovics's speculations concerning Hungarian-Finnish kinship, attempt to propose a distinctive Magyar-Finn-Estonian-Lapp identity. In this, Perecsényi Nagy may well have been influenced by Dugonics's related interest in the 18th century "Nordic Renaissance" to which I shall return later in this chapter.

those nobles who took Batsányi's advice - "Vigyázó szemetek Párizsra vessétek!"[24] - did not like what they saw.

If the radical and conservative elements of the Hungarian nobility could not agree on questions of the nation's future, they were at least agreed in their recognition of the dangers of disunity, and of the price the nation had paid for such disunity in the past. Thus Gvadányi, in his *A mostan folyó ország gyűlésének satyrico critice való leírása* (1791) - which expressed considerable scorn for the "excesses" of the radicals - would appeal to the time when Attila "tartá [...] diaétát / Melyrül e mostani vehetne idaeát" insofar as then "Nem volt vezéri közt semmi szemre vetés, / Éleszté mindnyáját egy lélek érzés",[25] while Berzeviczy was still more direct in his criticism of the inexpedient political wrangling of the present:

> Mit lehet oly nemzettől remélni, mely ebben a drága időben vitákkal és formalitásokkal veszti a szent időt, egymás ellen támad akkor, mikor megvan, jobbanmondva, megvolt az alkalma a közboldogságot századokra megszilárdítani.[26]

As a direct response to the widespread awareness of the potential perils of disunity, the key focus of the literary interest in the national past shifts during the 1790s from the positive example of the glories of Árpád and Mátyás to the negative example of the disastrous battle of Mohács in 1526. Thus Batsányi, contemplating "Mohács szomorú neve" in a poetic epistle to László Szentjóbi Szabó of 1792 writes:

> Hajh, iszonyú térség! Gyászos temetője hazánknak!
> Jártam hantjaidon; láttam sírhalmait én is
> Őseinknek, - kik hajdan az ellenségre kikelvén
> Honnyukért s érette vitéz vérekkel ádozván,
> Intenek íme, s világ füle hallatára kiáltják:
> "Nézz e térre, s tanulj már egyezségre, magyar nép!"[27]

before imploring his friend to "eredj; vedd tolladat; írd le mit érez / Hív szived, - s mi lehetne hazánk még most is ezernyi / Karunkon okosodva ha már egyezni tanulnánk!". From Szentjóbi Szabó's response to Batsányi's plea, *Töredéke a mohácsi veszedelem előadásának*, to József Péteri Takács's

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24 *A franciaországi változásokra* in János Batsányi, *Összes művei*, vol I, p.25.

25 *A mostan folyó ország gyűlésének satyrico critice való leírása.* Cited in Mezei, *Történetszemlélet*, p.61.

26 Cited in Mezei, *Történetszemlélet*, p.67.

27 *Batsányi János összes művei*, vol I, Budapest, 1953, p.50.

Mohács vidékjén írt levél of 1797 - which, like Ányos's poetic epistle to Barcsay of 1781 mentioned in the previous chapter, anticipates Károly Kisfaludy's great elegy of 1824 - the spectre of Mohács repeatedly returns to haunt the historical poetry of the 1790s. The most popular of these Mohács poems was undoubtedly Márton Etédi Sós's epic *Magyar gyász* (1792), which soon ran to three editions. The words attributed to King Lajos before the final confrontation would have spoken quite uneqivocally to Etédi Sós's contemporaries only one year after the disappointing conclusion of the Diet in 1791:

> Az egység által kis dolgok tenyésznek,
> De irigység miatt nagyok is enyésznek [...]
> Csak egy értelemmel s akarattal legyünk,
> Magunk között levő cívódást letegyünk [...]
> Ahol az egyezség, ott a győzelem [...][28]

The interest in national traditions which played a similarly formative role in late 18th century Hungarian literature was also born of a recognition of the type of threat to national integrity identified by Herder in his *Über den Ursprung der Sprache*. Indeed the nascent traditionalism which informs much of the work of Lőrinc Orczy - now generally considered to have been the first important representative of this tendency in the period - can be traced back to a *crise de conscience* induced primarily by political developments in a manner directly analogous to the shifts in attitudes towards the national past considered above. The crisis in Orczy's career comes in the year 1772. Just as Bessenyei completes his most profound dramatic meditation on issues of liberty and loyalty in *Ágis tragédiája*, so, in the same year, Orczy raises similar questions in his longest poetic work, *Futó gondolatok a szabadságról*, which force him to reconsider a number of the central values of his earlier poetry.

Orczy's reputation in Hungarian literary history - resting somewhat precariously on a handful of widely anthologized poems - is as a champion of tradition over innovation, simplicity over refinement, asceticism over luxury, and wisdom (bölcsesség) over scientific knowledge (tudomány). The first three of these emphases can all be identified in what remains his single most famous poem, *A bugaci csárdának tiszteletére*, which has been treated as fully characteristic of his *oeuvre* by most literary historians since Arany's statement in his portrait of Orczy from 1863 that: "A 'bugaci csárdát' ismeri minden

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28 Mezei, *Történetszemlélet*, pp.68-9.

ember. Ez kicsinyben hű tükre Orczy egész költészetének."[29] It is significant, however that all the poems on which Orczy's reputation is based were written either in or after 1772. Thus, even though the most extensive anthology of Hungarian poetry - *Hét évszázad magyar versei*[30] - for example, places Orczy in its fourth section together with Amade, Faludi and the "Kuruc" poetry of the 1703-11 War of Independence, and not with the likes of Bessenyei and Barcsay in section five, the three Orczy poems it includes, *A bugaci csárda, Panasz*, and *Megint panasz*, are all from the period 1772-82. Particularly on questions of luxury and vanity, however, much of Orczy's poetry from the 1760s stands in sharp contrast to his work after 1772, in that it is characterised by a distinctly Voltairean "apologie de luxe" totally incompatible with the spartan values of *A bugaci csárda*. After Orczy's dialogic reworking of Voltaire's *Mondain* poems *(Le mondain, Defense du mondain))* in *Barátságos beszédje egy úrnak káplánjával*, the most pertinent example of his "mondainian" defence of luxury is the ode *A magyar szépekhez* (1760) in which he proposes an economic justification for an (a)moral epicurism:

Való, hogy sok rossznak vagytok koholói,
De ellenben jóknak szintúgy megtartói,
Nem tudom, vagytok-e világ jobbítói,
De tudom, szokásnak, ti vagytok hozói.

Amit ti akartok, akarja egész nép,
[...] Ország általatok jön virágzásában,
Sok tartomány úszik kincses gazdagságban,
Mennyi mesterségek volnának hamvában,
Ha ti maradnátok a régi szokásban.

[...] A kamukás ágyból későbben költözni,
Lehet, tükör előtt csinosan öltözni,
Szagos vízzel piros orcodat öntözni,
De arról eközben nem kell felejtkezni:

Hogy kedves társodnak házi gazdasága
Szép s jó renddel folyjon gondossága.

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29 *Arany János összes művei*, vol XI, Budapest, 1968, p.469.

30 Most recent edition published in four vols, Budapest, 1978.

Általad térüljön java s gazdasága,
Ne legyen oly terhes házi safrasága.[31]

Behind Orczy's rejection of these Voltairean arguments after 1772 lies his attempt to come to terms with a profoundly disturbing political development in that year: the first Partition of Poland. Not only did Voltaire's open support for this intervention leave Orczy somewhat suspicious of the implications of the latter's "enlightened" values (just as Rousseau's condemnation of the partition considerably enhanced his reputation in Hungary), it also led him, through an attempt to explain the background to Poland's virtual annihilation, to reconsider his own earlier ideas on the proper extent of personal and political liberty. Thus the longest section of *Futó gondolatok a szabadságról* (55 stanzas), carrying the subtitle "Lengyelek", attributes Poland's downfall to the excessive vanity, luxury and liberty enjoyed by the Polish nobility in their relations with both the monarch and the peasantry. The considerably shorter section on Hungary, on the other hand, pays tribute to the Hungarian nobility for its moral temperance and prudent acceptance of the limitation of its political freedoms. Orczy's new moral and political position is not primarily informed by any underlying or unambiguous loyalty to Vienna, but by his profound fears for the future of the Hungarian nation aroused by the disastrous "excesses" of the Poles.[32] From this time onwards, Orczy's poetry is dominated by a tone of resignation and an open hostility to innovation:

Köznép, ne szidolmazd többé a szerencsét;
Nem neked osztotta nehezebb bilincsét.
[...] Boldog a te sorsod, nagy a dicsőséged,
Megmarad, örökös lesz a te fényességed.
(A szegény paraszt néphez beszéd)[33]

Föld! kit a jó Isten minen változástól,
Megmentett fegyveres kéznek rontásától [...]

Vedd észre sorsodat, szemlélvén ügyökét,
Boldog cendességben te mívelsz földeket,
És danolva kapálsz sok fürtös töveket,

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31 *Magyar költők 18. század*, pp.111-5. For a full discussion of the "Mondainian" aspects of Orczy's poetry see Ferenc Bíró's "A magyar Mondain (Orczy Lőrinc helyzete)", in *A fiatal Bessenyei és íróbarátai*, pp.259-298.

32 An interesting parallel might de drawn here with Vörösmarty's two poetic responses to the Galician uprising of 1846 - *Az emberek* and *Országháza*.

33 *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.128.

Nyájas mulatsággal szedsz szép gyümölcsöket.
(A magyar hazának)[34]

Boldog! ki esméri tehetetlenségét,
Határozni tudja büszkés eszességét,
Látván elméjének ilyen kisdedségét,
Nagyra nem terjeszti csonka mesterségét.
(Szívbéli sóhajtás a bölcsesség után)[35]

While 1772 certainly constitutes a critical moment in Orczy's intellectual development, it far from resolves all the complexities involved in any projected periodisation of his poetry. The year before writing *A magyar szépekhez* in 1760, for example, Orczy wrote two poems (*Világi tekintetek megvetéséről* and *Hívságok megvetéséről*) whose arguments entirely contradict those of the later poem. The same can be said of a number of Orczy's earlier odes, such as *Nagy urakhoz, a gyönyörűségek változásokról* (1759) and *Egy ifjúhoz, ki a városi lakást a falusinál inkább szereti* (1762), which anticipate the spartan morality of *A bugaci csárdának tiszteletére*. In the 1770s, however, the same Orczy who asks rhetorically "Illik-e a magyarhoz csalfa kereskedés" in *Tokajban való érkezés telén*, is chosen by Maria Theresa to preside over a committee set up to regulate the river Tisza. These tensions also complicate any attempt to "place" Orczy in the history of Hungarian literature. While most literary historians from Toldy to Pintér associated him with the "French School" - more on the basis of his literary acquaintances in Hungary, than on account of his somewhat limited interest in French literature - his more recent association with the concerns of Hungarian traditionalism is, at least on the basis of one major aspect of his work, considerably more meaningful, and Arany had good reason to consider him the natural predecessor of Gvadányi.[36] That the relationship between the two poets is not only a matter of ideological, but of *stylistic* continuity is also suggested by Arany's description of Orczy's emergent "populism": "Népiessége a még romlatlan magyar érzetbe s annak oly naív kifejezésében áll."[37] For the naturalistic immediacy of much of Orczy's consciously

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34 Ibid., p.129.

35 Ibid., p.136.

36 *Arany János összes művei*, vol XI, p.468.

37 Ibid., p.469. Here and in what follows, I use the terms *popular, populist*, and *populism* in a highly restricted and specific sense to approximate the Hungarian

"populist" lexis seems to look forward to the language of *Egy falusi nótáriusnak budai utazása* rather than backward to the more refined "pastoral" poetry of Faludi:

> Nem a kormos bogrács, ki büdös tüzektől,
> Nem két szurkos fazék, ki zsíros dögbéltől,
> Hozz neked vendéget alsó-felső széltől,
> Ijesztenek ezek a te cégéredtől.
> *(A bugaci csárdának tiszteletére)*[38]

The repeated emphasis on simple, unaffected, traditional and "popular" national styles and values in so much of Orczy's poetry enables us to see in his work the first broadly integrated articulation of the naive configuration in late 18th century Hungarian literature. In addition to *A bugaci csárda*, the fullest expression of naive aspirations in Orczy is to be found in his *Beszéd a szegény paraszt néphez* - based loosely on A. Leonard Thomas's *Epitre au peuple*. Fifty stanzas in length, this ode represents the first important attempt at a moral - although still not at this stage *political* - identification with the characteristics and values of the peasantry in the national literature. The moral superiority of the "szegény paraszt nép" is stressed quite uneqivocally in the following couplet: "Gazdagoknak a kincs jóra akadálya, / Parasztnak jó erkölcs s igazság osztálya." This moral integrity is further equated with the essential simplicity of "popular" values:

> Mint tetszik énnekem paraszt egyenesség,
> Kit el nem csábított mostani veszettség!
> [...] Nálad lakik, mulat még az ártatlanság.[39]

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terms *népi, népies* and *népiesség* which are without simple equivalents in English. In 18th and 19th century Hungarian, the term *nép* ("the people") refers almost exclusively to the peasantry who were, in the period under discussion, excluded from the concept of the political nation. Thus, as an approximation of the Hungarian *népi*, the term "popular" will signify "of the (peasant rural, rustic) people" in general; "populist" *(népies)* is essentially a *stylistic* term signifyng the "popular (peasant, rustic) style" in language and culture; "populism" *(népiesség)* signifies a conscious *conceptualization* of "popular style", as, for example, in the conscious literary movement to immitate, reproduce or approximate to the styles of folk (peasant) culture, which will be referred to as "literary populism".

38 *Magyar költők 18. század*, p.131.

39 Ibid., p.124.

Here, the adverb "még", together with the reference to "mostani veszettség", also anticipates the contrast between past virtues and present vices Orczy develops some fifteen stanzas later:

> Láttam én sok nagyot annyira botlani.
> A szent szokásokat akarván bontani,
> Szivekből kivettek legszentebb neveket,
> Nevezni nem mertek fiakat, férjeket:
> Te pedig egyenlő a régi atyákhoz
> Fiadat bocsátván szomszéd leányához [...][40]

Finally, Orczy also draws upon a juxtaposition of two key signifiers of national identity (language and costume), which was to gain remarkably wide currency in works of literature proposing a naive identification with national traditions in the 1780s and 90s:

> Valamint együgyű vagy te ruházatban,
> Olyan vagy, és még jobb, beszédben szavadban,
> Tiszta és ártatlan is életed,
> Nincs rosszal keverve te gyönyörűséged.[41]

For all these reasons it is the peasantry and not the nobility which for Orczy constitutes the authentic corner-stone of national identity:

> A te csemetéid országok bástyája,
> Te vagy a hanyatló trónusnak istápja;
> Akár elbírt hazát tűztől kell menteni,
> Akár hív fegyverrel erőt kell kiverni.[42]

That Orczy's identification with the "szegény paraszt nép" does not translate moral sympathy into political commitment - as illustrated by his closing appeal to the peasantry to accept their conditions quoted earlier - was already noticed by Arany in his Orczy portrait of 1863: "ő nem *javítani* akarja a nép sorsát, hanem ellentétül a nagyok cifra nyomorúságával, azt ecseteli, mily boldog a paraszt [...] a maga egyszerűségében." Orczy's sympathetic attitude towards the peasantry has little in common with the political radicalism of the likes of Hajnóczy and Berzeviczy, and is still a very long way from the radical populism of Petőfi in the 1840s. What Orczy sees in the speech, customs and values of the peasantry is a timeless, homogeneous world

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40 Ibid., p.126.

41 Ibid., p.127.

42 Ibid., p.123.

of moral and cultural unity lost to the fashionable and imitative nobility of his own age.

In this too he may be properly seen as the predecessor of Gvadányi, who also combines the genuine sympathy for folk and peasant characters portrayed in his poetry with what remains an essentially feudalistic political conservatism. His conservatism, like that of Orczy, is rooted not in any fundamental identification with Vienna - to which he would have had temperamental as well as ideological objections - but rather, again like Orczy, in an antipathy towards foreign fashions *(Falusi nótárius)* and in fears concerning the threat to national integrity posed by the unlimited pursuit of personal liberties *(A mostan folyó ország gyűlés)*.

To the "naive" aspects of Orczy's work, however, Gvadányi also adds three further emphases. First, his rejection of the "enlightened" sciences is not only more extreme than Orczy's, but is based in an unashamed provincialism rather than in conscientious moral principle. Perhaps the clearest example of this can be found in Gvadányi's sequel to *Falusi nótárius* (*A falusi nótáriusnak elmélkedései, betegsége, halála és testámentoma*, 1796) where Zajtai, the celebrated notary of Peleske, rejects the advice of learned doctors and cures his stomach complaint with "pályinka" - a characteristically regional rendition of "pálinka", a Hungarian schnaps. As Antal Szerb comments ironically in his *Magyar Irodalomtörténet*: "Az orvosokba becsületes magyar embernek nincs sok bizalma."[43] Secondly, Gvadányi makes a conscious attempt to recover what he sees as the traditional Hungarian prosody of the 17th century poet István Gyöngyösi as a corrective to the tendency of the "ujj Magyar poéták" to soar on the "költsönözött szárnyak" of foreign influences. Convinced that "még olly Magyar Poétát e világra anya nem szült mind néhai Gyöngyösi István", Gvadányi recommends his own *Falusi nótárius* on the basis that "igazi régi magyar Poésisnak útjáról el nem tért."[44] Thirdly, in addition to his preoccupation with national traditions, Gvadányi also shows a considerable *philosophical* interest in the idea of the past as in itself an object of intrinsic value. In 1792 he published his *Tizenkettődik Károly 'Svétzia ország királyának élete* which, as we have seen, stresses the social and ethical importance of the study of history, and between 1796 and 1803 he wrote a universal history, *A' világnak közönséges históriája*

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43 *Magyar irodalomtörténet*, Budapest, 1934, p.244.

44 Gvadányi, *Egy falusi nótárius budai utazása*, (Tevan edition) Budapest, 1978, pp.12-15.

based on Claude-Francois-Xavier Millot's *Elements d'histoire générale* (1776). The impetus behind Gvadányi's historical writings - which are generally overlooked in his association in Hungarian literary history with the "magyaros" or "hagyományőrző" (traditionalist) schools, can be identified as the same interest in naive recovery which informs his traditionalism. Indeed, in his *Tizenkettődik Károly 'Svétzia ország királyának élete*, he actually weaves his own characteristic celebration of national traditions and criticism of foreign customs into a translation of Voltaire's *Charles XII.*

It was, however, above all as a creator of "popular" characters and scenes which were to secure for themselves a lasting place in what Arany refers to in his Gvadányi portrait of 1863 as "a nép-mitológia" and "a nemzeti-phantásia"[45] that Gvadányi was to exercise most influence on the development of Hungarian literature. Like Arany, Petőfi was also well aware of his debt to "a régi jó Gvadányi" as he makes clear not only in his poem of that title (1844):

> [...] most is kedves nékem a munkája.
> [...] Nincs abban sok cifra poétai szépség,
> De vagyon annál több igaz magyar épség.[46]

but also in his *Uti levelek* of 1847: "Istenem sokért nem adnám, ha én írtam volna a peleskei nótáriust."[47]

The "popular" figures portrayed in *Falusi nótárius* have all the natural simplicity and moral integrity of the "szegény paraszt nép" addressed in abstraction in Orczy's ode, but are also described in more life-like detail, and with greater warmth and intimacy. In contrast to the townspeople of Buda of whom we are told "Budán senki semmit ingyen / Nem ad",[48] the characters the notary meets on his way to the capital willingly share with him their food and humble lodgings, asking for nothing in return. When the notary offers his legal services to a shepherd who saves him from a raging bull, the shepherd's spontaneous answer anticipates the unaffected folk-morality of Petőfi's *János vitéz*: "Ember az embernek látván veszedelmét / Tartozik sietve adni segedelmét".[49] The only hostile characters he encounters before his arrival in

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45 *Arany János összes művei*, vol XI, p.484, 485.

46 *Petőfi Sándor összes művei*, vol I, Budapest, 1951, p.113.

47 Ibid., vol V, Budapest, 1956, p.69.

48 *Falusi nótárius*, p.50.

49 Ibid., p.30.

Buda are, significantly, foreigners: a group of German cuirassiers who set upon the notary mistaking him for a police officer.

Rich in regional expressions and ethnographical detail, the language of the first three parts of *Falusi nótárius* (ie, before the notary's arrival in the "decadent" capital) contributes considerably to the dominant atmosphere of "populist" simplicity and straightforwardness. Describing the notary's stay with a furrier in Debrecen, for example, Gvadányi writes:

> Debretzennek estve értem városába,
> Egy Szűtsnél meg száltam a Tsapó utzába.
> Lovamat kötöttem pintze gátorába;
> Mivel istálója nem volt udvarába.
>
> Látván felesége terítti asztalt,
> Ketrecén petsenyét, egy tál katrabutzát
> Téve fel: de mivel, nem volt látni borát
> Kulatsomból töltém kettőjük poharát.[50]

The same directness characterises the notary's encounter with a cowherd *(gulyás)* on the Great Hungarian Plain and the traditional herdsman's supper which follows:

> Isten jó nap! Bátya: neki így köszöntem,
> Hozta Isten Kedet, feleletét vettem.
> Szállást kértem; adott: azzal le nyergeltem,
> Iszákom nyergestül a földre tettem.
>
> Míg a lovam fübe kötöttem pányvára,
> Akasztott egy bográts húst a szolga fára
> Megborsolta, s veres hagymát metszett, arra
> Kért: hogy a míg meg fő, üljek a szalmára.[51]

It was largely this attention to ethnographical and linguistic detail which gained the approval of Arany ("Hol az apró körülmények ennyire egyeznek az előttünk ismeretes valósággal, szinte lehetetlen, hogy a bennök járó-kelő egyén ne legyen valódi"),[52]who goes to great lengths in providing an inventory of folk terms and expressions from the first half of the work.

Much of the poem's comic effect is derived from Gvadányi's deliberate interruptions of this homogeneous "popular" discourse with sudden, jarring

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50 Ibid., p.21.

51 Ibid., p.23.

52 *Arany János öszes művei*, vol XI, p.490-1.

shifts of register, such as the notary's bizarre expression of gratitude to the shepherd in Part 1:

> Drága juhász bátsim! én Hypocratésem!
> Te nagy böltsességű kedves Sokratésem!
> Én vitéz Hektorom, vitéz Ulissesem!
> Engem vezérlő hív Ganimédesem![53]

or the hybrid speech of the Germans in Part 2:

> Músz szain! alló frissen, her Kántor tántzolik
> Morble! nem tántzolik sok három pátz adik,
> Tudni én: her Kántor! szép tántzolni tudik,
> Sok kitsin tántz tsinálsz: her puder maradik.[54]

Even Gvadányi's own lexis often serves as a source of parody in his description of life in Buda, such as in the following description of "worshippers" in church:

> Complementirozást egymás között tettek,
> Nem oltárra, hanem hátra tekintgettek,
> Dámák Gavallérok egymásra intettek.[55]

Gvadányi's treatment of the notary's experiences in Buda (Parts 5-12) loses much of the down-to-earth immediacy of the earlier sections, again for reasons first identified by Arany: "Budán minden másképp fordul. Ott a környezetnek nem élethű rajza, hanem szatirikus *túlzása* lévén a cél: a nótárius alakja is elveszti a támaszt, mely eddig emelte képzeletünkben."[56] Here the text lapses into an increasingly repetitive and didactic lamentation on the neglect of the national laguage, customs and costume. The whole of Part 5, for example, is devoted to a description of the types of traditional national dress the notary had vainly hoped to see worn by the inhabitants of Buda, which seeks to retrieve the lost world of "nagy hírű Eleink, / Az egész világot rettentő Őseink"[57]for the national memory. At the end of this detailed description, Gvadányi makes the (by now conventional) association of the national costume with the national language: "Illy öltözeteket Budán nem

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53 *Falusi nótárius*, p.29.

54 Ibid., p.34.

55 Ibid., p.66.

56 *Arany János összes művei*, vol XI, p.492.

57 *Falusi nótárius*, p.59.

láthattam, / És még magyar szót is tsak ritkán halhattam."[58] National identity is still primarily a question of *signs* rather than of distinctly national (moral, pilitical or cultural) characteristics or values. If Kazinczy could claim to determine a person's identity through his speech, the traditionalist could establish just as much from his dress:

> [...] hogy ökör ökröt a szarváról
> Lehet meg esmérni, madarat tolláról,
> [...] Hogy ez Magyar legyen, tudom ruhájától.[59]

Based above all on a notion of sensibility, however, the *personal* identity Kazinczy interpellates in the challenge "Szólj! és ki vagy, elmondom" is quite different from the *national* identity constituted for Gvadányi in the mere adoption (as signifiers) of the national language and costume. To the perfectly reasonable objection of a foppish Hungarian count in Buda that "köntös a barátot / Nem teszi barátnak," Gvadányi's notary can only respond with the following paralogism:

> Mondám: azt Gróf Uram Nagyságod! jól mondja,
> Nem tsinál Barátat köntös, mellyt ő hordja,
> De ha nem Ánglus, kin van Ánglus rongyja,
> Ki tehát ez? úgy-e, tsak világ bolondja?[60]

That, for Gvadányi, the identity signified by the wearing (display) of the national costume has its roots in an association with the national past is made quite clear by the notary's final words of advice to the count:

> Hazánkban nemzete volt mindég tündöklő,
> Híre neve fénylett, mint fénylik gyémánt kő.
> Legyen Nagyságod is Eleit követő.
> Azt ha nem tselekszi, üsse meg a mennykő.[61]

When we remember that these lines were written in 1787 - after seven breathless years of Joseph II's far-reaching and innovative reforms - it is perhaps easier to understand both the intensity and the popularity of Gvadányi's appeal to the national past for a sense of stability, continuity and permanence. Just as Ányos had lamented the loss of "állandóság" and "bizonyos rendek" in his *A világi gyönyörűségeknek haszontalansága* of

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58 Ibid., p.62.

59 Ibid., p.71.

60 Ibid., p.70-1.

61 Ibid., p.72.

1782, so Gvadányi scorns the insatiable appitite for the new in the fashionable ladies of Buda:

> A Magyar Dámákban nintsen állandóság,
> Mindnyájoknak tetszik a módi, és újság;
> A tegnapi ruha, és Ura már óság.[62]

The elevantion of the national costume to the status of a symbol for those values of tradition, unaffectedness and national continuity which together constitute a major part of the naive identification in late 18th century Hungarian literature was, as suggested earlier, very widespread in the period. In addition to the poetry of Gvadányi, it appears in the work of - to name only the better known writers - Dugonics *(Etelka)*, Baróti-Szabó *(A köntösváltoztatásról)*, Révai *(A magyar öltözet és nyelv állandó fennmaradásáért)*, Ányos *(A régi magyar viseletről)* and even Dayka *(A nemzeti öltözet)*. The two latter examples are particularly interesting in that they provide further evidence of the relationship between naive and sentimental aspirations. The emphasis on the connection between a respect for the national costume and a sense of national identity in Ányos's *A régi magyar viseletről*, for example, may be read as an attempt to resolve the sentimental doubts of *A világi gyönyörűségeknek haszontalansága* written in the same year:

> Így tehát barátim, kik scytha vérünknek
> Tisztelői vagytok dicső nemzetünknek,
> Áldom sziveteket, hogy még atyainkról
> Tudtok emlékezni régi szokásainkról.
> Ha hozzátok jövök, s magyar öltözetben
> Látlak benneteket, csákóban, övekben,
> Meg is ölellek! [...][63]

Or, as Ányos argues in his *Gondolataim erről a tárgyról* attatched to the above poem:

> Megpuhult a szív, az ész megfelejtkezett őseiről; alig lát magán a mostani magyar csak egy fótot már, melly emlékeztethetné, hogy azoknak onokája, kik nemes vérekkel fizették azt az örökséget, mellyben most heveresz!

Ányos also stresses the connection between the national costume and the national language as signifiers of identity:

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62 Ibid., p.115.

63 *Ányos Pál válogatott művei*, p.90.

> Más öltözet más nyelvet szül; más nyelv más indulatokat; más indulatok más hajlandóságokat; és így, lassú lépésekkel, a pallérozásnak gyönörű szine alatt elveszik a haza, a nemzetség más nemzetséggé válik [...][64]

Similar concerns inform Dayka's poem, *A nemzeti öltözet*:

> Csak toldasd már, pajtás, hosszabra ruhádot!
> Hányd el kalpagodat, csákódat, kucsmádat!
> És a mint felvetted őket minapába,
> Temesd el őseid hideg sírhalmába.
> [...] mi nem ismerjük, mi az a *nemzeti*,
> S mely bölcsesség, mely kincs, egy eszes nemzetben
> Változást nem tenni sem az öltözetben,
> Sem az azzal járó vércserebéreben,
> Hanem megmaradni a maga bőrében.[65]

It was Dugonics, however, who, in his retrospective *Etelkának kulcsa*, was the first to relate these concerns directly to the "threatening" innovations and aspirations of Joseph II:

> A császár azon iparkodott, hogy a magyar ruhát megváltoztassa és németre fordítsa [...] A magyar ruhának levetése ellen támadtam Etelkámban, annak első könyvében, első szakaszában, hetedik részében. És ott Kádárnak beszédjében megintettem a magyarokat, hogy az országot legjobban lehet megtartani, ha a ruhát és nyelvet megtartják.[66]

While we have already seen that the key inspiration for Dugonics's novel as a whole has much in common with Herder's meditation on the tendency of threatened groups to "extol the deeds of their forefathers", another distinctly Herderian consideration also informs Dugonics's project. Among others, Antal Szerb drew attention to this in his *Magyar preromantika* of 1929:

> Dugonics érdeme nemcsak a preromantikus múltba fordulás beplántálása a magyar irodalmi tudatba: a másik herderi gondolatot, a népi gyökerekhez való visszatérést is ő valósította meg elsőnek. [...] Dugonics ugyanis magáévá tette Herdernek és korának azt a meggyőződését, hogy régi és népi voltaképpen azonos; tehát ha Etelka úgy beszél, mint a Tisza-parti halászok, akkor úgy beszél, mint ahogy egy régi magyarnak beszélnie kell.[67]

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64 Ibid., p.91.

65 *Dayka Gábor költeményei*, Budapest, 1879. pp.82-3.

66 *Dugonics András feljegyzései*, p.15.

67 Reprinted in Antal Szerb, *Gondolatok a könyvtárban*, (3rd edition), Budapest, 1981, p.351. See also Hankiss János, *Európa és a magyar irodalom*, Budapest, 1942, p.204.

It is significant that Szerb's notion of "pre-romanticism" should incorporate both the sentimentalism of such writers as Ányos and Dayka *and* the historicism, traditionalism and emergent "populism" of Gvadányi and Dugonics, even though his critical terminology is unable fully to articulate the essential contiguity between these two structures of feeling. While it is - as I attempted to show in Chapter Two - above all Szerb's retrospective interpretation of these currents as little more than the precursors of a projected "National Romanticism" which prevents him from reading their relation within its own specific and formative historical context, Szerb's following comment on the Herderian association of the "ancient" and "popular" in Dugovics does suggest - if only somewhat fortuitously - the possibility of a more historically pertinent approach: "Ebben a naivitásban is a korának igazi fia, az átmenetnek klasszicizmus és romantika között."[68] For it is precisely this "naivety" - the attempt to recover the naive values of folk culture and the lost unities of the national past - which places Dugonics in the same sentimental crisis of identity which had motivated a similar interest in national traditions in the later work of the likes of Ányos and Dayka. Indeed *Etelka* - considered today exclusively as a product of late 18th century Hungarian traditionalism - itself represents a fascinating illustration of the proximity of naive and sentimental concerns. For while its heroine speaks (and curses!) with all the directness and dialectal authenticity of a peasant from the lower Hungarian plains - "Eb után kutya vagy, vad embör. Te is azon elsővel egy forrásbul buggyantál. Ő büdös vaj; te kukacos szalonna, egybeillötök[69] - she has the feeling heart and all the trappings of sensibility (such as a propensity for weeping and fainting) of a Julie, a Lotte or a Fanni. That one contemporary reviewer of *Etelka* considered it the Hungarian *Pamela*,[70] and that even Csokonai should have confessed that on reading the novel "bennem is az összeolvadott / Szív sok háládatos könnyekre fakadott",[71] suggests that it was not only the novel's patriotism, but also its essential sentimentality which was appreciated in its own day.

In addition to Dugonics's concern with the national past and his equation of the "ancient" with the "popular", there is also a third aspect of his work which

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68 Ibid., p.351.

69 Cited in Szerb, *Magyar irodalomtörténet*, p.247.

70 *Mindenes Gyűjtemény*, vol I, Komárom, 1789, p.120ff.

71 *A Dugonics oszlopa* in *Csokonai Vitéz Mihály minden munkája: Versek*, Budapest, 1981, p.254.

suggests parallels with the preoccupations of Herder. This concerns his part in the so-called "Nordic Renaissance" which played an important role in the formation of a "naive" interest in folk culture all over Europe in the second half of the 18th century.

Ironically, the beginnings of this interest in Nordic culture can be traced back to the heart of the Enlightenment in mid-century France. It was, after all, Montesquieu who, in the fourteenth chapter of his *De l'esprit des lois*, first emphasised the inherent courage and heroism of the Northern peoples over the indolence of the South, largely on the basis of his theory of climatic influence. Published some seven years later in 1755, Paul-Henri Mallet's *Histoire de Dannomarc* was, within a decade of its first appearence, to exercise enormous influence in the German provinces. In 1765, for example, Herder himself wrote a highly enthusiastic review of the first volume of the German translation which had appeared one year before, and continued to show great interest in Nordic culture throughout his career. In his *Auch eine Philisophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774), Herder not only incorporates the climatological theory of Montesquieu ("the Northern air hardened men more than they could be hardened in the hothouses of the East and South"), but also writes with great enthusiasm of how in the Middle Ages "a new man was born in the North" who despised "the luxury and delicacy which had devastated humanity" and had "brought *Nature* instead of the arts, *healthy Nordic understanding* instead of sciences, *strong and good morals*, even though *wild* ones." "When all that fermented together," Herder concludes, "- what an event!"[72] This idea of the new man of nature born in the North provided one of the key sources of German attempts to forge a distinctive cultural identity in the late 18th century. Its early appearance in the poetry of Gerstenberg (*Gedicht eines Skalden,* 1766) and Klopstock, who considered himself a serious student of Old Norse folk literature and restricted himself almost exclusively to Nordic mythology in his bardic poems after 1764,[73] prepared the way not only for Herder's generous treatment of Nordic songs in his *Volkslieder* of 1778-9, but also for the enthusiastic reception of Ossian. That the German notion of what actually constituted the "Nordic" was somewhat dubious and contradictory (Herder, for example, confused Celts and Scandinavians, linking the *Edda* poems with Ossian, while Klopstock repeatedly confused Celts, Germans and Norsemen), formed, ironically, a key

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72 English version from *Herder on Social and Political Culture*, pp. 189-90.

73 See R. T. Clarke, *Herder, His Life and Thought*, op. cit. p.72.

characteristic of the naive *mis*-identification with questionable national and folk continuities, which finds, as we shall see, its ultimate expression in the acceptance as, "authentic" and "original", of the forgeries of Macpherson.

The first important and influential representative of this Nordic interest in 18th Hungary was the astronomer Miksa Hell, a close friend of Ossian's Austrian translator Michael Denis. In his *Expeditiones Literariae*, Hell proposes Karelia as the original homeland of the Hungarians, from which they came South to the Carpathian Basin in the 9th century. Hell's ideas seem to derive largely from the work of the 17th century classical philologist Johannes Gerhard Scheffer to whose *Lapponia* he had probably been introduced by Denis. Hell in turn showed the work to the Hungarian Jesuit scholar, János Sajnovics, the first serious proponent of the theory of the Finno-Ugric origin of the Hungarian language (*Demonstratio idioma Hungarorum et Lapporum idem esse*, 1770). Dugonics not only draws heavily on Sajnovics in *Etelka* - in particular in the extensive footnotes with which the novel is furnished - and on Hell in his later drama, *Etelka Karjelben*, but also makes references to the work of Scheffer.[74] Indeed the seriousness of Dugonics's interest in this area is indicated by his awareness of the work of the medieval Saxo Grammaticus, *Danorum regum heromque historiae...*,[75] to which he refers as proof of the commonness of the name Attila among the Finns in the middle ages: "a mai Fineknél (vagy Finomoknál) Saxo Grammaticus bizonyitássa szerént az Attila név igen közönséges."[76] It is also highly likely that, as a close friend and correspondent of Miklós Révai - another of Denis's Hungarian friends, whose call for the collection of ancient and folk poetry in 1782 led Dugonics to compile an important collection of folk proverbs and sayings - Dugonics would have been aware of the Nordic interests of Denis. It should at any rate be clear that the main constituents of

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[74] Dugonics's familiarity with the work of Sajnovics is well known. His interest in the work of Hell, Scheffer and the medieval Saxo Grammaticus has been documented in a fascinating study by Dezső Baróti, "Dugonics András és a barokk regény", in Baróti, *Írók, érzelmek, stílusok*, Budapest, 1971. I am obliged to Baróti's study for several details of the present discussion of Dugonics's sources.

[75] *Danorum regnum heroumque historiae stilo eleganti a Saxone Grammatico, natione Sialandico, necnon Roskildensis ecclesiae praeposito, abhinc circa trecentos annos conscriptae et nunc primum literaria serie tersissimeque impresse.* Published posthumously, Paris, 1514.

[76] Baróti, *Írók, érzelmek, stílusok*, p.122.

the German preoccupation with Nordic culture in the second half of the 18th century - the celebration, inherited from Montesquieu, of the Northern hero, the elevation of the simple and natural over the refined and artificial and the search for national cultural *origins* - all play an important part in Dugonics's work in particular, and, at a greater level of abstraction, in the project of late 18th century Hungarian traditionalism as a whole. For Dugonics's inclusion of Hungarian folk songs and sayings in *Etelka* and *Jolánka* and his collection of *Magyar példabeszédek és jeles mondások* published in 1820, two years after his death, like Gvadányi's immortalisation of folk characters and national customs or Ádám Horváth's collection of *Ó és új mintegy ötödfélszázad énekek*,[77] are born of the same impulse of naive recovery which informs not only the Nordic and Celtic "renaissance", but also the cult of folk poetry identifiable throughout Europe in the second half of the 18th century.

That the Hungarians were well aware of this European current is powerfully illustrated by Mátyás Rát's substantial editorial introduction to Révai's call for the collection of ancient and folk poetry which appeared in the *Magyar Hírmondó* on January 16 1782. Rát's text is worth quoting at some length:

[77] Compiled in 1813, but not published until 1953.

Tudva vagyon, minemű nagy szorgalmatossággal gyűjtögetik az Ánglusok és a Francziák nem tsak önnön magok eleiknek régi verseiket s énekjeiket, hanem a távoly lakozó népekéit-is. Az Olaszoknak hasonló igyekezetek nem kevésbé esméretes. Hát a Németeket avagy szükség-e elő-hoznom? holott mindenek, valakik ezeknek nevezetessebb könyveiket olvasták, gyakorta észre vehették, minemű nagy betsbenn legyenek nálok a régi Német historiás, mesés s több afféle énekek. Ki nem tudja, mint kapnak ők a köz népnek szájábann forogni szokott régi versekenn, mellyeknek *Volkslieder* a nevezetek? Ezeket pedig leg-inkább attól az időtől fogva kezdettek elő-keresni s haszonra fordítani, miolta az ő saját nyelveket, s azonn, az ékes tudományokat láttatoson gyakorolják. Általában valami tsak eredeti, s nem másból vetetett, akár-melly nyelvenn legyen meg-írva, mind az méltónak ítéltetik a fel-földi Tudósoktól, hogy világra hozattassék.[78]

János Horváth's comment on Rát's claims - that "Herder több gondolatait alig lehetett volna ily szűk terjedelemben teljesebben méltatni"[79] - is, if a little exaggerated, not without some justification. Rát had, after all, spent the years 1773-1777 studying in Göttingen, so would have been familiar not only with Herder's work, but also with that of the "völkisch" Bürger - who was Professor of Aestheics at Göttingen University where Rát studied - together with the bardic poetry of Klopstock and its celebration in the folk ideology of the Hainbund. Rát's reference to "a fel-földi [ie. North European] Tudósok" also suggests a familiarity with the German interest in Nordic culture. No less significant in characterising the intellectual milieu from which the Hungarian interest in folk poetry takes its bearings is the fact that the "érdemes Hazafi Bétsbenn" whose announcement Rát introduces is, as mentioned earlier, Denis's Hungarian friend, Miklós Révai. Bearing in mind our consideration of the sentimental aspects of Révai's poetry in the previous chapter, it is worth noting that we find not only Ádám Horváth - who wrote the sentimental novel *A felfedezett titok* and considered Kazinczy's *Bácsmegyey* to be the latter's greatest literary achievement - but also Ignác Mészáros (the author the first Hungarian sentimental novel, *Kartigám* among the principal collectors of folk poetry in late 18th century Hungarian literature.

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78 *Magyar Hírmondó. Az első magyar nyelvű újság. Válogatás*, ed. György Kókay, Budapest, 1981, pp.263-4.

79 *A magyar irodalmi népiesség Faluditól Petőfiig*, (end edition) Budapest, 1978, p.51.

It is also significant that the first people to whom Rát refers in his illustration of the interest in ancient and folk poetry in Europe should be "az Anglusok". Rát is presumably thinking above all of Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), to which Herder's own association of the "alt" and "völkisch" ("Urpoesie", "alte Nationslieder" and "Volkslied")[80] can ultimately be traced. In addition to this equation, Herder and Percy's other European followers could find in the preface and dedication to the *Reliques* two other sets of oppositions which were to prove crucial to their own projects of naive identification with folk culture. First, Percy recommends his "specimens of ancient poetry" for their "pleasing simplicity and many artless graces" rarely to be found in the poetry of his own "polished age".[81] Secondly, he suggests, in his dedication to the Countess of Northumberland, that "these poems are presented [...] not as labours of art, but as effusions of nature, showing the first efforts of ancient genius."[82] In both cases Percy seems to anticipate not only Herder's distinction between the poetry of a natural and an artificial age (or community), but also the elevation of the simple and natural over the refined and artificial that we have seen in the work of Orczy, Gvadányi and Dugonics.

Percy differs considerably from later promoters of ancient and "popular" culture in Germany and Hungary, however, in his highly guarded articulation of the *value* of his project. His preface to the *Reliques* is riddled with apologetic qualifications and reservations:

> In a polished age, like the present, I am sensible that many of these reliques of antiquity will require great allowances to be made for them [...] To attone for the rudeness of the more obsolete poems, each volume concludes with a few modern attempts in the same kind of writing [...] The artless productions of

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80 It seems likey that, in his reference to "az Olaszok" (the Italians), Rát is thinking above all of Melchiorre Cesarotti, (1730-1808), the most important Italian translator of Ossian in the 18th century. Rát would probably have been awere of Cesarotti through Michael Denis's Ossian translation which reproduces Cesarotti's notes, including the letter's claim, with Vico, that "raw culture produces poets." Cesarotti's interest in Ossian was a characteristic product of the naive moment under consideration. In a letter to Macpherson of 1763, Cesarotti seems to anticipate Schiller's distinction between naive and sentimental, praising "la poesie de nature" over "la poesie de reflection." See Rene Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism*, vol I, pp.138-40.

81 *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, ed. R. A. Willmot, London, 1857, p.xxxviii.

82 Ibid., p.xlv.

> these old rhapsodists (ie. the English Minstrels) are occasionally confronted with specimens of the compositions of contemporary poets of a higher class.[83]

Percy's main justification for his interest in antiquity is not primarily the naive desire to recover a lost language of simplicity, organicity and naturalness which Herder will find so appealing in his work, but a concern for cultural improvement which is rooted firmly in the progressivist ideology of the Enlightenment:

> No active or comprehensive mind can forbear some attention to the reliques of antiquity. It is prompted by natural curiosity to survey the progress of life and manners, and to inquire by what gradations barbarity was civilized, grossness refined, and ignorance instructed.[84]

The degree to which these reservations reveal a cultural backgound quite different from that into which Percy's interests are transplanted in Germany and Hungary is indicated by the way in which even Macpherson feels obliged to qualify his related interest in antiquity. As he states at the beginning of his *A Dissertation Concerning the Era of Ossian*:

> Inquiries into the antiquities of nations afford more pleasure than any real advantage to mankind [...] The infancy of states and kingdoms is as destitute of great events, as of the means of transmitting them to posterity. The arts of polished life, by which alone facts can be preserved with certainty, are the products of a well-formed community.[85]

These considerations may help to explain why British readers found comparatively little "pleasure" and still less "advantage" in the projects of Percy and Macpherson than writers in the less "well-formed communities" of Hungary and the heterogeneous German principalities. Rát's sense of the value of the study of antiquity is a far cry from the caution of either Percy or Macpherson:

> Ha a Magyar Hírmondó valaha, a nemzetének betsületére, hasznára és gyönyörűségére válandó dolgot hirdetett avagy hirdethetett; ha a tudós vagy-is a tudományokbann gyönyörködő jó Hazafiakat, valamikor valamelly jól intézett

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83 Ibid., p.xxxviii.

84 Ibid., pp.xlv-xlvi.

85 *The Poems of Ossian*, translated by James Macpherson ESQ, with the Translator's Dissertation on the era and poems of Ossian and Dr. Blair's Critical Dissertation, Edinburg, 1819, p.7.

munka eránt való figyelmetességre felindíthatta: most valóbann ollyan dolognak jelentéséhez vagyon szerentséje.[86]

The same confidence informs Sándor Kisfaludy's preface to his *Regék a' Magyar Előidőből* inspired at least in part by the example of one of his main poetic ideals, Ossian:

Különös, és tulajdon móddal érdekli a' Régiség a' gondolkodó, képzelő és érző lelket: azért-e hogy a' Régiek valóban nagyobbak, erősebbek és lelkesebbek, noha egyszer'smind durvábbak, és szilajabbak is voltanak, mint sem a' mostaniak? [...], - egyenesen meg nem tudnám mondani; de az bizonyos, hogy a Régiség még a durvább embert is érdekelni szokta; - 's minden embert Hazájának régiségi inkább, mint sem a' külföldiek.[87]

While the influence of Ossian on late 18th and early 19th century Hungarian literature has often been overestimated (and no more so than in connection with Vörösmarty's *Zalán futása*), the essentially corrective approach of the most recent study of Ossian in Hungary, which claims that "Ossian had no major part in the development of Hungarian poetry", is no less prone to exaggeration.[88] What needs to be clarified here is that it was not so much the poetry as the *cult* of Ossian which played a highly formative role in the articulation of naive aspirations and (mis)identifications in Hungarian literature during this period.

The three most important aspects of Hungarian Ossianism - the cult of the bardic figure as a symbol of the national conscience, the juxtaposition of Ossian and Homer as poets of genius and nature rather than reflection and art, and the Ossianic fusion of naivety and sentimentality - again enter Hungarian literature through German interpretations of Ossian's significance, such as those of Denis, Goethe and, above all, Herder. Denis's interest in bardic poetry was inspired primarily by Klopstock who first urged him to

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86 *Magyar Hírmondó... (Válogatás)*, p.363.

87 Sándor Kisfaludy, *Minden munkái*, ed. Dávid Angyal, vol II, Budapest, 1892, p.69. In the same Preface, Kisfaludy writes of Ossian: "*Oszszián* mindeg nagy Poéta marad az ő gyalulatlan Czelta nyelvében, *Denis* fennyen járó Hexametereiben, és *Bacsányi*nk fellengező, magas Prózájában; 's ott legnagyobb a' hol gondolati, 's érzeményi leghatalmasabban érdeklik a' lelket, és szivet." (p.73).

88 Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, *The Rise and Fall of Ossian* in *Neohelicon*, Akadémia kiadó and John Benjamins BV, VIII-1, 1980, p.334.

translate Ossian, and whose famous appeal to the Celtic bard from *Unsere Sprache* Denis quoted in his own collection of original bardic poems, *Die Lieder Sineds des Barden* ("Sined" being Denis's anagrammatic bardic pseudonym).[89] While it was quite probably Klopstock's *Messias* which inspired Denis to translate Ossian in hexameters, it was precisely this form which made Herder miss the "Bardenton des Gesanges" in the translation. For Herder saw in Ossian the same poet of "lyrische Natur" he saw in Homer; both were genuine folk poets in Herder's remarkably open sense, and both were formed by nature and by the collective values of their own immediate communities and times. Although Herder's concern with the "völkisch" in Homer precedes his interest in Ossian, it was Hugh Blair's highly influential *Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian* - reprinted in Denis's translation - which provided the crucial theoretical basis for his association of the two poets. Blair explains his comparison of Ossian and Homer in a passage which anticipates not only Herder's naive preoccupation with the simple, original and ancient, but also his opposition of the organicity of Hellenic culture to the imitative and "artificial" culture of Rome:

> I have chosen all along to compare Ossian with Homer, rather than with Virgil, for an obvious reason. There is much nearer correspondence between the times and manners of the two former poets. Both wrote in an early period of society; both are originals; both are distinguished by simplicity, sublimity, and fire. The correct elegance of Virgil, his artful imitation of Homer, the Roman stateliness which he everywhere maintains, admit no parallel with the abrupt boldness and enthusiastic warmth of the Celtic bard.[90]

We have seen how Herder and Schiller differed in their approach to the naive and sentimental in Ossian. Revealingly, it is in the work of Goethe, in whom both saw - at different times, yet for similar reasons - the seeds of a potential German literary renaissance, that the proximity of these two emphases is most powerfully embodied. For Goethe, Ossian is at once the naive *Naturdichter* and bardic national conscience who "seeks on the spacious heath the footprints of his forbears", and the sentimental graveyard poet who hears "the half-obliterated groaning of the spirits from the caves, and the

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[89] The lines from Klopstok's *Unsre Sprache* quoted by Denis are:

Die Vergessenheit umhullt, o Ossian, auch dich!
Dich huben sie hervor, und du stehest nun da!
Gleichest dich dem Griechen! trotzest ihm!
Und fragst ob wie du er entflemme den Gesang?

[90] *The Poems of Ossian*, p.147.

lamentations of the girl who is grieving herself to death, hovering above the four moss-covered grass-grown gravestones of her beloved, fallen noble."[91] It is also significant that when Werther reads to Lotte from his own translation of Ossian at the climax of the novel, the extract Goethe chooses is from the distinctly Youngian and sentimental *Songs of Selma*, which, perhaps for this very reason, was to become the most popular Ossianic text in late 18th century Hungary.

All three of these characteristics of the German Ossianic cult can also be identified in the work of Ossian's first Hungarian translator, János Batsányi. While Batsányi's interest in Ossian bates back to the second half of the 1780s, his life-long preoccupation with the poet found new inspiration and guidance through his acquaintance (which developed into a close friendship during Batsányi's stay in Vienna after his release from Kufstein in 1796) with Herder's friend and later publisher, Johannes von Müller. Through this acquaintance Batsányi became one of the few Hungarian writers in the 18th century to acquire a direct - as opposed to a received and mediated - knowledge of Herder's works, and when he heard of the master's Ossian translations he wrote to Müller with great enthiusiasm:

> Äusserst angenehm ist mir, dass Herder den herlichen Gedanken hat, meinen geliebten Ossian zu übersetzen - und zwar aus dem Original selbst! - welch ein Gewinn für mich! für Deutschland! für die ganze literarische Welt![92]

In a footnote to his first published Ossian translation (*Osszián utolsó éneke*, 1788), Batsányi, in explaining the term "bard", draws upon an association of Nordic culture and Hungarian origins reminiscent of Dugonics:

> A bárdusok olyan énekesek voltak a régi északi nemzeteknél, akik azoknak nevezetes bajnokait énekelve magasztalták. Azt írja *Priscus Rhetor*, hogy Attilának idejében nekünk is voltak ilyen énekeseink; noha munkáik a mi időnkig fenn nem maradhattak.[93]

In a letter to József Teleki of November 1 1788, he offers a more substantial account of what he sees as his own bardic function:

> Bárdussá akartam lenni magyar nemzetemnek, s a régi kelták történeteiben tükröt tartani polgártársaim eleibe; édes anyám nyelvén akartam siratni erkölcseinknek elhanyatlását, dicsőségünknek kimúlását! mert oly környülállásokban vagyunk, hogy, hacsak teljességgel el nem rontotta már

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91 *The Sufferings of Young Werther*, p.107-8.

92 *Batsányi János összes művei*, vol I, p.537.

93 Ibid., p.181.

> sziveinket az idegen maszlag, szükségképpen meg kell illetődnünk egy Hazája veszedelmét oly érzékeny kesergő öreg vitéznek szomorú panasszára.[94]

It is this representation of the bard as the heroic spokesman for (threatened) national continuity and integrity which gained considerable currency and popularity in late 18th Hungarian letters. Not only did Baróti-Szabó refer to Batsányi as Hungary's "fő bárdusa", but another "classicist" poet, Benedek Virág, celebrated Baróti-Szabó himself as "Hazánk szerencsés Bárdusa! Nemzetünk / Díszére termett Ossziánunk" on the basis of the latter's elegiac treatment of the traditions of the Hungarian forefathers in his poem *Szabolcs vármegye ünnepére*.[95] Similarly, Sándor Kisfaludy - whom Batsányi called his Ossian "boldog örököse" largely on the basis of his "bardic" *Regék* - corroborated Batsányi's own sense of his bardic mission while urging him in a letter of August 6 1808 to continue translating Ossian:

> De tedd meg egyszer már Te is, Barátom, a' mit tehetsz, a' mit már olly régen, a' mennyire Íróinkat ismerem, egyedül Tőlled várhatunk: ereszd a' Magyar világba Oszszián t. Most volna rá legnagyobb szüksége a' Magyar léleknek, - midőn a' mint eggy helyen Oszszián mond, - a' mi Werthernek is úgy szívére esett - talán nem sokára Hazánkra, és Nemzetünkre nézve mondhattyuk![96]

In their association of Ossian with Homer, Hungarian writers from Batsányi to Petőfi and Arany take their lead from Herder and Blair. In a polemical "appendix" to the third volume of the *Magyar Museum* in 1789 *(Toldalék a' Magyar Museum' III-dik negyedéhez)*, Batsányi already promotes the Herderian ideals of original genius, naturalness and simplicity:

> a' Mesterség nem tsinálhat nagy elmét: születni kell annak, és már a' Természettől belénk öntetődni. Tellyesen el vagyok én arról hitettve, hogy száz *Arisztotelés*, száz *Batto*, 's meg annyi *Home* sem adhat olly szabásokat, mellyek egy *Sakspert, Oszszián*t, vagy *Homérust* nevellyenek. - A' született nagy elme, az ő kegyes annyát, a' Természetet nyomozván, maga vág magának utat, és saját világánál, minden egyéb kalauz nélkül, el-ér oda, a' hova más, szerentsétlen születése miatt homályban vakoskodván, a' Mesterségnek minden szövetnekeivel sem juthat.[97]

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94 Ibid., p.529.

95 See Sándor Maller *Ossián Magyarországon 1788-1849*, Debrecen, 1940, p.12; p.18.

96 Sándor Kisfaludy, *Minden munkái*, vol VIII, p.151. See also Batsányi's poem *Kisfaludy: Himfyhez* in Batsányi *Összes művei*, p.107.

97 Ibid., vol II, p.166.

And, as he argues in a footnote to this passage:

> OSZSZIÁN semmi mesterséget, semmi regulát nem ismert. A' Tudományok' lakásától ötet mind ideje, mind hazája messze helyheztette. És mitsoda nagy Poéta ő még-is! Eggy ismeretes Költőnek sints HOMÉRUSHOZ olly nagy hasonlatossága, mint ő-neki. Miért? - mivel mind a' ketten a' leg-nagyobb, leg-felségesebb elmével születettvén, annak vezérlése utánn a' Természetnek eggyügyű, egyenes úttyát mind a' kettő híven követte.[98]

Another Hungarian translator of Ossian, Károly Farkas, while echoing the essence of Batsányi's position in the notes to his translation of the *Song of Selma* (1805), goes on to offer an interesting distinction between Homer and Ossian on the basis of the types of reader addressed by their works:

> Homérus és Ossián a világon élt legnagyobb poéták közé tartoznak. Tiszta, még nem vesztegetett szemmel nézték ezen teremtő Géniék a Természetet. De ki Homérus tökéletességet egész tellyességében akarja érezni, pallérozott ízléssel kell annak bírni; Ossián pedig csak érzékeny szivet s eleven fantáziát kíván.[99]

This association of Ossian with the "feeling heart" is also crucial to the more sentimental aspect of Batsányi's interest in the bard. In the dedication to his translation of *Osszián utolsó éneke* Batsányi not only praises Ossian for the naturalness of his poetry ("énekeiben oly gyakran a természet hatalmas és mindég kedves szavát halljuk s megesmerjük"), and for his attempt to recover the lost glories of the national past ("örömmel emlékezett nemzete bajnokairól [...] eleven szinekkel festi nemzetének hajdani vitéz erkölcseit"), but also because:

> *Ossziánnak* szive egy nemes érzésekben, nagyságos és érzékeny indulatokban olvadó szív; oly szív mely ég, s a képzelődést tűzbe hozza; szív, mely teli van, és áradozik.[100]

Bearing this combination of naive and sentimental elements in mind, it is interesting to remember that Batsányi dedicated his translation (and addressed the above words) to Lőrinc Orczy.

The first complete Hungarian translation of Ossian did not appear until 1815. The translator was Kazinczy, who saw the project more as a linguistic challenge than as a "bardic" obligation. As Dezső Keresztury has argued, Kazinczy did not "appreciate in Ossian the national singer, the awakener of present patriotism through the glory of the past and the phantom of national

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98 Ibid., vol II, pp.183-4.

99 Cited in *Ossián Magyarországon 1788-1849*, p.17.

100 *Batsányi János összes művei*, vol I, p.179.

death."[101] Instead he was probably attracted by the fact that Ossian was fashionable in *Europe*, and that the work of such a "nehéz értelmű és tónusú poéta"[102] would test the capacity of his own language (he furnished his text with a glossary and a discussion of the principles of translation). Kazinczy's approach to the literary value of Ossian was anyway more qualified than that of his Hungarian predecessors. He considered the Celtic bard worthy of respect, but stopped short of making the popular comparison with Homer:

> Ha Osszián nem Homér is, épen úgy nem, mint ahogy a goth stílű Münsterek nem Jónai ízlésű peripteronok. Igazságtalan volna a ki e költeményektől álmélkodását s tiszteletét megtagadná.[103]

If Ossian was no Homer, Kazinczy himself could hardly be taken seriously as a Hungarian Bard in the way that Batsányi had been. This is reflected in an advertisement for his translation worded by Mihály Helmeczy - who prepared Kazinczy's text for publication - which appeared in *Hazai és Külföldi Tudósítások* on 26 March 1814. Here Kazinczy is promoted not as a "magyar Osszián" but as a Hungarian Macpherson:

> eggy Ossián ez a minden századok Homérja, ki sphaerákba ragadozó zengzetével olly bájolóan s lelkesen lebelgeti előnkbe hazája diadalmasit, lelhetett-e nálunk hívebb Macphersonra Kazinczynál?[104]

Kazinczy's translation of Ossian represents one of the few - and relatively superficial - points of contact between his work and the naive configuration we have been describing. He showed some interest in translating Serb folk poetry, but here too his interest was primarily stylistic rather than ideological. Of Dugonics's *Etelka* and the type of national traditionalism and "populism" it represented, he could be highly scathing, such as in the following comment from a letter to Gedeon Raday of June 21 1788, the year in which *Etelka* was first published: "a leg-ízetlenebb galantériát a leg-alatsonyabb popularitást 's gyermeki affectátiót, *hogy Magyar vagyok*, találtam benne."[105]

While it is true that Kazinczy makes a number of enthusiastic references to Herder in his correspondence, his interest was, before 1807 when he read the

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101 In *The First Hungarian Translation of Ossian, New Hungarian Quarterly*, vol IV, no 12, Oct-Dec, Budapest, 1963, p.170.

102 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol XII, p.202.

103 Ibid., p.202.

104 Cited in *Ossián Magyarországon 1788-1849*, p.25.

105 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol I, p.191.

aesthetic and philosophical works for the first time, mainly in Herder's work as a poet.[106] The only work he ever translated was the *Paramythien* (Dichtungen aus der griechischen Fabel), even though he admitted he found the texts inferior to the work of Lessing.

In his biography of Herder, Gillies suggested appositely that "the two Classical injunctions explained in [Young's] *Conjectures on Original Composition* 'Know thyself' and 'Reverence thyself' [...] acquired under Herder's hand a national significance."[107] Kazinczy's work never makes this transition from the (universal) individual subject to the collective, (first-person plural) national subject, which - in the form of a naive resolution to a sentimental dilemma - characterised the aspirations of so many of his contemporaries and, as we shall see, most of his successors in the 1820s, 30s and 40s. For neither the Herderian nor the Hungarian "naive" was ever very far from a relativistic stress on the idea of the *native*, from which, etymologically as well as ideologically, it stems. It was ultimately the increasingly exclusive preoccupation with the *native* in the first halt of the 19th century which would alienate Kazinczy from the new direction the national literature was taking. As he complained in a letter to György Zádor of December 16 1825, referring to the patriotic poetry of the new generation:

> Nem szeretem azt a neki-dühült nemzetiséget s szeretném ha a *rein menschlich* szóllana ez mellet [...] Addig éneklik az Árpádiászokat, hogy végre belecsömörlünk.[108]

There was, of course, still much that was "rein menschlich" in Herder's idea of "natural poetry", just as there was in Wordsworth's equally "naive" interest in "humble and rustic life" in his *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* of 1800, or even in Rát's call for the collection of folk poetry in 1782. These universal, philosophical concerns, however, were rapidly to dissapear from the literary populism which came to dominate Hungarian literature in the first half of the 19th century. And it was in and through this development of an inwardly national (naive-native) literary populism that - in spite of the profoundly Romantic and European initiatives of the two most accomplished poets of the

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106 Ibid., vol V, p.213-4. Letter to János Kiss, November 4 1807: "Csak most kapámmeg a' könyvkötőtől Herdernek 24 darab munkáját a' Cotta kiadásából, Religion u. Theologie - Philosophie u. Geschichte - Poesie u. Kunst [...]"

107 Herder, op. cit., p.33.

108 *Kazinczy levelezése*, vol XIX, p.484.

period, Berzsenyi and Vörösmarty - modern Hungarian literature first turned its back on the European cultural context of which it was born.

Chapter Five

Naive and Native in the Age of Reform

In one of the first serious critical biographies of Petőfi (*Petőfi Sándor*, written in 1919, but only published posthumously in 1927), Frigyes Riedl makes the following important assertion: "A magyar irodalom az egyetlen, mely fénykorát a népies költészet alapján érte el. Mindegyikre hatott: de fénykorát nem idezett elő."[1] Riedl's case in undoubtedly overstated: one could take issue both with his judgement - the degree to which the populist aspects of the work of, above all, Petőfi and Arany represented a "Golden Age" - and with his comparative point of departure, which appears to ignore the decisive contribution of folk culture to the development of national literatures throughout East Central Europe. Having voiced these reservations, however, it is still possible to retrieve the underlying relevance and bearing of Riedl's claim. For, as I shall attempt to show in this chapter, literary populism continued to play a leading role in the development of a consciously national literature in Hungary long after it had made its (far less significant) contribution to those West European literatures to which Hungarian writers had initially turned for inspiration and example.

As themselves products of the sentimental structure of feeling, the "naive" literary initiatives we have been considering so far can similarly be seen as no more than an *emergent* configuration of identifications, associations and projections of value. In Hungarian literature this sense of emergence is well illustrated by the terminological uncertainty and heterogeneity which surrounds attempts to convey the sense of Herder's crucial neoligism, *das Volkslied*, before István Kultsár's introduction of the - at this stage still hyphenated - compound "nép-dal" in 1818, which even then had to wait for more than a decade before gaining general curency in Hungarian. The earliest of these attempts tended, revealingly, to reproduce the German term ("Volkslieder", Rát 1782; "Volksliedek", Csokonai 1798, 1804), or at least to

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1 Frigyes Riedl, *Petőfi Sándor*, Budapest, 1923, p.51.

collapse the senses of the terms "régi versek" (ancient poems) and "köz énekek" (common songs - Révai, 1782) into what would be widely referred to as "nemzeti dallok" (national songs - eg. *Hazai s Külföldi Tudósítások*, 1811, *Hasznos Mulatságok*, 1817) with the increasing association of the "popular" with the "national" in the first half of the 19th century.[2] As late as 1830 we still find an example of this terminological ambiguity in the first anathology of Hungarian poetry to appear in English translation, John Bowring's *Poetry of the Magyars*, compiled with the assistance of Gábor Döbrentei and György Károly Rumy. The volume contains sixty-four Hungarian "folksongs" under the Hungarian heading "Magyar Nemzeti Dallok" with the English "equivalent" rendered as "Hungarian Popular Songs".

A similar sense of a process in formation can also be gauged from the essentially fragmentary and heuristic character of Herder's writings. As René Wellek comments in his *A History of Modern Criticism*:

> There is hardly a real book among the thirty-three volumes of Herder's *Collected Works*. Many of them are called quite rightly *Fragmente, Torso, Wälder, Briefe, Zerstreute Blätter, Ideen zur...*; or they have fancy titles such as *Adrastea, Kalligone, Terpsichore*, which often conceal an extremely miscellaneous content.[3]

Herder's philosophical and aesthetic speculations never consolidated into an internally consistent, totalizing philosophy or world-view, but remained a body of remarkably rich and influential suggestions towards a possible philosophy of history and culture. Before such a possibility could be coherently realised, his ideas had been largely superseded. In the last years of Herder's life, when he was preoccupied primarily with a polemic against the "pure reason" of Kant, a new collection of *Fragmente* (by Friedrich Schlegel) had already begun to appear in the journal of the Jena Romantics, *Athenaeum*, heralding a new "progressive universal poetry" which would ultimately transcend the antithesis of "artistic and natural poetry".[4] The new Romantic formation - whose influence and durability was far to extend that of the transitional *Sturm und Drang* - did, of course, incorporate several elements of Herder's though, including his interest in folk poetry. Thus the collection of

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2 See János Horváth, *A magyar irodalmi népiesség Faluditól Petőfiig*, Budapest, 1978, p.115.

3 René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*, vol I, p.182.

4 Friedrich Schlegel, *Athenaum Fragment*, No.166. In *Kritische Ausgabe*, vol II, ed. Hans Eichner, Munich, 1967, p.182.

over 700 German folksongs, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, published by Armin and Brentano chiefly in the years 1804-7, was enthusiastically received not only by the likes of Joseph Görres, whose review of the anthology continues to uphold Herder's distinction between *Kunst-* and *Naturpoesie*, but also by Goethe. No less influential was Görres's own attempt to identify "der ächte innere Geist des deutschen Volks" in his *Die deutschen Volksbücher* of 1807.[5] These emphases were further corroborated by the activity of the Grimm brothers, and particularly in the theoretical work of Jacob Grimm whose notion of "Sichvonselbstmachen" in natural poetry recalls Schiller's representation of the naive poet as one who "is the Creation, and the Creation is He."[6] It would, however, be misleading to overemphasise these continuities. While many of the more important German Romantic poets - such as Eichendorff, Heine, Uhland and Mörike - were similarly inspired to take an interest in, and borrow formally and stylistically from, German folk poetry, their own work goes on to explore imaginative, psychological and metaphorical depths which have little in common with either the songs of the *Wunderhorn* or the naive configuration outlined by Schiller and Herder. They saw in the *Volkslied* and the *Märchen* above all the means towards a universal poetry of imagination and symbol - which finds its only serious Hungarian counterpart in the Vörösmarty of *Délsziget, Tündérvölgy* and *Csongor és Tünde* - rather than the foundations of a distinctly national poetry on the lines proposed by the likes of Kölcsey and Erdélyi.

The supersession of the naive develops in a similar fashion in late 18th and early 19th century English literature, where the interest in the simplicity, immediacy and "naturalness" of folk poetry also constituted only one part of a broader cultural formation. The most pertinent illustration of this can be found in Percy's most distinguished English advocate and, in some senses, successor: the Wordsworth of the *Lyrical Ballads*, the first edition of which appeared in 1798. Indeed, the closing poem of that volume, *Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, actually allows a reading of the Romantic negation of the naive-sentimental dichotomy in microcosm, and is, for this reason, worth considering in a little more detail.

Written "on revisiting the banks of the Wye" after five years spent "mid the din / Of towns and cities", *Tintern Abbey* seems at first sight to offer the

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5 Josef von Görres, *Geistesgeschtliche und literarische Schriften*, vol I, ed. Gunter Müller, Köln, 1926, p.175.

6 See Correspondence of *Archim von Arnim und Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*, ed. Reinhold Steig, Stuttgart, 1904, p.118.

gesture of a "return to nature". This return brings to the poet's mind his former harmony with the natural world in childhood when nature had been "all in all"; not an object of (sentimental) reflection, but:

> [...] a feeling and a love,
> That had no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, or any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye.[7]

If this evocation of the immediate (unmediated) relationship between nature and childhood - which finds its most intense expression in Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* (1803-6) - has much in common with Schiller's association of "the naive way of thinking" with "childish simplicity",[8] Wordsworth's representation of this unity as *lost* would surely have constituted for Schiller a powerful example of his concept of "sentimental elegy":

> [...] That time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more,
> And all its dizzy raptures.[9]

Where Wordsworth goes beyond Schiller's dualism, however, is in his immediate rejection of this sentimental, elegiac mood:

> [...] Not for this
> Fain I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
> Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
> Abundant recompence. For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
> A motoin and a spirit, that impells
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,

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7 Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford, 1978, p.164.

8 "das Naive der Denkart"; "die kindliche Einfalt" Schiller, op. cit., p.422; p.417.

9 Wordsworth, op. cit. p.164.

And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,
And what perceive [...][10]

In place of both the naive, unreflective unity with nature and the sentimental lament for the loss of this unity, Wordsworth offers a notion of internalised nature represented as a kind of imaginative power, nurtured on the external objects of the natural world and capable of uniting perception and creation. This internalisation of nature as an inner creative power provides one of the key means by which Romantic poetry breaks down the network of oppositions in which the alienation of the sentimental character is reproduced - subject and object, self and world, art and nature, imitation and reflection, thought and language.

In characterising the English literary interest in folk culture during this period, the project of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* is also important in two further ways. First, when Wordsworth in his Preface relates his preoccupation with "humble and rustic life" to a desire to identify "the primary laws of our nature", his use of the first person plural evokes not a national, but a universal human community.[11] Unlike those products of folk culture which represent for Görres the "genuine inner spirit" of his nation, Wordsworth's ballads are not offered as authentic expressions of the English national character. The language of the "people" (albeir "purified [...] from what may appear to be its real defects") is chosen not for its essential "Englishness", but because it is considered "a more permanent and phiposophical language than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets."[12] For Wordsworth, the poet is not a bard addressing his nation, but "a man speaking to men."[13] Secondly, the world that Wordsworth portrays in his ballads is, for all the energy and realism of its representation, essentially a lost, or at least a disappearing, world. We have already seen how, even in the first half of the 18th century, the "Iron Times" referred to in Thomson's *The Seasons* were bringing about a transition in English poetry on rural life from a perspective of "reflection" to

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10 Wordsworth, pp.164-5.

11 Wordsworth, p.734.

12 Wordsworth, p.735.

13 Wordsworth, p.737.

one of "retrospect". By the time Wordsworth came to make his first major contribution to this tradition at the end of the 1790s, he could draw not only on the work of Thomson, Gray and Goldsmith, but also on the "counter-pastoral" example of Grabbe's *The Village*, published in 1783. Indeed Wordsworth's description of a waning, disintegrating world in poems like *The Female Vagrant, Simon Lee, The Old Huntsman, The Last of the Flock* and *The Old Cumberland Beggar* seems to take up Crabbe's challenge from the opening couplet to Book 2 of *The Village*: "No longer truth, though shown in verse, disdain, / But own the village life a life of pain."[14] The "organic" Cumberland community to which the likes of Simon Lee had once belonged is a lost community whose spirit Wordsworth revives in its very moment of decay and whose morality - so deeply felt throughout the *Lyrical Ballads* - is already the product of Romantic re-creation.

The situation is quite different with the Hungarian literary interest in "humble and rustic life" in the first half of the 19th century. While Hungarian literary populism continues to preserve its late 18th century equation of the "popular" with the "ancient", it increasingly looks to contemporary peasant culture for its objects of inspiration, finding in them the symbols of a *living past*. While Wordsworth's folk characters are represented as pathetic, broken and rapidly diappearing from the English rural scene, those of, for example, Petőfi, some forty years later, are still full of energy, resilience and thoroughly at home in the world. It is ultimately this (naive) identification with the living traditions of the national folk culture, and the elevation of these traditions as the basis for a new national poetry, which makes Novalis's dictum that "Die Welt muss romantisiert werden"[15] appear somewhat gratuitous to most Hungarian poets in the first half of the 19th century.

I shall return to the question of Romanticism in Hungary in Chapter Seven. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the development of Hungarian literary populism between the years 1811 and 1840, while Chapter Six will examine the continuation and consequences of this development in the 1840s.

The most important elements of both continuity and development between the emergent naive configuration in late 18th century Hungarian literature

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[14] George Crabbe, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. N. Dalrymple-Champneys and A. Pollard, Oxford, 1988, vol I, p.168.

[15] Novalis, *Fragmente des Jahres 1798*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Carl Seelig, Zürich, 1945, vol III, p.38.

and the coherent national-populist programme of Kölcsey can be identified in the work of István Kultsár, the editor of *Hazai s Külföldi Tudósítások* and its cultural supplement, *Hasznos Mulatságok*, launched in 1817. In the same year, in a call for the collection of Hungarian folk poetry, Kultsár provides the link between the projects of Rát and Révai and those of Kölcsey and his followers nearly half a century later: "Minden Nemzeteknél szorgalmatosan öszszeszedik a Nemzeti Dallokat, mert ezekből az idő culturáját, a Nemzet charactereit könnyű kitapogatni."[16] In a similar announcement published in *Hasznos Mulatságok* in 1818 - the year in which Kultsár coins the term "népdal" - these continuities are made still clearer:

> Az Anglusok, Franciák, Németek vetélkedve gyűjtögetik a' Köznép Dallait. Az ártatlan természet festi ezekben magát, és a' Nemzetnek természeti bélyege, erkölcsi szokása, 's életének foglalatosságai világosan kitetszenek. Bár a' pusztákon, és falukon forgó tudósb Hazafiak ezen Dallokra figyelmetesebbek volnának, 's összegyűjtve, vagy egyenként közölnek velem. Igy fentarthatnánk sok együgyű: de szép gondolatot; 's nem adnak Maradékainknak olly panaszra okot, a' millyennel vádoljuk mi ős Eleinket, kik már Attila és Árpád udvarában, sőt Mátyás Király alatt is a' Vitézeiknek viselt dolgait énekeltek: de írásban reánk nem szállították.[17]

If the appeal to the activities of other nations is also distinctly reminiscent of Rát, the direct equation of the *naive* ("Az ártatlan természet festi ezekben magát") with the *native* ("A Nemzetnek természeti bélyege" etc) again looks forward to the theoretical work of Kölcsey and Erdélyi and to the poetic practice of Petőfi. It is also here that the exclusive association of the "popular" with the "ancient" is consciously extended through an appeal to educated patriots to turn their attention to the living cultural traditions of the common people of the plains and villages.

While, in response to Kultsár's calls, folksongs, tales and sayings began to appear with growing regularity in contemporary Hungarian periodicals - and nowhere more so than in *Hasznos Mulatságok* which had published approximately fifty specimens of the Hungarian folksong by 1828 - the first comprehensive anthology of national folk poetry to be published *in Hungarian* was Erdélyi's *Népdalok és mondák*, the opening volume of which did not appear until 1846. The first published collection of a body of texts representing any form of Hungarian verbal folk culture whatsoever was

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16 Kultsár, *Szép Mesterség. Poézis* in *Hasznos Mulatságok*, Budapest, 1817, vol I, no 3, p.21.

17 Kultsár, *A Köznép Dallai* in *Hasznos Mulatságok*, 1818, vol I, no 8, pp.57-8.

Dugonics's posthumous *Magyar példabeszédek és jeles mondások* which appeared in 1820. This was followed in 1822 by the publication in Vienna of the first collection of Hungarian folktales, *Märchen der Magyaren*, compiled in German by György Gaál who had been Dugonics's favourite student at the university. Three years later Count János Mailáth published a further collection in German on similar lines, *Magyarische Sagen und Märchen* (Brünn, 1825), the first Hungarian translation of which did not appear until some 40 years later. Both Mailáth and Gaál were quite clearly inspired by the activities of the Grimm brothers in this area, and sought to contribute to the contemporary German interest in folk culture by demonstrating the survival of related (and no less noteworthy) traditions in Hungary. The first anthology of Hungarian poetry to include a section consciously devoted to the folksong was Ferenc Toldy's bilingual *Handbuch der ungarischen Poesie* (1828) which included fifteen specimens of the genre. The next substantial collection was also directed towards a non-Hungarian reading public, Bowring's *Poetry of the Magyars* (1830) including, as already mentioned, sixty-four Hungarian "popular songs" from a larger collection prepared by György Károly Rumy which, although it contains much otherwise unknown material, has never been published in Hungarian.

Bowring also played a part in promoting another very important influence upon the development of Hungarian literary populism, that of the Serbian folksong. Three years before the appearance of his Hungarian anthology, Bowring had published a collection of *Servian Popular Poetry* (London, 1827), which was seen in Hungary as further evidence of the growing international reputation of the Serbian folksong, and was referred to with great admiration and respect by advertisements in the Hungarian press announcing the preparation of Bowring's Hungarian anthology.[18]

By 1827, however, with the publication of Ferenc Toldy's major essay, *A Szerbus Nép-költészetéről* - based largely on Eugen Wesely's introduction to his German collection, *Serbische Hochzeitslieder* (1826) - the Hungarian interest in Serbian folk poetry had already reached its height after a period spanning nearly fifty years. Initially, this interest too had been inspired by, or at least mediated through, German sources. Thus Kazinczy's celebrated translation of the famous "Lament of the Noble Woman of Asan Aga" (known in Serbian as the *Hasanaginica* and entitled in Kazinczy's Hungarian, *Gyászdal Azzan-agának szép de szerencsétlen nője felől*) was based on

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[18] See, for example, Mihály Vörösmarty, "Jelességek". *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, Budapest, 1828, vol V, pp.124-5.

Goethe's translation - from the French! Even when the publication of Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic's first collection of Serbian folksongs in 1814 inspired a far more widespread interest in Serbian folk poetry, this interest was undoubtedly enhanced by Jacob Grimm's highly enthusiastic review of the collection in the *Wiener Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung* (March 8 1816), in which the German writer expressed his doubts as to whether: "irgend ein Volk des heutigen Europa überhaupt sich in dieser Rücksicht mit den Serbiern messen kann [...]".[19]

It should not be forgotten, however, that the significant Serbian community which was highly active in Pest-Buda at the beginning of the 19th century - having its own printing press from 1795 and responsible for the first Serbian scholarly society, the *Matica srbska*, in 1826 - also played an important part in the growing Hungarian interest in Serbian folk poetry, which can be seen as the first major East European influence on the development of the national literature. The most important point of contact between the activities of this community and the Hungarian *literati* of Pest was undoubtedly the work of the bilingual poet, Mihály Vitkovics, who not only produced widely acclaimed translations of Serbian folksongs, but also, in the 1820s, became the first Hungarian poet regularly to publish his own "folk" poetry as a consciously independent genre within his work.

The discovery of the Serbian folksong also played a part in Kölcsey's gradual recognition of the literary and ideological significance of folk culture. As early as 1814, Kölcsey tried his hand at translating Serbian poetry (eg. *Rác nyelvből*), working from a literal translation supplied by none other than Vitkovics himself. Furthermore, in his critical evaluation of Berzsenyi's poetry, *Berzsenyi Dániel versei* (1817), he appeals to the example of Serbian folk poetry to refute the suggestion that Hungary's climatic, geographical and historical conditions are not inducive to the development of a strong, original, national poetry:

> ha meggondoljuk, minden egyebet elmellőzvén, hogy ezek a csak nem köztünk élő *szerbusok*, a mi Dunánknak, a mi Szávánknak parjain oly poétai lebegéssel, oly makacs kedvvel, s oly egyszerű fennséggel költik dalaikat, mint Anakreon és a Homéridák: bizonyosan azt kell hinnünk, hogy poétai szegénységünknek oka

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[19] Jacob Grimm, *Serbische Literatur* in *Wiener Allgemeine Literature Zeitung*, 1816, Nov. 20 (III. 8); cited in István Fenyő, *Nemzet, nép-irodalom*, Budapest, 1973, p.184.

mélebben fekszik mintsem azt, akár geográgiai fekvésünkből, akár valami egyes történetből kimagyarázhatnók.[20]

Kölcsey's route to a position adjacent to, but more fully elaborated than, that of Kultsár on the importance of folk poetry is particularly revealing in the context of the relationship between the sentimental and the naive (as a relationship of dilemma and resolution) that we have been describing. For Kölcsey's poetic and theoretical development enacts, in the space of some twenty years, the crisis of identity and allegiance experienced by the national literature as a whole in the period under consideration.

While Kölcsey's earliest surviving poems show the unmistakable influence of Csokonai *(A pávatollhoz, A képzelethez, A nyugalomhoz)*, the character of his poetry, together with his literary taste, changes considerably after he comes into direct contact with the ideas and person of Kazinczy in 1808. Kölcsey destroys much of his earlier work and, especially after moving to Pest in 1810, becomes for most of the decade Kazinczy's most promising new pupil. He comes to Kazinczy's defence in the national debate about language reform *(Felelet a mondolatra)*, and echoes his master's literary preferences both in his criticism (his essay on Csokonai and, if less obviously, his review of the poetry of Berzsenyi) and in the new sentimental tone which now dominates his poetry. In his "autobiographical letter" to Pál Szemere of March 20 1833. Kölcsey himself recalls that, "1808-ban és 1809-ben sentimental-lyrisch voltam";[21] and in a letter to Gábor Döbrentei of 21 June 1814 he claims:

Legrégibb verseim Hölty és Salis manierjában irattak, kiket még akkor nem ismertem, Későbben Matthisonnak szine látszott rajtok, kit könyv nélkül tudtam.[22]

The following examples should give some idea of the extent to which not only the Hainbund, but also the Youngian lexis considered in Chapter Two and the tone, disposition and idiom of Ányos and Dayka illustrated in Chapter Three continue to play a leading role in Kölcsey's poetry in the 1810s:

[...] Gyors enyészettel forog a jelenlét,
A dicső hérost örök éj borítja,
Büszke márványán kihal a csudály név,

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20 Ferenc Kölcsey, *Összes művei*, (in one vol) Budapest, 1943, p.470. This passage was omitted from Kölcsey's text when it was first published in 1817.

21 Kölcsey, p.1495.

22 Kölcsey, pp.1452-3.

S fű lepi sírját.
(*Kívánság*, 1810)

Csendes éjjelimnek szent homályán
Szivök lelkesítő cseppeket.
Istenasszony, fuss az égi pályán!
Nem nézem már sírva képedet.
(*A holdhoz*, 1811)

Minden órám csüggesztő magányom
Néma csenden búnak szentelem,
Rajtad elmém ah törődve hányom.
S könyeim árját issza kebelem.
[...] Szállj homályba, s hunyj el fátyoladnak
Éjjelében bús emlékezet! [...]
(*Minden órám*, 1813)

Oh sírni, sírni, sírni,
Mint nem sírt senki még
Az elsülyedt boldogság után;
Mint nem sírt senki még
Legfelső pontján fájdalmának,
Ki tud? ki tud?
(*Elfojtódás*, 1814)[23]

The same sentimentalism also informs Kölcsey's theoretical and literary critical statements during this phase of his development. In the letter to Döbrentei already mentioned, Kölcsey describes how, in the German poetry with which he is so far familiar, he sees:

> a görögnek leányát, de amely az új századok manierját öltözte fel, a sentimentalismust. Dagályos; ugy mondod. Igen is; de ezen dagály a sentimentalismusnak, s sokaknál igazán a szívnek nyelve. Nem így szól-e Rousseau is? nem-e ez a természetnek igaz s igaznak fia?[24]

A letter to Szemere of 14 November 1813 illustrates the German writers Kölcsey has in mind:

> Göttingenben Bürger, Voss, Hölty, Boye s többek, Leipzigban Rabener, Gellert, Kramer, Klopstock, Schlegel, Gisecke stb. hozattak öszve sors szerént azon szép

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23 Kölcsey, pp.21, 23, 33-4, 53.

24 Kölcsey, p.1453.

hajnalon, mely után a legszebb nap következett, mely valaha fénylett Európában.[25]

Another crucial aspect of Kölcsey's sentimental approach to poetry at this stage is expressed in his notorious evaluation of the work of Berzsenyi (*Berzsenyi Dániel versei*, 1817). In distinguishing between the "poeta" and the mere "versificator", Kölcsey argues that in genuinely poetic writing: "a közönséges tárgy bizonyos *idealitást* nyer".[26] Thus Berzsenyi's greatest strength stems from the fact that: "Ő soha sem a tárgytól veszen lelkesedést, hanem önmagától, önmagából omlik ki minden szó, minden gondolat."[27]

We have already considered - with reference to Young, Burke and Kazinczy - the centrality of this idea of a poetry "from objects free" to the sentimental structure of feeling. Schiller corroborates this emphasis by suggesting its inverse in his account of the privileged role of the object in naive poetry: "Ancient literature can give us the best evidence for the degree to which the naive poet is dependent on his object and how much, indeed how everything depends on his perception."[28] The poet's attitude to the object clearly constitutes one of the most decisive points of difference between the naive and sentimental approaches to literary expression, as can be seen in the Hungarian context by contrasting the positions of Kazinczy and the early, sentimental Kölcsey with a statement by Arany on the "naive" Gvadányi - "Azt is lehet mondani, hogy műveinek az érdem inkább a tárgyé, mint a költőé"[29] - or by Erdélyi on the populism of Tompa - "előad mindent oly kevés szóval, hogy *szó* helyet mintegy magát látjuk a *tárgyat*."[30]

Kölcsey's critical evaluation of the poetic achievement of Csokonai *Csokonai Vitéz Mihály munkáinak kritikai megítéltetések*, written in 1815, but not published until 1821) provides further evidence of Kölcsey's sentimental approach to literature in the 1810s. Here, Kölcsey not only rates Sándor

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25 Cited in János Hankiss, *Európa és a magyar irodalom*, Budapest, 1942, p.263.

26 Kölcsey, op. cit., p.469.

27 Kölcsey, p.472.

28 "wie sehr der naive Dichter von seinem Objekt abhänge, und wie viel, ja wie alles auf sein Empfinden ankomme, darüber kann uns die alte Dichtkunst die bessten Belege geben."

Schiller, op. cit., p.478.

29 János Arany *Összes művei*, vol XI, ed. Dezső Keresztury, Budapest, 1968, p.486.

30 János Erdélyi, *Pályák és pálmák*, Budapest, 1881, p.316.

Kisfaludy's *Himfy* above Csokonai's *Lilla* poems and - "az érzés és kultúra tekintetében" - considers Dayka's poetry superior to Csokonai's as a whole, but also, revealingly, prefers the sentimental *Himfy* to Kisfaludy's more naive *Regék.*[31] Still more significantly, Kölcsey now modifies his earlier position on Bürger and, appealing to Schiller's "famous review" of Bürger's poetry, argues that the same objections can be raised against Csokonai - even though he still concedes that "Bürger szentimentalisabb mint Csokonai."[32] Kölcsey's objection to both poets is ultimately besed in his conviction that: "mindketten hajlandók voltak a Bürger által úgynevezett popularitásra."[33] According to Kölcsey, Csokonai's mistake was to reject the example of the "csinos ízlésű" Báróczy and Kazinczy for that of his Debrecen friend, János Földi, whom Kölcsey cites as having stated that: "A köznépé az igaz magyarság, az idegennél nem egyvelges nagyarság."[34] Kölcsey is thus led to draw the following conclusions:

> Földi által vezetettvén a filológiában, kezdette ő is kiáltozni, hogy a köznéptől kell magyarul tanulni, s mivel ő nemcsak kiáltozta, de cselekedte is, innen van, hogy az iskolai tónust s az alföldi provincializmust levetkezni nem igyekezett [...] Bürgernek szertelen követése, s a rossz uton vezettetett popularitás mániája soha sem engedte őtet azon útra lépni, melyen Báróczy és Dayka koszorút szedtenek s melyen indulván el a németeknél Wieland és Matthison a legbájolóbb szépségű nyelv birtokába jutottanak.[35]

At this stage in Kölcsey's career we still find little of the fervent patriotism we shall meet in his later prose (*Mohács* 1826, *Nemzeti hagyományok* 1826, *Magyar Játékszín* 1827) and poetry (*Himnusz* 1823, *Zrínyi dala* 1830, *Zrínyi második éneke* 1838). Kölcsey is still a fundamentally cosmopolitan writer, as in suggested by his letter to Szemere of 14 November 1813:

> Ha lelkemnek, minekelőtte Hádészból felvezettetvén ide plántáltatott, választás lett volna engedve, bizonyosan nem választottam a hont, melyben születtem [...][36]

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31 Kölcsey, op. cit., pp.454-5.

32 Kölcsey, p.454.

33 Kölcsey, p.453.

34 Kölcsey, p.457.

35 Kölcsey, p.458.

36 Ferenc Kölcsey, *Minden munkái*, Budapest, 1887, vol IX, p.224.

or by the following retrospective statement from his autobiographical letter of 1833:

> Volt idő (iskolai pályám vége s jurátusságom), midőn cozmopolitismus fogott körül, s ez időben a magyar hazán nem függék melegen.[37]

The beginnings of a coherent change in Kölcsey's attitudes and priorities can be observed by the end of the decade. A most articulate account of the nature of this change is given by Kölcsey himself in his autobigraphical letter:

> 1818-1823. Kölcsén és Csekén igen-igen keveset dolgoztam; de dalaim alakja akkor fejlett ki [...] ha sötét képeim engedtek, a paraszt dal tónját találgatám. Nehezebb studiumom egész életemben nem vala. A sentimental-lyrisch ünnepélyes hangjáról a sokszor elkeseredett lelket szeszélyesen dévaj és még is meleg, és még is nemes hangra vinni által, nehéz théma volt. Felvettem valami rímről rímre, s tárgyról tárgyra ugráló paraszt dalt s annak formájára csináltam előbb a legmindennapibb, keresetlen port kitételekkel dalt s azután úgy nemesítem meg egyik sort a másik után. Így támadt a *Hervadsz, hervadsz szerelem rózsája*, mely évekig emlékezetemben élt; így az *Ültem csolnakomban*, melyen talán még most is látszik, hogy valaha fonókába illő nyelven volt írva.[38]

1818 is, of course, a highly significant year from which to date such a transition. It was in 1818 that Kultsár coined the term "nép-dal" to provide a uniform (and Hungarian) terminological focus for the nation's growing interest in its own oral tradition, and it was in that year that Kultsár also published his third and most coherently argued call for the collection of Hungarian folk poetry which in so many ways anticipates both the arguments and the idiom of Kölcsey's *Nemzeti hagyományok*.

Those poems Kölcsey wrote in the years 1818-21 on the basis of his attempt to reproduce the tone of "peasant songs" by no means effect a break with the sentimental *content* of his earlier poetry. This is particularly true of the two texts to which he refers in his autobiographical letter, as can be seen from their closing stanzas:

> Ülök csolnakomban
> Habzó vizen,
> Hallok zúgni darvat
> Röptébe fenn;
> Röpülj, égi vándor,

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37 Kölcsey, *Összes munkái*, p.1504.

38 Kölcsey, p.1499.

Föld s víz felett,
Sorsom, ah, nem adta
Szállnom veled!
(Csolnakon)[39]

Hervadsz, hervadsz
Szerelem rózsája!
Nem kell nekem
Remény violája;
Ujjaim csak
Nefelejcset szednek
Bús estvéjén
Bús emlékezetnek.
(Hervadsz, hervadsz...)[40]

According to János Horváth, Kölcsey "nem tartozik a népi dal tartalmát utánzó műköltők közé, hanem elseje azoknak, kik műköltői egyéniségük megtagadása nélkül a naiv dal műfaji esztétikumát akarták elsajátítani a népi dalokból."[41] While it is important to stress the coexistence of individual sentiment and naive (popular, communal) form in Kölcsey's folk-inspired poetry, we would be mistaken to conclude with Horváth that Kölcsey's interest in folk culture is informed exclusively by *aesthetic* considerations. Fully to appreciate the change in Kölcsey's position concerning the value of the "national traditions" preserved in the culture of the "common people" *(nép)*, it is necessary to interpret this development in the *political* context of an aspiration that was to constitute the key objective of the Hungarian Age of Reform: the transformation of the feudal *natio Hungarica* into a modern nation state. For this was seen to involve an extension of the limited 18th century concept of the political nation to include, and represent the interests of, all social classes, including the peasantry which accounted for four fifths of the population.

The politicization of the Hungarian nobility, which had begun with the resistance to the reforms of Joseph II - but had been retarded by the reaction to the French Revolution, the Martinovics trials, the re-intensification of censorship and the superficial unity of interests brought about by the Napoleonic wars - began to gather new momentum after 1818. The war had

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39 Kölcsey, p.75.

40 Kölcsey, p.110.

41 Horváth, op. cit., p.178.

sustained an artificial demand for Hungarian produce, concealing the backwardness of Hungary's feudal agricultural system and making the shock of modern competition after the war - in particular with the cheap American grain which flooded the market - all the more severe. The fact that Vienna continued to treat Hungary as little more than a subject province only added to the growing awareness of the need for social and political reform. At the beginning of the 1820s, Francis I reimposed the war tax and ordered new recruits to assist in crushing uprisings in Italy without the consent of the Hungarian Diet. The fact that he insisted upon the payment of this tax in silver rather than paper money, without taking into consideration the devaluation of the currency in 1811, effectively increased the tax by 250%. Between 1822 and 1823, resistance to the new tax spread rapidly across the Hungarian counties and although it was eventually crushed by force, its intensity led to the reconvention of the Diet in 1825 - for the first time in 13 years.

In 1823, at the height of the noble resistance, Kölcsey wrote two poems, *Zsarnok* and *Himnusz*, which testify to his own growing political commitment. In the same year, his desire to play a more active part in public life received further impetus from the discussion of plans to introduce a new literary periodical with Szemere entitled, significantly, *Élet ésLiteratura*. The journal was launched in 1826 - one year after the opening of the Diet from which the inception of the Age of Reform is conventionally dated - and it was here that Kölcsey published his first major cultural historical and political statements, *Mohács* and *Nemzeti hagyományok*. In *Mohács*, Kölcsey already promotes a progressive and inclusive concept of the nation based in an idea of a common cultural identity which extends beyond the boundaries of private property and social class:

> És mi a haza egyéb, összvetartozó nagy háznép egésznél? Minden ily nagy háznépet saját nyelv, saját szokások, saját ősek, saját hagyomány, saját jó és balszerencse kötnek együvé, s választanak el egymástól [...] Mi köt most titeket, mint egész néptömeget együvé? [...] Mi más lenne az, ha őseitek s egész házatok öröm és bú napjait Duna és Tisza parjain, palotákban és kunyhókban egyformán ülnétek! mert íme, hol a paloták urának őse győzött, vagy halt, ott győzött és halt a kunyhók lakójának őse is. Ily emlékezetnek egyetemi joga van minden szivhez. Rang és birtok egyesek sajáta: a nemzet és haza nevében mindenki osztozik.[42]

Here, Kölcsey completely rejects his earlier cosmopolitanism:

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[42] Kölcsey, op. cit., p.1007.

> Isten egy szívnek egy kebelt teremte; így egy embernek egy hazát [...] Egész világért, egész emberiségért halni: azt isten teheté; ember meghal háznépéért, ember meghal hazájáért: haladó szív többet meg nem bír.[43]

In *Magyar játékszín*, written in the following year, Kölcsey is even prepared to argue that the imitation of foreign fashions and styles leads to the moral ruin of the nation:

> Itt [...] és egyedül csak itt, e külföldiség vadászásában, fakad romlásunk forrása! Soha még egy nemzet sem romlott el, mely hazája erkölcseit és szokásait híven megörzötte.[44]

As Kölcsey's political commitment intensifies and his involvement in public life becomes more practical and direct, his new, liberal concept of the nation becomes more explicit. In 1829 he is chosen as a representative for Szatmár County and in 1832-3 attends the Diet in Pozsony. In his extensive diary account of the debates and proceedings of the Diet (*Országgyűlési napló*, written largely from memory back on his estate in Cseke in August 1833), he argues that the task of the true Hungarian patriot is to ensure:

> hogy az adozó nép nagy tömege egyszer már a polgári alkotmányba belépjen; s ezáltal az alkotmány hétszázezer puhaság és szegénység által elaljasodott lélek helyett, tíz millió felemelkedhetőt nyerjen [...][45]

Kölcsey's liberal projection of national unity, argued in directly political terms in 1833, finds its most articulate and influential cultural expression in what is undoubtedly his most significant contribution to the discursive prose of the Age of Reform, *Nemzeti hagyományok*, published in *Élet és Literatura* in 1826. Ironically, there is nothing very original about most of Kölcsey's arguments in this essay, and it is primarily as a remarkably comprehensive, coherent and eloquent work of synthesis that the text is of lasting importance.

The essay's opening claim that ages in the development of nations correspond to those in the lives of individuals - infancy, youth, adulthood and old age - had already been popularised by Herder's *Fragmente*. The same is also true of Kölcsey's subsequent claims that "A nemzeti hőskor hagyja maga után a nemzeti hagyományt" and that:

> Ahol ősi hagyomány vagy éppen nincsen, vagy igen keskeny határokban áll, ott nemzeti poézis sem származhatik; az ott születendő énekes vagy saját (tisztulást

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43 Kölcsey, p.1002.

44 Kölcsey, pp.1014-5.

45 Kölcsey, p.1240.

és folyamát nem található) lángjában sülyed el, vagy külföldi poézis világánál fog fáklyát gyújtani; s hangjai örökre idegenek lesznek hazájában.[46]

Equally Herderian is Kölcsey's repeated opposition of Hellenic (organic, natural) culture to Roman (imitative, artificial) culture. To cite only one example:

midőn a pacuviusi koturnusban Heraklesek, Thyestesek, Agamemnonok, s több görög és mindég csak görög, sohasem római hősek jelentek meg; midőn a Plautusok és Terentiusok a Tiberis partjain görög neveket hangoztattak, s görög háznépi szcénákat terjesztettek elő: nem nyilván mutatja-e ez, hogy a római poézis saját honában félig idegen volt? S ez az oka, hogy az oly erőt és virágzatot, és köz kiterjedést nem is nyerhetett, mint a görög ének nyert honában.[47]

More interesting is the way in which Kölcsey draws upon the Herder of the *Ideen* (rather than the Herder of the earlier and substantially different *Von Ähnlichkeit der mittleren englischen und deutschen Dichtkunst*, 1777) in his attempt to argue that the spread of Christianity in the Middle Ages deprived the literatures of Europe of their national character. Again the contrast is with the national specificity of Hellenic culture:

Ha a régi és új poézis különbségéről van szó, azt sem kell elfelednünk, hogy az új Európa költője a maga nemzetével nem áll a görröggel egyforma jóltevő összefüggésben. Keresztyén vallás és európai tudományos kultúra egyenlően kosmopolitismusra törekednek. Innen van, hogy az a kirekesztő, saját centruma körül forgó, de egyszersmind lelket emelő nemzetiség, mely a hellénnek tulajdona volt, Európában nem találtatik.[48]

Throughout the essay, the notion of European identity is seen as detrimental to the emergence of a distinctive Hungarian national character and culture:

Keresztyénség, politika és tudomány sokképen közelítették magyarinkat európai szomszédaikhoz; saját státusalkotvány, nyelv, szokások és kölcsönös idegenkedés sokképen visszavontak tőlök. Így történt, hogy sok európai színt vettek fel, s egyszersmind sok nemeurópait megtartottak; de ez utolsók csak félszázad előtt is sokkal szembetűnőbbek voltak, mint most; s mennél inkább enyészetére hajlanak, annál nagyobb fájdalommal érezzük, hogy nincs írónk, aki őseinket az ő egyszerű, eredeti nagyságokban előállította volna.[49]

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46 Kölcsey, p.621.

47 Kölcsey, p.642.

48 Kölcsey, p.628.

49 Kölcsey, pp.636-7.

Even in the heroic age of János Hunyadi (1407-56), when national tradtions had every reason to develop, the opportunity was regrettably neglected: "Fájdalom, mi már akkor idegen befolyásnak nagy készséggel adtunk helyet."[50] Hunyadi's second son, Mátyás (Matthias Corvinus, who ruled Hungary from 1458 until 1490) is also censured in this schema:

> Mátyás valóban királyi pártfogást adott a tudományoknak, de tudósainak, nagyrészént külföldi seregében még a hazafiak is elfeledték a nemzetiségre vetni tekinteteiket [...] Mátyás keményen bánt a nemzettel, mely őtet tömlöcéből emelte trónusra [...][51]

Here we can identify another German influence on Kölcsey's train of thought: that of Friedrich Schlegel's *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur* (1815) on which most of Kölcsey's literary historical arguments appear to be besed. Part of Schlegel's own brief section on the development of Hungarian literature seems to provide the direct source of Kölcsey's comments on the reign of Matthias Corvinus:

> Wahrscheinlich ist diese ganze alte Poesie vorzüglich erst unter Matthias Corvin untergegangen, der seine Ungarn mit einem Male ganz lateinisch und italienisch umwandeln wollte, worüber denn die Landessprache, wie natürlich, vernachlässigt ward, und die alten Sagen und Lieder in Vergessenheit gerieten.[52]

As the champion of the new "Universelpoesie" of Romanticism, however, Schlegel's attitude to national character in literature is inevitably more qualified than Kölcsey's. In his treatment of Spanish literature in the following chapter of the *Geschichte*, Schlegel makes it quite clear that he is "übrigens weit entfernt, jenen nationalen Gesichtspunkt für den einzigen zu halten, aus dem der welthistorische Wert einer Literatur zu beurteilen ist."[53] Furthermore, if Schlegel seems to share Kölcsey's misgivings about the loss of national specificity in various European literatures during the Middle Ages, he would not have identified himself with the conclusions drawn from this by the Hungarian writer with regard to the *modern* age. Insofar as his national traditions have been destroyed, Kölcsey argues, the modern poet is forced to create his own mythology out of "nothing". Kölcsey treats this new

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50 Kölcsey, p.637.

51 Kölcsey, pp.637-8.

52 Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Ausgabe*, vol VI, p.237.

53 Schlegel, p.264.

(Romantic) poetry with no less disdain than the Christian cosmopolitanism of the Middle Ages:

> az életet magasítani, s az emberiség határait kiterjeszteni akaró költő bizonyos mitológiának nemlétében egy csudálatos formákból alkotott tündérvilág felé csapongott; s így tündérezés, rittersége és szerelem vallási buzgósággal és köznépi babonával elvegyülve rendkivülvaló, bizarr világításban tüntették fel a romantikát, mi az európai poézisre még akkor sem szűnt meg fő behatással munkálni, mikor a görög és római művek új életre hozatván, követés tárgyaivá tetettek.[54]

The most important argument of *Nemzeti hagyományok* - that "a való nemzeti poésis eredeti szikráját a köznépi dalokban kell nyomozni"[55] - is, of course, no more original than any of the other claims we have been considering so far. It finds precedents not only in the work of such German writers as Herder, Görres, Arnim, Brentano and the Grimm brothers, but also, as we have seen, in the editorial statements of Kultsár between 1811 and 1818. Indeed it even suggests a certain continuity (and reconciliation) with the claim Kölcsey had attributed to Földi in his Csokonai essay - and had rejected in 1815 - that: "A köznépé az igaz magyarság, az idegennél nem egyvelgés magyarság."

Kölcsey's idea of national poetry is not, however, based in the mere imitation or reproduction of the idiom of folk poetry, for he finds much that is "vulgar", "tasteless" and indeed "laughable" in the songs of the common people.[56] The task is rather to raise or ennoble the "popular" to the level of the "national". Here Kölcsey draws upon the example of the Greeks and the Celts (clearly with Homer and Ossian in mind) as peoples who:

> az együgyü ének hangját időről időre megnemesítik, az énekes magasabb reptet vesz, s honának történeteit nevekedő fényben terjeszti elő. Az ének lépcsőnként hágó ereje lassanként vonja maga után az egykorúakat, s mindég a nemzetiség körében szállongván, állandóul ismerős marad nekiek, míg végre a bordalból egy selmai ének vagy éppen egy Ilias tűnik fel.[57]

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[54] Kölcsey, op. cit., p.627. Kölcsey also objects to what he sees as the irrationalism of Romantic theory in the essays *Levelek a mesmerizmusról* 1823, and *Az állati magnetizmus nyomairól a régiségben* 1828.

[55] Kölcsey, p.639.

[56] Kölcsey, p.635.

[57] Kölcsey, p.639.

This approach not only suggests a continuity with Kölcsey's own poetic practice in the years 1818-23 (as described in his autobiographical letter of 1833), but also anticipates the "transitional" populism of Bajza and Arany in which the assimilation of folk poetry is represented as no more than a step towards an authentic national poetry rather than, as it was to be for Petőfi, the very form of national poetry itself.

The most original aspect of Kölcsey's essay - his assessment of late 18th century Hungarian poetry - was also the least influential. It is based on an attempt to reconcile the sentimental with the national (native-naive): "a magyar karakteri szentimentalizmus [...] fő vonását [...] hazájától és nemzeti fekvésétől kölcsönözi."[58] Of all late 18th century Hungarian poets, it is only Ányos whose poetry points the way towards - without itself entirely achieving - the fusion of sentimental and naive elements Kölcsey sees as the essential ingredients of an authentically Hungarian national poetry:

> Azon kornak gyermekei körül bizonyosan Ányos az, ki leginkább saját tüzében látszik olvadni, s kinek érzése a nemzetiséggel s fantáziája a hon képeivel leginkább rokon. Soraiból egy szeliden bús, s a hazához hevülettel vonzódó léleknek harmóniája hangzik felénk; énekbe ömlő szentimentalizmusát a honszellem érzelmei által vezeti, s a lenyugvó napban a haza lebeg, mint a szeretőnek kedvelt lyánykája, szemei előtt [...][59]

For those writers of the following decades who drew much of their inspiration from Kölcsey's *Nemzeti hagyományok*, however, the sentimental example of Ányos was already seen as something of an anarchronism. Erdélyi makes no mention of Ányos at all in his wideranging literary historical essays, and Arany only makes one passing reference to his poetry in his outline for an essay on *A magyar népdal az irodalomban*, and even this is based on a point Arany makes in his teaching notes on the history of Hungarian literature: "Egy pár *dalában* a népi schémát is sükerrel alkalmazta."[60]

It is above all Kölcsey's negative attitude to foreign influences and his consolidation of a range of earlier ideas on the importance of folk poetry in the creation of a national literature which were to secure the most lasting influence in Hungarian literary history. Both ideas resurface in the work of Erdélyi, the next important theorist of Hungarian folk culture in the first half of the 19th century.

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[58] Kölcsey, p.636.

[59] Kölcsey, p.644.

[60] Arany, *Összes művei*, vol X, p.502.

Before turning our attention to Erdélyi and the radical populism of the 1840s, however, we should consider the attitudes of the *Aurora* circle to folk poetry in the late 1820s and 30s. Károly Kisfaludy's publication of 25 original "folksongs" in a single issue of *Aurora* (1829; followed by a further eight folksongs in the 1830 number) represented an event in many ways more directly significant and influential than the appearance of Kölcsey's *Nemzeti hagyományok* three years before. With the relative demise of Kazinczy's influence by the beginning of the 1820s, Károly Kisfaludy (the younger brother of the author of *Himfy* and the *Regék*) began to emerge as the unchallenged leader and idol of a new generation of Hungarian writers. By 1823, Kazinczy and most of his followers - including Pál Szemere, István Horvát, and even the onetime disciple Kölcsey - had broken with Kisfaludy's *Aurora*. In the same year, works by the seventeen year old Ferenc Toldy and the eighteen year old József Bajza began to appear in the almanach, with texts by two twenty year olds, Vörösmarty and Czuczor, appearing the following year. This new generation of Hungarian writers, who, after a remarkebly short "apprenticeship", would themselves take the helm of the national literature in the following decade, professed enormous admiration and respect for Kisfaludy. Thus, when the master himself published 25 of his own "folksongs" in the forum of the new literary vanguard, the gesture was seen as an authoritative stamp of approval on the growing literary interest in folk culture promoted by the likes of Kultsár and Kölcsey over the past two decades. Reviewing the volume of *Aurora* in question (Vol. VIII, 1829) in *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, Toldy responded to Kisfaludy's folksongs with great enthusiasm: "Kisfaludy Károly ismét új oldalát láttatja protheuszi tehetségeinek a' huszonöt népdalban."[61] He goes on to describe the challenge represented by these folksongs as follows:

> A' feladás így abban áll, a' nép' gondolkozása' 's érzése' logikáját, képzelete' módját, az eléadásban annak tónusát, a' nyelvben annak fordulatit, kedvenc szavait, szólásait, a' rímben azt a' naiv gondolatlanságot: mind összevéve úgy adni, hogy *a' mív a' nép keblében támadtnak tessék.*[62]

While later critics - from Gusztáv Szontágh onwards - would dispute the appositeness of these words as a description of most of Kisfaludy's own poems in the popular genre, it is undeniably true that Kisfaludy made a major contribution to the introduction of a configuration of popular forms, metres,

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61 Cited in Horváth, op. cit., p.161.

62 Horváth, p.161.

expressions, and themes into the mainstream of Hungarian verse, the effects of which can be identified throughout the poetry of Petőfi.

The character and implications of this configuration can best be illustrated through a comparison of one of Kisfaludy's folksongs with an example of his "art" poetry. The following two poems, *Vedd sarlódat...* (1828) and *Alkonyi dal* (1827), are among the most appropriate for such a comparison in that both represent the same period in Kisfaludy's development and both are lovesongs in which the poet addresses or entreats his beloved directly in the first person. Their diction and modes of signification are, however, quite different:

Vedd Sarlódat..

Vedd sarlódat, édes kincsem,
Aratni jer most énvelem,
Temelletted, édes rózsám,
Mindjárt jobban megy a munkám.

Danolj, rózsám! A nótában
Mint szivünkben, szerelem van,
Szép is a dal ha szerelmes,
Bús legyen bár, mégis kedves.

Kösd be fejed a kendővel,
De szép orcád ne takard el,
Virágoskert az énnekem,
Örömimet onnan szedem.

Nagyon süt a nap délfelé,
Pihenj le a kereszt mellé,
Dűlj szűrömre, édes rózsám!
Enni majd hoz édes anyám.

Én addig a kútra megyek,
Hogy friss vízzel enyhítselek,
Ha csókot adsz érte, rózsám,
Hárommal megköszöni szám.

Aratgassunk aztán megint,
Míg az este álomra int:
Ád az isten így kenyeret,
Így veszlek el én tégedet.[63]

[63] Károly Kisafaludy, *Minden munkái*, Pest, 1843, vol I, pp.175-6.

Alkonyi dal

Ím kedvesem édes! kék hegyeken túl
A nap remegő sugára leszáll,
És tiszta gyepágyon lágy pihenésre
Olly biztosan int a berki homály.

Ott gyenge fuvalmak játszva susognak,
S hű párja körül a fülmile zeng
És illatözönben zöld koszorúkkal
A boldog aranykor képe dereng.

Ott messze irigylő vizsga szemektől
A földi szokás rab féke szakad,
Csak a szerelemnek égi hatalma
Vesz kényeket és új kénybe ragad.

S mint parti virággal víg ölelésben
A feldagadó hab habbal vegyül,
Úgy kéjledez életünk egybeömölve,
Míg a gyönyörűség mélyibe dűl.

S mint a füzes ingó lombjai által
A holdnak ezüst virága ragyog:
A teljesülés szép álma felettünk
Még bájos alakban lengeni fog.

Jer, kedvesem édes! A tavasz illan,
S a fülmile nyájas zengzete múl,
Majd éji leheltén a komor ősznek
A csermelye fagy, a rózsa lehull.

Míg bátor erőben kérkedik a lét,
És a liget ernyős rejteket ad,
Most éljük az életet: hervad is az bár,
A múltnak azért emléke marad.

Nézd a magas égnes csillagírását,
Melly érzeni és szeretni tanít!

Ó hadd szemeidben visszaragyogni,
Mit lelkem epedve s égve gyanít.[64]

The comparative simplicity of *Vedd sarlódat...*, which constitutes the most obvious difference between the two poems, derives above all fom its use of repetition and lack of adjectival detail. Of the poem's ten adjectives, three are repetitions (there are three instances of "édes" and two of "szép"), while of the thirty-one adjectives of *Alkonyi dal*, only one (again "édes") is repeated. The adjectival complexity of the latter poem foregrounds the operative presence of the poetic voice and with it the (literary) activity of representation or evocation. This emphasis is corroborated by the poet's use of highly personal compound images, neologisms and the products of the Hungarian language renewal of the turn of the century ("gyepágy", "illatözön", "kéjledez", "zengzet", "csillagírás"). The lexis of *Vedd sarlódat...*, on the other hand, is devoid of these elements, and its images ("édes kincsem", "édes rózsám" etc.) function not as individual evocations of a specific reality as articulated through the personal vision of the poet, but as a set of already given, conventional and - most importantly - *communal* terms of reference. Indeed the term "édes" in phrases like "édes kincsem" and "édes rózsám" is (like the repeated "kincsem édes" in *Alkonyi dal*) actually no more adjectival than the "édes" in "édes anyám" in stanza four. It does not so much *describe* its referent as locate and identify the speaking subject within a given mode of (popular) discourse. Read as metaphors, the terms "kincsem", "rózsám" (representing the poet's sweetheart) and "virágos kert" (representing the sweetheart's face) - which constitute the only metaphors in the poem - require little active interpretation on the part of the reader in that their tenors are already fully familiar to the competence they address. In this way too, they confirm the terms of a discursive agreement between text and reader by iterating the key items of a common code, rather than presenting the reader with an individual expression of an experience, emotion or scene which in some way challenges or extends the terms of his own previous perception.

Metaphorical relationships in *Alkonyi dal* are, of course, far more complex and make greater interpretive demands on the reader. Here, most of Kisfaludy's natural images suggest a further level of signification beyond their immediate objects of reference. Thus, for example, the soft and playfully whispering breezes, the nightingale singing to its faithful mate, and the joyful embrace of the flowers on the riverbank all serve as metaphors for the poet's desire. The unmistakably erotic nature of this desire is also evoked, if more

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[64] Kisfaludy, pp.130-1.

discreetly, at one further stage of metaphorical remove, through the imagery of rising flood and effluence: "illat*özön*", "A feldagadó hab habbal vegyül", "egybe ömölve". Thus the first four stanzas of the poem - from the "gyepágy" of stanza one to the more explicitly carnal connotations it receives from the terms "kéjledez", "ömölve" and "a gyönyörűség melyibe" in stanza four - read as a metaphor for the consummation desired by the poet - which his soul "epedve s égve gyanít" - with the tranquil, reposeful atmosphere ("ingó", "lengeni") and direct reference to "teljesülés" of stanza five suggesting the projected peace which follows. In the sixth stanza - the diction and argument of which perhaps quite consciously recalls Berzsenyi's *A közelítő tél* - the poet goes on to elevate his depiction of the scene to a higher level of conceptual generality and abstraction with Spring and Autumn serving as metaphors not only for desire and fruition, but also for the essential ephemerality of human life, whose laws are reflected throughout nature and, in the closing stanza, in the astral hieroglyphics of the heavens themselves.

The range of codes and competences thus appealed to in *Alkonyi dal* is, not surprisingly, far wider than that of *Vedd sarlódat....* Apart from its pretensions as an erotic poem, *Alkonyi dal* also incorporates elements of pastoral, moral and social criticism (references to "irigylő vizsga szemek" and "A földi szokás rab féke"), philosophical abstraction (the concept of mutability), elevated poetic diction (the poem's classical metre and use of terms like "Ím" and "Jer") and intertextuality (the direct suggestion of Berzsenyi). The full meaning of the poem cannot be merely abstracted from its immediate referents in the world which lies beyond it, but is sustained in its internal organisation of distinctly *literary* devices and strategies.

The differences we have been outlining between the two poems can perhaps be exposed most emphatically by appealing to the terms and logic of Roman Jakobson's well-known conception of the six "factors" and "functions" which constitute any given speech act.[65] Thus, in *Alkonyi dal*, it is not the *context* of

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[65] See Roman Jakobson, "Concluding Statement: linguistics and poetics", in T. A. Sebeök (ed.) *Style in Language*, Cambridge, 1960. The relationships of factor to function Jacobson proposes can be summerized as follows:

context (referential)
message (poetic)

addresser ———————————————————————————

addressee

(emotive) (conative)

the speech act which is foregrounded - the external objects or situations to which the poem "refers" - but the complex inner structure of the *message* itself. The "function" of the poem is therefore, in Jakobson's schema, not *referential*, but *poetic* (or "aesthetic"). While the function of *Vedd sarlódat...* is hardly more directly referential than that of *Alkonyi dal*, the dominant factor in its communication is not the "message" - that is to say, our attention is not focussed on relations of imagery and metaphor, discursive strategy and device - but the *code*. To understand the speech act of *Vedd sarlódat* - for example, the signification of terms like "kincsem" and "rózsám", or even the particular importance attributable to items like "nóta", "kendő", "virágos kert", "szűr" and "kút" - we must not above all interpret the individual logic of the message, but rather recognise the collective code it represents. Thus, in Jakobson's terms, the function of Kisfaludy's folksong is not ultimately poetic or aesthetic, but "metalingual": the confirmation of a code common to addresser and addressee.

It is not, of course, necessary to accept Jakobson's theory of poetics and his somewhat onesidedly immanent definition of the "poetic" - which seems oblivious to the equally crucial question of *reception* in literary theory - to appreciate the suggestiveness of his schema in the context of our attempt to identify the specific character and function of the Hungarian literary folksong. For what the "populist" writers of the Age of Reform sought in this genre - and what Kisfaludy's folksong so effectively provided - was precisely a collective poetic code which could cross and extend beyond all previous boundaries of cultivation and social class in the name of a common and inclusive national poetry. This is not to suggest that folk poetry is somehow inherently less "poetic" or "literary" than art poetry, but that, in the late 1820s and 30s (and for several decades thereafter), the literary identification with folk culture answered above all to the *ideological* needs of the liberal Hungarian *literati* to bevelop a national poetic discourse based on a shared, closed and immediately recognisable system of values, images and stylistic norms. The incorporation into the national poetry of folk expressions like - to quote the extensive list of the essential ingredients of popular discourse as summarised by Horváth in his *A magyar irodalmi népiesség Faluditól Petőfiig*:

> Rózsám, violám, kincsem, galambom [...] barna hajad, szép orcád, bogárszem, barna legény, nyalka legény, piros leány; a hajnal, a rózsa, a tejben úszó rózsa, a

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contact (phatic)
code (metalingual)

> gyöngyvirág, a liliomszál, a búzavirág, a viola, a hollószárny, a kökény, a gyöngybefoglalás, a patak, a daru, a hattyú, a gyönge szellő, a fülemile, a pacsirta, a csillagok [...] a Tisza, a Duna, a Bakony, - nyáj, furulya, szűr, bunda, bokrétás kalap, pejcsikó, kasza, sarló, fejkötő, rokka [...][66]

was not considered valuable in that such terms are in any way intrinsically more "beautiful" than Kisfaludy's more individualistic compounds and neologisms, but because they provided the foundations of a common (national) cultural identity which was to find its highest and most accomplished expression in the popular-national poetry of Petőfi and Arany.

The character of *Aurora*'s literary populism changed little after Kisfaludy's death in 1832 when the editorship of the almanach was left in the competent hands of Bajza. Considering the fact that the latter's conception of the role and importance of folk poetry differed substantially from that of Kisfaludy and Toldy, this continuity is at first sight somewhat surprising. The key to Bajza's position lies in his early intellectual and temperamental formation which has much in common with that of Kölcsey. That his literary taste and aspirations are informed by a similar sentimentalism is already clear from an early letter to Toldy of September 18 1822:

> Költői szellemem, a csekély, melyet a természettől nyerek, igen hajlik a szubjektivitásra: s ezt bizonyolja az is, hogy sphérámban tetszem lenni magamnak midőn Daykának *Esdeklését* és *Titkos búját*, Szemerének *Emlékezetét, Titkos vidékét* olvasom [...][67]

This statement is born out by Bajza's own poetry in the 1820s. One example will suffice to illustrate the same sentimental configuration of lexis, idiom, theme and disposition we identified in the poetry of Kölcsey of the previous decade:

Ti a messze láthatáron
Elvonuló fellegek!
Kik reám itt hervadóra
Végbúcsúval intetek,
Merre nyúl boldog pályátok?
Tán van nektek is hazátok?
Ott a nyugti ég alatt,
Merre szárnyatok halad?

Boldogok! bár engem egy szél

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66 Horváth, op. cit., p.164.

67 *Bajza József és Toldy Ferenc levelezése*, ed. Ambrus Oltvány, Budapest, 1969, p.43.

Elfuvalna véletek
E gyászhonból, hol lekötve
Tartanak bús végzetek.
Túl a láthatatlan mezőkön,Zord pusztákon, szirttetőkön,
A nyugot szép tájihoz,
Merre lelkem vágyadoz.
(*Fellegekhez*, 1825)[68]

Like Kölcsey, the young Bajza is also influenced by the poetry of Matthisson and by the poets of the Göttingen Hainbund.[69] His taste in Hungarian literature is no less sentimental, as is illustrated by the literary evaluations and allegiances proposed in his "Wertheresque" epistolary novella, *Ottilia* (1832): while Dugonics and Gvadányi are treated with scorn, the work of Kazinczy, Kölcsey and above all Dayka is adduced with unqualified reverence.

Bajza's sentimental formation has considerable bearing on his approach to folk culture. The folksong is to be associated with only one side of the familiar opposition betwen naive and sentimental, natural and artistic, poetry. Bajza's "theory" of the "művészi népdal" (artistic folksong), as outlined in a letter to Toldy of July 31 1828, constitutes an attempt to transcend this opposition. Starting out from the conviction that the aim of art (the realisation of the "beautiful") does not directly correspond to the aims of nature, Bajza considers it the task of the artist to select and recombine the scattered ("elszórt") beauties nature none the less provides. As folksongs are themselves products of nature ("természet produktumai") rather than art, the artist's approach to the folksong must be similarly selective. Art poetry must not imitate, but *ennoble* the poetry of nature:

> Azt kívánnám a népdal-költő művésztől, hogy ne ő ereszkedjék-le a néphez, hanem egy magasabb pontot találjon s oda emelje magához a népet. Vagy hogy világosan szóljak ne a költő vetkezze-le a maga művészségét, hogy a népéhez hasonló legyen, hanem a nép szájába támadt dalt öltöztesse művészi alakba, nemesítse meg művészi gonddal.[70]

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68 József Bajza, *Válogatott művei*, Budapest, 1959, p.58.

69 See Jenő Péterfy's study *Bajza József* (1882) in Jenő Péterfy, *Válogatott művei*, Budapest, 1983, pp.474-513.

70 *Bajza József és Toldy Ferenc levelezése*, p.439.

It is significant that Bajza should see in "many of the songs of Goethe" the realisation of his ideal of the "művészi népdal";[71] it was, after all in Goethe's work that Schiller too saw the possibility of a fusion of the sentimental with the naive. It is, of course, for the same reason, that Bajza appeals to Kölcsey's *Hervadsz, hervadsz* as the most effective illustration of his theory in the Hungarian poetry of his own day.

Bajza himself paid little attention to his concept of the "művészi népdal" in his own poetic practice. His two main statements on folk poetry are both to be found in letters to Toldy - one from 1826, the year in which *Nemzeti hagyományok* appeared, the other from 1828, as a response to three folksongs by Kisfaludy which Toldy had sent him in a letter of July 24 - and he never returned to the question at any length in his later critical essays. While his most important statement on the subject - the second letter to Toldy - does echo, in words attributed to Goethe, Kölcsey's famous characterisation of the relationship between popular and national poetry ("minél elevenebb, minél természetszerűbb a naív költés valamely nemzet poézisában, annál szerencsésebben fognak kifejleni az utóbb következő epochák"),[72] this relationship does not continue to feature as an important part of Bajza's conception of literature. Indeed, his most important essay on the Hungarian national character, *Nemzetiség és nyelv* (1844), reads rather like a recapitulation of the central ideas of Kölcsey's *Nemzeti hagyományok* with the references to popular poetry omitted. It is, therefore, quite probably because Bajza's interest in folk poetry was - for all the ingeniousness of his theory - relatively superficial and shortlived that he did not attempt to impose his ideal of the "művészi népdal" on the practice of the *Aurora* poets.

If Bajza's editorship did not bring about a change of direction in the literary populism of the almanach, the main source of continuity can be identified in the popular poetry of Gergely Czuczor. Over the period of some fourteen years between the publication of Kisfaludy's first twenty-five folksongs and the appearance of Petőfi, Czuczor was the most widely admired and prolific practitioner of this genre in Hungarian poetry. Between 1830 and 1837 he published folksongs in every number of *Aurora*, amounting to a total of thirty-

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71 Ibid., p.440.

72 Ibid., p.440. Goethe's actual words, from *Noten und Abhandlungen zu Besserem Verständnis des West-Ostlicher Diwans*, are: "Naive Dichtkunst ist bei jeder Nation der erste, sie liegt allen folgenden zu Grunde; je frischer, je naturgemasser sie hervortritt, desto glücklicher entwickeln sich die nachherigen Epochen."

four poems. While an interest in popular poetry informs only one phase in the poetic development of Kölcsey, Kisfaludy and Bajza, it constitutes a major and enduring part of Czuczor's *oeuvre*. By 1844, Toldy could write of Czuczor that: "a 'népdal' költeményeiben majdnem utolérhetetlen." [73]

Czuczor's folksongs, like many of Kisfaludy's, are generally considered somewhat stilted and artificial today, and their importance lies in their conscious adoption of the earlier poet's efforts towards the "naturalisation" of popular discourse in the national poetry. Czuczor's project differs from that of his predecessors, however, in that his poems seek to address nor only the restricted, cultivated and predominantly noble readership of an organ like *Aurora*, but also the common "people" themselves. Czuczor sets out to furnish the "folk" from which the form of the folksong is originally derived with "improved" or "ennobled" songs better suited to the expression of their true feelings:

> Ideje már egyszer, hogy a Senki Pál, Angyal Bandi, Zöld Marci, Becskereki, Cigánylakodalom s több ilyféle igen aljas könyvecskénél *valamivel csinosabb népdalok is* megforduljanak a jámbor falusi ember kezei között.[74]

Czuczor's familiarity with these "aljas könyvecskék" is quite probably based in his own childhood experiences; as a child he had been made to work with his father's farmhands in the fields during his school holidays. While he spent most of his adult life in the cultivated society of Pest, Czuczor's interest in popular culture throughout his career reveals - albeit to a lesser extent than that of Erdélyi or Petőfi - an awareness (and commitment to the improvement) of the real national conditions of the Hungarian peasantry which has not been generally recognised. Perhaps the best indication of Czuczor's progressive, liberal orientation is a highly revealing, but today all but forgotten, artlicle he wrote in 1835 entitled *Szellemi mozgás Angliában, s annak haladása, tekintettel más európai nemzetekre*. In his consideration of late 18th early 19th century English poetry, Czuczor singles out the work of Burns and Crabbe for particular praise. In his discussion of Burns, for example, he writes of how the "skót földmívelő" contributed to the renewal of "English" poetry "csupa természeti fellengése által egy gyöngéded s mély érzelmű léleknek."[75] Burns, he continues:

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[73] Cited in Horváth, op. cit., p.296.

[74] Horváth, p.296.

[75] *A magyar kritika évszázadai*, ed. István Sőtér, 2-3 *Irányok* vol I, Budapest, 1981, p.243.

beérte avval, ha magát azon hajlandóságnak adá, mely a hajdani skót pornépet ihleté, mely oly gazdag a mezei költészetben, oly édes, mint a völgyeikben virágzó rekettye illata. Benne több az erő, mint amazokban, s kifakadóbb az érzés. Gondolkodása terjedtebb, heve tömöttebb. A közelgető versenygés az alsó és felső rendek között akartán kivül megindítja s elfoglalja őtet. Kebelében forr valami azon lávából, mely Rousseau-t elemészté. Ezen szó: "szabadság" nem harsant-e még? Éjszak-Amerika nem rázta-e le igáját? Nincsen-e itt a francia filozófia, mely felszablyázott karral a régi nemzeteket megrohanja és porba sújtja.[76]

Then he turns his attention to "Egy szegény pap, ki Londonba ment valami hivatalt keresni, és ki egész ifjúságát egy kisded hajlékban töltötte el, mezei visszaemlékezéseit költeménnyé próbálta alakítani."[77] The reference is to Crabbe, of whom he continues:

Nem nézé ő azokat, mint Burns, a szenvedélyek prizmáján, vagy pedig a vallásos és részegítő lelkesedés szürkületén, mint Cowper, hanem minden ideális elegyítés nélkül nyers valóságokban, kemény, bús meztelenségökben. [...] Semmirekellő gaznépek, koldusok, tolvajok és rablók, cigányok, halászok, dugárusok és kisvárosiak, házalók, tőzsérek, finom vonásaik, melyen érzett részletességeik és szorgos kidolgozásuk gyakran a hollandi oskola nagy mestereire emlékeztetnek.[78]

Finally, Czuczor directly relates the democratic aspirations of these poets to England's political development in the 1830s, concluding that:

Most többé nem a literatura, hanem főleg a politika uralkodik Angliában. Minden a pártok nagy és erőszakos mozgásának, a népségi szenvedélyeknek és filozófiai ideáknak, az intézetekkel és régi szokásokkal küszködőknek van alája vetve.[79]

It is significant that Erdélyi, who would also stress the direct relationship between literature and politics, and who favoured Czuczor above the other populists of the 1820s and 30s, is one of the few critics who *does* highlight the importance of the poet's background in the formation of the national character of his poetry:

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76 *A magyar kritika évszázadai*, pp.243-4.

77 *A magyar kritika évszázadai*, p.244.

78 *A magyar kritika évszázadai*, p.244.

79 *A magyar kritika évszázadai*, p.246.

> Czuczor, közrendű szülektől származva, tőzsgyökeres magyar vér gyermeke, tanulási pálya után is folytonos érintkezésben maradván a magyar élettel, roppant nyelvi kincsre tőn szert ez úton.[80]

It is on this basis that Erdélyi explains why Czuczor was chosen by the Academy in 1844 to edit the first comprehensive dictionary of the Hungarian language. Erdélyi also recognises that Czuczor was not only popular with the educated readers of *Aurora*, but with the "people" themselves: "Czuczor igen sok dala nem az övé többé, hanem a népé, mely azokat lekapkodta ajkairól."[81] In summarising the significance of Czuczor as a writer of folksongs, Erdélyi appeals to a combination of the very qualities Czuczor had admired in Burns and Crabbe:

> Senki sem tud naívabb és idyllibb lenni, mint ő; de viszont a nyers, a kemény markú mezeiség sincs élénkebben előadva, mint általa. Innen van, hogy népszerű dalai szinte eszményi táplálék; népünket igen megtisztelő, szerető lélek gyöngéd adományai [...][82]

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80 János Erdélyi, *Czuczor Gergely* (1854), reprinted in *Pályák és pálmák*, p.302.

81 Erdélyi, p.296.

82 Erdélyi, pp.300-1.

Chapter Six

The Triumph of Literary Populism: The 1840s

By the time János Erdélyi came to write his first highly influential statements on folk poetry in the 1840s, the cultural and political context of Hungarian literature was already quite different from that which had produced the literary populist theory of *Nemzeti hagyományok* and practice of *Aurora*. The incorporation of all social classes into the constitution which had been called for by Kölcsey in 1833 was accepted - if only in principle - by the Diet exactly ten years later, as was the concept - although again not the practice - of rendering the nobility eligible for taxation. The influence of Széchenyi, the leading light of political reform in the 1830s, had been eclipsed by the more radical and broadly based appeal of Kossuth. Where Széchenyi's complex and often ponderous books on reform had sought to create a stratum of cultivated, discriminating and politically conscious reformers - described by his term "a kiművelt emberfő", whose number constituted for Széchenyi the most important of national statistics - Kossuth, as the editor Hungary's first widely popular political newpaper, would appeal to an addressee whose role Széchenyi refused, as a matter of principle rather than unawareness, to recognise at this stage: public opinion (közvélemény). It was this last concept which formed one of the central targets of Széchenyi's book-length assault on *Petőfi Hírlap* in general and on its editor in particular in the summer of 1841 *(Kelet népe)*, leading to a major national debate from which Kossuth emerged triumphant.

The importance of public opinion in the 1840s is further illustrated by the demise of the "quality" cultural periodicals which had championed the cause of the national literature in the 1820s and 30s (such as the pioneering *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* which ceased publication in 1843, *Athenaeum* which, at one point appearing as frequently as three times a week, more than filled the gap left by the abandoned *Aurora* from 1833 to 1843, and *Hazai s Külföldi Tudósítások* whose life effectively came to an end in 1840 when it was transformed into the very different *Nemzeti Újság*) and the simultaneous rise of the popular "modeblätter" *(divatlapok)*. The most radical of these was *Életképek* (originally *Magyar Életképek*) which ran from 1843 to 1848. By

1845, the year in which it began to appear on a *regular* weekly basis, it had developed a consciously popular editorial profile: "Beszélni a közvélemény nevében, de beszélni a közvéleménynek is."[1] By 1847, Petőfi - who had first contributed to the paper in 1845 - could see *Életképek* as the ideal forum for the new representatives of literary populism and for the radical political attitudes of the Fiatal Magyarország (Young Hungary) group. As he wrote to Arany on August 17 1847:

> Én a népköltészet képviselőit akartam egyesíteni; miért az Életképekben? Mert annak legtöbb olvasója van, mert ahhoz szegődtek a legjobb fejek, mert annak szerkesztője egyik fő tagja a fiatal Magyarországnak [...][2]

In the same year, the editor of *Életképek*'s literary critical section, Károly Sükei, gave the following account of the paper's general aims:

> Irányunk központja a népszellem [...] Látjuk a népszellemet cselekvő életre éledni; látjuk, hogy az akaraté a kezdeményezés, és ez akarat új eget, új földet teremtő erő hatályának szimbolikája nekünk - mitológiánk.[3]

The effect of these developments on individual works of literature can be gauged quite effectively through a comparison of two highly influential and innovatory novels which in many respects epitomise the political perspectives of two very different decades. Thus András Fáy's *A Bélteky ház* (1832), generally considered the first Hungarian social (or critical realist) novel of the Age of Reform and written very much under the influence of Széchenyi's *Hitel* (1830), is based on an opposition between two generations in the contemporary history of the Hungarian nobility. The educated, progressive Gyula Bélteky is unable to tolerate the conventionally apathetic and hedonistic life of the traditional Hungarian nobleman as personified by his father, and leaves his homeland to broaden his horizons - like Széchenyi himself - in the liberal, constitutional democracies of the West. Returning to Hungary after his mother's death, he finds employment in the household of a squire named Uzay who, although an advocate of social and political reform, lacks the energy to put his progressive ideas into practice and withdraws from public life. At the end of the novel, Gyula marries Uzay's young widow and together they devote their lives to the improvement of the nation. The novel

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1 These are the words of the paper's editor, József Irinyi, cited in *A magyar sajtó története*, vol I (1705-1848), p.622.

2 In János Arany *Összes művei*, vol XV (Correspondence) ed. Dezső Keresztury, Budapest, 1975, p.120.

3 In *A magyar kritika évszázadai*, 2-3 *Irányok*, vol I, pp.324-5.

thus reads as a critique of the traditional values of the Hungarian nobility and as an appeal its younger generation to work towards the creation of a new Hungary. Fáy's conclusion may be summarised in the words with which Széchenyi had closed his *Hitel* two years before: "Sokan azt gondolják: Magyarország - volt; - én inkább azt szeretem hinni: lesz!"[4]

The emphasis of József Eötvös's *A falu jegyzője* (1845) - the most significant Hungarian social novel of the following decade and probably also of the first half of the century as a whole - is considerably more radical. Here, for the first time in the history of the Hungarian novel, representatives of the peasantry are not only treated with immense sympathy, but are also afforded a central (and heroic) role in the plot. Of the novel's two positive moral heroes, one (Viola) is an honest peasant forced by penury and persecution to live the life of an outlaw, while the other (Tengelyi) is an equally honest representative of the lesser nobility who offers protection to Viola and his family. Both are represented as victims of Hungary's feudal political and legal system as the novel ugres the radical reform of the nation's constitution and laws. In proposing *A falu jegyzője* as characteristic of its decade, however, it is necessary to stress one point of qualification. Eötvös's political sympathies lay with the Centralist movement which took control of *Pesti Hírlap* after Kossuth's dismissal in 1844 and which - as can be seen from the dramatic decline of the paper's readership after that date - never gained the same popularity and support enjoyed by the former editor. Although Eötvös's concerns for the plight and rights of the common people were certainly shared by Kossuth, it would be misleading to suggest the same type of parallel between these two figures as that which we were able to draw in the case of Fáy and Széchenyi. For *A falu jegyzője* represents the most articulate literary expression of Eötvös's political centralism, condemning, as an obstacle to progress, the very county system which Kossuth continued to see as the bastion of national resistance against Vienna.

A new political awareness also began to make its presence felt in the Hungarian theatre in the 1840s. The year 1843 was to be of enormous significance in this respect. It saw, for example, the staging of Ignác Nagy's intensely satirical representation of a provincial county election, *Tisztújítás*, which exercised an unmistakable influence not only on Eötvös's *A falu jegyzője*, but also on Arany's first literary "success", his satirical epic on the same theme, *Az elveszett alkotmány* (1845). The following year saw the publication - but not performance - of Károly Obernyik's more politically

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4 István Széchenyi *Összes munkái* (Fontes edition) vol II, Budapest, 1930, p.492.

radical drama on the injustices suffered by the Hungarian peasantry at the hands of the nobility, *Főúr és pór*, which - like Nagy's *Tiszújítás* - won an award from the Hungarian Academy. One of the most important developments in the positive representation of folk *culture* on the Hungarian stage came with József Gaál's highly popular dramatisation of Gvadányi's *Egy falusi nótárius budai utazása*, under the title *A peleskei nótárius*, in 1838. Gaál scored a particular success with contemporary Hungarian audiences - whose admiration for Gvadányi came to rest almost exclusively on Gaál's somewhat diluted adaptation[5] - by incorporating several folksongs into the text, together with lively scenes of outlaws singing and dancing on the Great Plain. It was again, however, in 1843 that the current director of the Hungarian National Theatre, Endre Bartay, both acknowledged and further contributed to the growing theatrical interest in the life and culture of the peasantry by anouncing a competition calling for:

> Egy a népéletből merített minden aljasságtól ment, jó irányú, látványos színműre, mely által a köznép is színházba édesgetvén, izlése nemesbítések [...][6]

The winning entry was Ferenc Ney's *A kalandor*, which saw only three performances before being dropped from the repertory and condemned to oblivion. More significant from a literary historical point of view was the play which won the second prize, *Szökött katona* - with the subtitle "eredeti színmű népdalokkal, tánccal három szakaszban" - by Ede Szigligeti, who would later coin the term *népszínmű* (Volksstück) to describe his own work. The play was an enormous success and the genre remained highly popular until near the end of the century, with the Népszínház (Folk Theatre) being founded in 1875 to promote similar productions. John Palgrave Simpson, an English visitor to Hungary in the 1840s provides a good, if somewhat over-generous, description of Szigligeti's dramas and their reception in his *Letters from the Danube* published in London in 1847:

> An actor of but moderate pretensions in his art, by name Szigligeti, has lately produced several pieces, written in a true national spirit, and acted with the greatest applause. Without pretending to the highest flights in dramatic literature, the lively, stirring, and exciting pieces of this imaginative author have the merit of containing scenes taken from daily life - pictures from the manners,

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5 Thus Erdélyi and Petőfi both refer to *Gvadányi*'s work as *A peleskei nótárius*. In fact, Gaál's "musical" drama bears little resemblance to Gvadányi's original poem. Zajtay, the notary, entirely looses the critical function he had performed in Gvadányi's text and becomes an unambiguously comic figure.

6 Cited in Béla Osváth, *Szigligeti*, Budapest, 1955, pp.51-2.

customs, and romantic life of the lower classes, and illustrative, although in a less degree, of higher society.

Generally mixed up with an original plot of deep interest, these living pictures of Hungarian life - so bright with costume and scraps of those exquisite national melodies, and that simple national poetry, in which the outbursts of applause at the theatre constantly shew the deep national pride - have a colour, a vivacity, an originality, a stamp of truth, and a flow of humour and quaintness, which deserve high praise, as what the French call *tableaux de genre.*[7]

The fact that one reviewer of *Szökött katona* (in the *Regélő Pesti Divatlap*) could claim that Szigligeti had deliberately included such "scraps" of "exquisite national melodies" and "simple national poetry" in order to be sure of a direct hit with his public itself bears eloquent testimony to the degree to which the literary preoccupation with folk culture had influenced national tastes by 1843.

In addition to the promotion of these popular preoccupations on the stage, another indication of the growing institutionalisation of literary populism in the 1840s can be seen in the character of the literary competitions organised by the Kisfaludy Társaság - established in 1836, six years after the death of Károly Kisfaludy, to promote the development of the national literature. It was, of course, for one such competition - calling for a narrative poem whose hero should be "valamely, a nép ajkain élő történeti személy" and in which both "forma és szellem népies legyen" - that Arany wrote his seminal folk epic *Toldi* in 1846.[8] The results of an earlier competition of 1841, posing the question "Mit értünk nemzetiség és népiesség alatt a költészetben? S különösen a magyar költészetre mennyi és milly befolyást gyakorlott a nemzeti és népi elem?", have been less thoroughly researched by Hungarian literary historians.[9] Of the four texts which reached the judges by the closing date of November 20 1841, the prize was awarded - at first sight, perhaps, surprisingly - to a highly abstract and theoretical essay by Godofred Müller, which demonstrated a somewhat superficial knowledge of Hungarian literature based largely on Toldy's two volume anthology of 1827-8, *Handbuch der ungarischen Poesie*, compiled in Müller's native tongue,

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7 John Palgrave Simpson, *Letters from the Danube*, London, 1847, vol I, p.270. Simpson also mentions Nagy's *Tisztújítás*, as a play "full of popular scenes admirably well 'got up', and mingled with a lively plot." p.274.

8 János Arany, *Összes művei*, vol II, Budapest, 1951, ed. Géza Voinovich, p.245.

9 *A Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, Budapest, 1842, vol III, p.31.

German. In fact, Müller's text, which stresses the universal, rather than specifically national, characteristics of folk poetry ("elintézésbeni egyszerűség, előadásbeni világosság és kifejezésbeni könnyűség")[10] only won the approval of two of the three judges: Toldy himself, and Kazinczy's former pupil, Pál Szemere. The third judge, Gusztáv Szontágh, rejected Müller's essay and his own critical statement, which appeared alongside the four entries in the third volume of the *Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai* for 1842, had much more in common with the more radically social and political emphases of two of the anonymous entries and with the spirit of the decade in general. Szontágh argued that:

> A' *nép*nek két értelme van, melynek elseje szerint külön törzsökből *népfajt*, második szerint a' nemzet *alsó osztályát*, a' *köznépet* jelenti. E' két értelmet e' jelen kérdésben egy fogalomba kell össze kötnünk.[11]

In contrast to this corporate notion of the "people", the concept of nationality only represented the interests of a single layer of society:

> A nemzetiséghez tehát a' társasági (sociális) élet' *felsőbb elemei* tartoznak, hol a' népesség mint *egész*, mint *erkölcsi test* jelenik meg.[12]

It was in the work of the Transylvanian collector of folk poetry, János Kriza (whose most important anthology, *Vadrózsák*, was completed before Erdélyi's *Népdalok és mondák*, but only published some fifteen years later in 1863), that Szontágh saw the reflection of his own political attitude to folk culture: "Krizát végre a' democrátiai álláspontón találjuk; ő már felszabadító népevangéliumról szól, hogy a' szegény magyar parasztgyereknek is legyen hazája."[13]

In the context of the present discussion, the most interesting of the four texts submitted to the Kisfaludy Társaság in 1841 is undoubtedly the anonymous essay which opens the sequence of the four entries in their published form of 1842. This essay directly challenges Kölcsey's proposition of a Hungarian "sentimental character" as expounded in *Nemzeti hagyományok* and represented both in his sentimental poetry of the 1810s and in his lament for lost golden age of the national past in his patriotic lyrics of the 1820s and 30s *(Hymnus, Zrínyi dala, Zrínyi mádosik éneke)*. According to

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10 *Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, Budapest, 1842, vol III, pp.379-80.

11 *Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, p.55.

12 *Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, p.56.

13 *Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, p.58.

the anonymous author of the competition essay, the tone of the Hungarian folksong:

> nem szomorú, hanem epedő inkább [...] Magyart sírni, ha csak fájdalma nem óriási, nem hallottam; akkor is sírása méreg és bosszú hangja volt, nem kétségbeesése.[14]

On the opposition of the barren present to a glorious past, the essay argues: "Népünk jelenén eped: mert levert sorsát érzi. Eped még a jövőért is, mert lát erőt magában, mi őt kivívandja."[15] From this the author is able to conclude that: "a magyarnak egy nagy jelleme: *remény a jövőben*."[16] In this he not only challenges the mentality which informs the great national lyrics of the Age of Reform (from, for example, Berzsenyi's *A magyarokhoz* - "Romlásnak indult, hajdan erős magyar!" - through the poems of Kölcsey already mentioned to Vörösmarty's *Szózat*), but also anticipates the forward-looking perspective of Petőfi's *A XIX. század költői*, together with the latter poet's attitude to the national past as expressed in his recommendation to Arany not to write poetry about the nation's historic kings and noblemen, however heroic they may have been.[17]

One Hungarian literary historian has suggested that the author of this competition entry may have been János Erdélyi.[18] While there is little concrete evidence to support such a view, it can certainly be argued that Erdélyi adopts and develops several of the essay's key themes and emphases, and that his approach to folk culture in the 1840s has more in common with the essay's political orientation than with the aesthetic idealism of a Müller or a Bajza. In his essay on Vörösmarty of 1845, Erdélyi writes quite explicitly about what he sees as the relationship of literature to politics:

> Nemcsak azt merem állítani, hogy politikai reformunkat megelőzvén az irodalmi, tehát eszközlötte is; hanem többet ennél: nevezetesen, hogy az eltévedt, vagy minden bizonynyal tévedező politikát is az fogja kivezetni egyenesb útra, biztosabb pályára. És ez elég, megmutatni az irodalminak a

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14 *Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, p.44.

15 *Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, pp.44-5.

16 *Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, p.45.

17 In János Arany *Összes művei*, vol XV, op. cit., p.56.

18 See István Fenyő, *Nemzet, nép-irodalom*, Budapest, 1973, p.377.

> politikai felett való elsőségét. Soha se menjünk példáért más népekhez. Itt vagyunk mi.[19]

The last two sentences of this statement are also central to Erdélyi's prescriptive characterisation of the national literature itself. Throughout his career, Erdélyi remained firmly opposed to the imitation of foreign literary styles and movements, and insisted, with Kölcsey, on the derivation of the national literature from Hungarian folk poetry. At the same time, however, we can identify throughout Erdélyi's work an apparent tension between an emphasis on the nationally specific and on the universally human, *reinmenschlich* or - in his own phrase - "tisztán emberi" in Erdélyi's appeal to the character and value of such a poetry. It is a tension he inherits, in part, from Herder who, while profoundly interested in the idea of national character,[20] could develop a totally cosmopolitan concept of folk poetry, and could at once claim that:

> not a man, not a country, not a people, not a national history, not a state, are like one another. Hence the true, the good, the beautiful in them are not similar either.[21]

while also arguing that the "inter-national transmission of social cultures in indeed the *highest form of cultural development which nature has elected.*"[22]

The influence of Herder's notion of *Naturpoesie* can already be felt in Erdélyi's first important theoretical statement, *Népköltészetről*, his inaugural address to the Kisfaludy Társaság in 1842:

> Kétségtelen, hogy az előidő nem sokkal dicsekhetik a természet adományain kivül. Nincs ugyan műveltség, de annál ébrebb a kedély, annál inkább megvan az érzelmek acélpengése [...][23]

Here too Erdélyi reproduces the Herderian tension between the local and the universal. On the one hand, he speaks of how, from the earliest times, "megnyeri a nép a maga zamatját" and of how a people will develop its own

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19 János Erdélyi, *Pályák és pálmák*, Budapest, 1886, p.149.

20 See, for example, *Herders Werke*, vol I, p.263; vol II, p.160; vol III, p.30; vol V, p.185, p.217.

21 Cited in Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder*, p.210.

22 *Herder on Social and Political Culture*, 1969, p.174.

23 János Erdélyi, *Válogatott művei*, Budapest, 1961, p.157. Here, Erdélyi also follows Herder in his proposition of the historical precedence of poetry over historiography: "minden népnek előbb van költészete, mint históriája" p.155.

specific "alaphang' (basic tone) and "alapérzés" (basic feeling) which will serve to constitute the "eredeti vonása, kinyomata [...] a nép sajátságának".[24] He goes on to argue, on the other hand, that "a népköltészet mindig a tisztán emberi felé irányul" and, in a phrase reminiscent of Wordsworth's Preface to The *Lyrical Ballads*, that "itt [ie. in folk poetry] látszik az ember minden alság nélkül embernek."[25] Soon after this, however, he again reinforces his earlier notion of the national specificity of folk culture by speaking of those determining characteristics ("sajátságok") of any given folk poetry "miket az iskola graecismus, gallicismus stb nevek alatt ismeri."[26]

In his next important statement on the subject, *A magyar népdalok* (1846) - which forms the introduction to the second volume of his collection *Népdalok és mondák* - the emphasis falls more firmly on the national characteristics of Hungarian folk poetry. As an epigraph to this introduction, Erdélyi chooses Kölcsey's famous claim that "a valódi nemzeti poésis eredeti szikráját a köznépi dalokban kell nyomozni", and the earlier writer's objection to foreign influences is reproduced throughout Erdélyi's text. Thus Erdélyi can speak of literary works written in Hungarian whose "soul" is none the less "foreign", commenting that "mely foka ez a süllyedésnek."[27] In order to create a genuinely Hungarian national poetry ("igaz magyar nemzeti költészet") it will be necessary to shake off "az idegen műveltség befolyásának igáját [...] nyakunkról és megszólalni, mint szólnunk istentől adatott."[28] The first step towards achieving this ideal is to find

> azon alaphangokat, melyekhez távolról sem férkezhetek idegen. Ilyeket találunk bőven a népi költészetben, habár töredékesen s nem oly virító épen is, mint a nemzet ifjúsága idején lehettek.[29]

It is not only the national literature, Erdélyi goes on to argue, which stands to benefit from the study of Hungarian folk poetry:

> Van azonban az irodalmin kivül más tekintet is, mely a népi költészetet a kor egyik és fő szükségévé teszi, s ez a magyar nép lélektudománya.[30]

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[24] Erdélyi, p.156.

[25] Erdélyi, p.160.

[26] Erdélyi, p.162.

[27] Erdélyi, p.203.

[28] Erdélyi, pp.202-3.

[29] Erdélyi, p.203.

In this attempt to posit a distinctively national psychology or Hungarian nature ("magyar természet" - a phrase Erdélyi uses later on in his text), Erdélyi drifts still further from his earlier identification of folk poetry with the "tisztán emberi". While it is tempting to explain this increased emphasis on the local over the universal in terms of the growing political movement towards national independence in the latter half of the decade, to do so would be to ignore the survival of this dichotomy in Erdélyi's thought well into the 1860s. Indeed, perhaps his most important retrospective discussion of the development of the national literature, *Pályák és pálmák* - which revives most of his key ideas of the 1840s - was first published in the *Budapesti Szemle* in the year of the *Ausgleich* (1867), less than a year before Erdélyi's death. In this major essay we continue to find the same juxtaposition of Erdélyi's broadly naive conception of folk poetry - "kezdetben volt az egyszerű, vagy kezdetben volt a népköltészet", or later: "a szépirodalomnak a népi felé hajlása vagy elsajátítása tehát mint előlegesen is láthatni, nem visszaesés, hanem visszatérés az eredetihez" - and his more specifically *native* conception, with its obvious (and still fully acknowledged) debt to Kölcsey: "A nemzeti költészet a határozottságot, melyre utalva van, a népi elem által éri el."[31]

The immediate context of these reformulations of Erdélyi's earlier positions is now, however, a conscious polemic against Goethe's idea of *Weltliteratur*:

> A világirodalom egységet alkuszik, mint politikában a cosmopolitismus, s megöli a nemzetiségek irodalmát, történelmi voltát, és ájtattal helyezkedik az egyetemes emberiségi szempontra, színvonalra.[32]

It is ultimately the development of Erdélyi's argument against the concept of world literature which provides the key to an understanding of the apparent contradiction in his thought between the "tisztán emberi" and the specifically national. For behind this "cosmopolitan" concept Erdélyi sees what he refers to as "a legfőbb szép elmélete" (the theory of the highest beauty), which he in turn condemns as a product of aesthetic "idealism" (eszményiség). The terms of this last argument lead us back to another crucial dualism in Erdélyi's thought which he first names and discusses at length in a key essay of 1847, and which frequently resurfaces in his writings thereafter.

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30 Erdélyi, pp.203-4.

31 Erdélyi, *Pályák és pálmák*, p.23; p.32; p.31.

32 Erdélyi, *Pályák és pálmák*, p.25.

The title of this essay is *Egyéni és eszményi*: two terms which represent, for Erdélyi, two opposing approaches to the expression of reality - and above all human reality - in art. According to the "individual" *(egyéni)* conception, the function of art is to represent the human not as an *essence*, but always as a specific *instance*, depicted in its separation and independence ("különváltságában és önállásában") from the general characteristics of the species as a whole.[33] According to the "ideal" *(eszményi)* conception, on the other hand, the function of art is to represent essence *in* instance: the species in the individual ("egyénben a *nemet* [...] előállítani").[34] The essay goes on to defend the former conception, while attacking the implications of aesthetic idealism in the work of Winckelmann and Schiller in Germany and in the work of Kazinczy, Berzsenyi, Kölcsey and, above all, Bajza in Hungary. Erdélyi's quotation from one of Bajza's contributions to *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* of 1828 gives the clearest idea of the type of idealism to which he so strongly objects. Bajza's reasoning here has much in common with that which informs his theory of the "művészi népdal" formulated in the same year:

> A költőnek, amint tudva van, egyik fő kötelessége a tárgyak idealizálása; mely nem egyéb, mint a természetben lévő kép, cselekedet és érzeménynek a lehető tökéletig emelt *megnemesítése*. A valódi költő ezen postulátumnak akként szokott megfelelni, hogy tárgyaiból minden aljast, mindennapit elhagy s csupán a tökélet elszórt sugarait gyűjtvén egybe, azokat olvasztja egy bizonyos pontban harmóniai vegyülettel össze.[35]

For Erdélyi, the duty of the artist is quite the opposite; he must concern himself not with the ideality of the object, but with its "individuality" or, to use the term he coins to express the same idea in *Pályák és pálmák*, its "specificity" (különösség). According to Erdélyi:

> tárgyával a költő legszorosabban tartozik megbarátkozni, azaz megtudni annak állandó és múló tehát szükséges és esetleges jegyeit. Ezen lépés megszerzi a költőnek a felfogás helyességét, azaz segíti felfogni a tárgyát annak természete, belsője szerint úgy, mint más tárgy fel nem fogható, csak éppen az.[36]

Towards the end of his essay, Erdélyi appeals to the examples of folk and national poetry as paradigms of *individual* art in that they constitute

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33 Erdélyi, *Egyéni és eszményi*, in *Válogatott művei*, p.208.

34 *Válogatott művei*, p.209.

35 *Válogatott művei*, p.221.

36 *Válogatott művei*, p.209.

expressions of a specific reality rather than of a universal ideal. Idealists will therefore be unable fully to appreciate these two types of poetry as they both diverge "az általános széptől". Erdélyi goes on - quite conceivably with the example of Godofred Müller in mind:

> Tanúi ennek irodalmunkban leginkább azon pályairatok, melyek népi és nemzeti költészetről iratván, sehogy sem tudnak hidat verni az ideális szépségű és nemzeti költészet között, s kénytelenek valának ürességet hagyó szókéssel bukfencezni át az általányból a vérrel és hússal jelzett költészeti valódiságba, minő a nemzeti költészet.[37]

Erdélyi's conception of the *individual* in art helps to explain why, in his essay of 1842 *(Népköltészetről)*, he can speak of folk poetry as an embodiment of *both* the "tisztán emberi" *and* the specifically local or national. For in folk poetry - as a fundamentally *individual* art form - the "human" does not appear as the representation of a universal ideal (the species in the individual), but as a specific and unique instance, or concrete realisation, of merely one of the endless possibilities of its species being. In this way we can interpret Erdélyi's emphasis on the national character of Hungarian folk poetry in his second major essay on the subject, *A magyar népdal* (1846), as - at least according to the terms of Erdélyi's own logic - a *necessary* preoccupation with the individual realisation of a general concept or configuration of possibilities. Thus, with Erdélyi, Schiller's *ideal* concept of the "naive" is transformed into an *individual* expression of the "native".

To argue - as several Hungarian literary historians have argued with considerable justification - that Erdélyi's theories concerning the role and character of Hungarian literary populism find their most articulate and accomplished poetic practitioner in Sándor Petőfi is, ironically, to question the immediate influence and exigency of Erdélyi's theoretical project. For Petőfi was already producing some of the greatest masterpieces of the Hungarian naive-native configuration not only before Erdélyi's theories were widely known, but also completely in spite of (or indeed, as Petőfi himself saw it, precisely to spite!) the prescriptions of any critic or theoretician. This is not, of course, to say that Petőfi remained unaware of, or oblivious to, the dominant populist tastes of his day. We have, for example, already mentioned his debt to Gvadányi - albeit as mediated by Gaál, in whose *A peleskei nótárius* the young Petőfi had played the part of Gazsi Baczur - and to Czuczor. He also appears to have been directly influenced by Erdélyi's brother-in-law, Sándor Vachott, with whom he discussed the importance of

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[37] *Válogatott művei*, p.224.

the folksong during his stay in Pozsony (Bratislava) during the spring and summer of 1843, and by Bajza who, according to one of Petőfi's letters (June 1 1843), advised the young poet to experiment with folk poetry on the basis of the former's own theories. Particularly between the years 1842 and 1844, Petőfi's folksongs and genre poems based on scenes and episodes from rustic life have much in common with the consciously popular poetry of Kisfaludy and Czuczor, not only in object and theme, but also in lexis, diction and prosody. Already, however, Petőfi's folk poems are more effective than those of his predecessors in that they are more lively and dramatic, and read not as products of conscious imitation, but as highly convincing expressions of the poet's own personality. This is not to suggest that Petőfi's poetry is in any way "confessional"; for Petőfi delights in experimenting with popular roles and personae as his poetry shifts effortlessly and untiringly from one rustic location to another. Behind all these roles and situations, however, remains the same immediacy, naturalness and sense of community - together with an unmistakable energy and appetite for experience - which characterises all of Petőfi's work.

These characteristics provide the key to the continuity between Petőfi's folksongs and all the other major aspects of his poetry - from the comic epic to the lovesong, from the revolutionary lyric to the realistic description of nature. Whereas the folksongs and "art" poems of Károly Kisfaludy are easily distinguishable, it was one of Petőfi's most important contributions to the development of Hungarian populism to extend those characteritics considered most valuable in folk poetry well beyond the genres and forms with which they had been conventionally associated. In this way the work of Petőfi can in many ways be seen as the realisation of the aspirations of Kölcsey and Erdélyi towards a new species of *national* poetry which would both incorporate and further develop existing folk traditions.

The three determinant constituents of this poetry - immediacy, naturalness and community - all play a crucial part in Schiller's formulation of his concept of the naive, and, as the following discussion of their role in Petőfi's work will attempt to show, Petőfi may be seen as the paradigm of the naive poet in Hungarian literary history.

By the term "immediacy" I mean to foreground the *appearance* in Petőfi's poetry of an "unmediated", unalienated relationship between subject and object, sign and referent, art and life, which stands in direct contrast to the alienated subjectivity of sentimental discourse. Schiller speaks of how, in

naive expression, "the sign completely vanishes in what is being signified."[38] This linguistic vanishing act can never, of course, be anything more than an illusion, but it is an illusion none the less masterfully sustained by the simplicity and apparent effortlessness of Petőfi's poetic language:

> Fa leszek, ha fának vagy virága.
> Ha harmat vagy: én virág leszek.
> Harmat leszek, ha te nap sugár vagy...
> Csakhogy lényink egyesüljenek.[39]

Schiller's claim that, in naive poetry, the poet "is the Creation, and the Creation is He" is also pertinent to Petőfi's writing, where it is almost impossible to mark the boundary between poetry and biography, art and life. As Antal Szerb comments in his *Magyar irodalomtörténet*: "[Petőfi] költészetében nincsen törés élmény és költői feldolgozás között: az élmény olyan egyenesen lesz irodalommá, mint a nagy naplóírók naplóiban."[40] One might go still further and suggest that, for Petőfi, all experience is already inherently poetic, and poetry little more than the form and medium of experience. The experience can range from the trivial - the poet goes into the kitchen to look at a pretty girl *(Befordultam a konyhára)* - and anecdotic - the poet's encounter with an innkeeper's wife on the Great Plain *(Hortobágyi kocsmárosné)*, or his account of an overheard dialogue between a young lover and his wise old neighbour *(Furcsa történet)* - to the political - the poet addressing the nation *(Nemzeti dal)* - and the tragic and heroic - the poet's experience of battle *(Négy nap dörgött az ágyu, Csatában)*. Naive poetry is the *witness*[41] of experience, and not, as for the sentimental character, the interpreter of experience from the (alienated) remove of reflection. In any account of the revolutionary events of March 15 1848, for example, Petőfi's *Nemzeti dal* will figure among the events themselves, rather than among attempts at their interpretation. The episodes of Petőfi's short but eventful life do not require to be "idealised" or, in Novalis's phrase, "romanticised" in order to be rendered poetic; poetry is no more than an extension of the real.

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38 "Wo das Zeichen ganz in dem Bezeichneten Verschwindet" Schiller, op. cit., p.426.

39 Sándor Petőfi, *Összes művei*, ed. B. Varjas and V. Nyilassy, Budapest, 1951-64, vol I, p.309.

40 Antal Szerb, *Magyar irodalomtörténet*, p.379.

41 Schiller contrasts naive poets as the "witnesses" of nature to sentimental poets as the "avengers" of nature. Schiller, op. cit., p.432.

This emphasis on reality over ideality suggests a further parallel between the immediacy of Petőfi's poetry and Schiller's concept of the naive. For, unlike the sentimental poet whose work is characterised by "the elevation of reality to the ideal", Schiller's naive poet is concerned with "the most complete *imitation of the real.*"[42]

Petőfi's much acclaimed "lyrical realism" should also be seen, of course, as a realisation of Erdélyi's concept of the *individual,* based on an intimate familiarity with, and concern for, the specificity of the object. The language of Petőfi's folk poetry, for example, is the language of real people in real situations and makes few concessions to the conventions of poetic diction. The most obvious concession is, of course, rhyme, but even here the illusion of immediacy is generally sustained insofar as Petőfi's rhymes - except when they are the direct sources of irony or parody - usually give the impression of being so natural and unobtrusive as themselves to "vanish in what is being signified".

Still more realistic and individual are Petőfi's poetic descriptions of natural scenes, especially those poems which depict the distinctive, changing faces of the Hungarian plains in different seasons, moods and perspectives (eg. *Az alföld, A puszta télen, A téli esték, A tisza, Kiskunság*). These poems are devoid of Romantic pantheism and have little in common with either the sentimental subjectification of nature we saw in the work of Ányos or the (Romantic) metaphorical reappropriation of nature after the fashion of the poet's inner vision which we shall find in the poetry of Vörösmarty. Both of these two latter gestures are products of the alienation of subject from object, man from nature, which - with the exception of the poems of, or directly surrounding, the *Felhők* cycle to which I shall return briefly in the next chapter - rarely finds expression in Petőfi's verse.

Petőfi's attitude to, and representation of, nature again suggests parallels with Schiller's concept of the naive. Unlike the sentimental poet who is condemned to seek "lost nature", Petőfi is entirely at home in the natural world:

> Lenn az alföld tengersík vidékin
> Ott vagyok honn, ott az én világom;
> Börtönéből szabadult sas lelkem,

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42 "die möglichst vollständige *Nachahmung des Wirklichen*"
Schiller, op. cit., p.437.

Ha a rónák végtelenjét látom.
(Az alföld)[43]

and sees it as an extension of his own being

Megtestesülése te érzékeimnek,
Magas, fényes, hő napsugár.
(Én és a nap)[44]

That the human world should be an inseparable extension of the natural world is for Petőfi no more than an axiom which it does not cross his mind to question:

Az erdőnek madara van
És a kertnek virága van
És az égnek csillaga van
S a legénynek kedvese van.
(Az erdőnek madara van)[45]

This proposed harmony or continuity between nature and man is frequently articulated in Petőfi's verse by means of a convention he adopts from folk poetry: the depiction at the beginning of a poem of a natural scene in order to introduce or symbolise the essence of the personal episode which follows. The relationship between the two discrete parts of the text is generally one of metaphorical analogy, rather than metonymical causality or temporal continuity:

A virágnak megtiltani nem lehet,
Hogy ne nyíljék, ha jön a szép kikelet;
Kikelet a lyány, virág a szerelem,
Kikeletre virítani kénytelen.
(A virágnak megtiltani nem lehet...)[46]

Hull a levél a virágról,
Elválok én a babámtól
(Hull a levél a virágról...)[47]

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43 Petőfi, op. cit., vol I, p.107.

44 Petőfi, vol I, p.332.

45 Petőfi, vol II, p.213.

46 Petőfi, vol I, p.51.

47 Petőfi, vol I, p.240.

Le az égről hull a csillag:
Szemeimből könnyek hullnak.
(Le az égről hull a csillag...)[48]

Reszket a bokor, mert
Madárka szállott rá.
Reszket a lelkem, mert
Eszembe jutottál [...]
(Reszket a bokor, mert...)[49]

Petőfi's attitude to nature is inseparable from his attitude to poetry. Indeed, at one point he even claims to derive his understanding of the former from his study of the latter:

> Ez ismét szép napja volt életemnek, nagyon szép. A természettel mulattam, az én legkedvesebb barátommal, kinek semmi titka nincs előttem. Mi csodálatosan értjük egymást, és azért vagyunk olyan jó barátok. Én értem a patak csörgését, a folyam zúgását, a szellő susogását és a fergeteg üvöltését ... megtanított rá a világ mysteriumainak grammaticája, a költészet.[50]

More frequently, however, this emphasis is inverted, and Petőfi bases his aesthetics on the principle of "naturalness": "A mi igaz, az természetes, a mi természetes, az jó és szerintem szép is. Ez az én aestheticám."[51] In one of his most characteristic *ars poetica* statements, *A természet vadvirága* (1844), he writes:

Nem verték belém tanítók
Bottal a költészetet
Iskolai szabályoknak
Lelkem sosem engedett.
Támaszkodjék szabályokra,
Ki szabadban félve mén.
A korláttalan természet
Vadvirága vagyok én.[52]

These lines are reminiscent not only of Batsányi's celebration of the naive naturalness of Ossian, but also of Schiller's following characterisation of the naive genius:

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48 Petőfi, vol I, p.250.

49 Petőfi, vol II, p.124.

50 Petőfi, vol V, p.62.

51 In János Arany, *Összes művei*, vol XV, (Correspondence) p.73.

52 Petőfi, vol I, p.222.

> Unaquainted with the rules, the crutches of weakness and the taskmasters of perversity, guided alone by nature or instict, his guardian angel, he moves calmly and surely through all the traps of false taste in which he who is not a genius, if he is not clever enough to avoid them from afar, remains inevitably entangled.[53]

Schiller also relates the "natural simplicity" of naive poetry to its inherent realism in a claim - which we have already quoted in part - particularly pertinent to Petőfi's work:

> in the state of natural simplicity, where man still functions together with all his powers as a harmonious unit, where the whole of his nature expresses itself completely in reality, [the aim of the poet is] the most complete *imitation of the real* [...][54]

Petőfi saw the realisation of many of his own poetic aspirations in Arany's "naive epic" *Toldi* (1846). In the celebratory poem he sent to Arany on February 4 1847 - as part of the letter which opens their fascinating correspondence - Petőfi identifies both of the crucial elements we have been considering - immediacy and naturalness:

> Dalod mint a puszták harangja, egyszerű,
> De olly tiszta is, mint a puszták harangja [...]
>
> Az iskolákban nem tanulni, hiába,
> Illyet ... a természet tanított tégedet [...]

before going on to appeal to a third, community:

> S ez az igaz költő, ki a nép ajkára
> Hullatja keblének mennyei mannáját.

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53 "Unbekannt mit den Regeln, den Krücken der Schwachheit und den Zuchtmeistern der Verkehrtheit, bloss von der Natur oder dem Instinkt, seinem schützenden Engel, geleitet, geht es ruhig und sicher durch alle Schlingen des falschen Geschmackes, in welchen, wenn er nicht so klug ist, sie schon von weitem zu vermeiden, das Nichtgenie unausbleiblich verstrickt wird."

Schiller, op. cit., p.424.

54 "in dem Zustände naturlicher Einfalt, wo der Mensch noch, mit allen seinen Kräften zugleich, als harmonische Einheit wirkt, wo mithin das Ganze seine Natur sich in der Wirklichkeit vollständig ausdrückt, die möglichst vollständige *Nachahmung des Wirklichen*"

Schiller, p.437.

A szegény nép! ollyan felhős láthatára,
S felhők közt kék eget csak néhanapján lát.[55]

Petőfi's identification with the "people" seeks to restore to Hungarian poetry what Schiller had seen as the naive sense of community so characteristic of the ancients, but lost to his own age. While the naive ancients were "united with themselves and happy in the feeling of their humanity", we, the sentimental moderns, are "in discord with ourselves and unhappy in the experience of humanity" and therefore have "no more urgent interest than to flee out of it".[56] Again apart from the poems of the *Felhők* cycle, there is little evidence in Petőfi's work of the kind of discord and compulsion to flee humanity that can be identified in the early of Kölcsey or in the mature Vörösmarty (eg. *Az emberek*, 1846). Petőfi's poetry not only captures the character, experience, spirit and idiom of the coherent (folk) community which forms both its object and addressee, but also shows enormous sympathy - based in a close familiarity - with the community in whose name it speaks. For there is nothing "folkloristic" about Petőfi's interest in, and identification with, the people and their culture. Petőfi does not collect folksongs as an outsider, but 'inhabits" and *extends* their idiom from the inside as if it were his own "natural" language. Unlike Kölcsey, Kisfaludy, Bajza and even Czuczor, Petőfi does not consider folk poetry from above, as something to be raised or ennobled to the level of art poetry - or at least, in Czuczor's case, to be "improved" for popular consumption. He is concerned not so much with a matrix of poetic possibilities (formal, thematic, idiomatic) upon which the national culture can draw, but with a whole way of life and attitude to the world. Thus *János vitéz* (1845) brings to life not only the familiar themes and characters of folk poetry (the foundling shepherd boy and his cruel foster-father, the pretty orphan girl and her wicked stepmother), but also the morality, mythology and dreams of the common people. Petőfi even reproduces - lovingly, if not without more than a hint of irony - the limitations of this people's knowledge of the world beyond the confines of their immediate environment and daily life:

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55 Petőfi, vol II, p.147.

56 "Einig mit sich selbst, und glücklich im Gefühl seiner Menschheit"; "uneinig mit uns selbst, und unglücklich in unsern Erfahrungen von Menschheit"; "kein dringenderes Interesse haben, als aus derselben herauszufleihen".

Schiller, op. cit., p.431.

Ekképen jutottak át Lengyelországba,
Lengyelek földjéről pedig Indiába;
Franciaország és India határos,
De köztök az út nem nagyon mulatságos.[57]

This statement is, paradoxically, highly characteristic of Petőfi's poetic realism: for what is being presented here is not above all a travesty of cartography, but a "faithful" representation of the topography of the rustic mind. That the narrating subject should be situated *within* this topography (and tropology), rather than occupying the privileged space of the superior observer, is itself an indication of the dept of Petőfi's identification with the community whose "reality" he portrays.

While Petőfi does not share the ambition of earlier writers to "improve" popular poetry, he *is* committed, both in his poetry and in his political activity, to the improvement of the social and political fortunes of the "people". In this he is more radical than any of his poetic predecessors (including Kölcsey), and it is here that his literary populism extends beyond the concerns of Schiller's naive and Herder's *Naturpoesie*. Two years after Erdélyi emphasises the relationship between literature and politics in his essay on Vörösmarty (1845), Petőfi restates this relationship in his opening letter to Arany in terms of a programme more farreaching than anything Erdélyi could have originally conceived:

> Hiába, a népköltészet az igazi költészet. Legyünk rajta, hogy ezt tegyük uralkodóvá! Ha a nép utalkodni fog a költészetben, közel áll ahhoz, hogy a politicában is uralkodjék, s ez a század föladata, ezt kivívni czélja minden nemes kebelnek, ki megsokalta már látni, mint mártírkodnak milliók, hogy egy pár ezren henyélhessenek és élvezzenek. Égbe a népet, pokolba az aristokrátiát![58]

When, in his reply of February 11 1847, Arany suggests the idea of writing a "serious" (komoly) folk epic on a national historical theme, Petőfi expresses his approval, but with the following qualification: "Csak királyt ne végy hősödnek, még Mátyást se."[59] As we have seen, Kölcsey too had been critical of King Matthias - whose reign had generally been idealised by the 18th century - insofar as he had allowed the nation to come under the sway of foreign (scholarly) influences. The nature of Petőfi's objection is, however,

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57 Petőfi, vol I, p.193.

58 In János Arany, *Összes művei* (Correspondence) op. cit., p.50.

59 Ibid., p.56.

quite different, and serves to ilustrate the new political orientation of his literary populism. For Petőfi, the problem with Matthias is the very fact that he was a king, and thus no better than any other: "egyik kutya, másik eb."[60]

Another more immediate discontinuity between the populism of Kölcsey and Petőfi concerns their very different understanding of what is actually signified by the collective term, the "people" (nép). Kölcsey differentiates between the terms "popular" and "pöbelhaft", and between the terms "populus" and "plebs",[61] just as Herder had argued before him that: "Volk heist nicht, der Pöbel auf den Gassen, der singt und dichtet niemals, sondern schreit und verstümmelt."[62] For both Kölcsey and Herder, "das Volk" is primarily a *cultural*, rather than a political entity. When Petőfi speaks "in the name of the people" ("a nép nevében"), he speaks not only for the voice "der singt und dichtet", but also for the destitute vagrant *(A vándorlegény)*, the beggar *(A koldus sírja)*, the political captive *(A rab)*, the impoverished innkeeper *(A jó öreg kocsmáros)* and the common soldier *(Tiszteljétek a közkatonákat)*. And what he demands for the people is not "ennobled" folksongs, but political rights:

Jogot a népnek, az emberiség

Nagy szent nevében, adjatok jogot,
S a hon nevében egyszersmind, amely
Eldől, ha nem nyer új védőoszlopot
(A nép nevében)[63]

for, as Petőfi remarks in an earlier poem, (*A nép*, 1846) - in a phrase reminiscent of that of the anonymous competitor in the Kisfaludy Társaság competition of 1841: "hol joga nincs, hazája sincs" - "Haza csak ott van, hol jog is van."[64]

Although denied an active part in the political life and constitution of the nation, the "people" of (and for) whom Petőfi's poetry speaks are not therefore portrayed as unrepresentative of the Hungarian national character. It is, on the contrary, the contemporary Hungarian nobleman who appears as

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60 Ibid., p.56.

61 In a letter to Gábor Döbrentei of May 3 1815; in Ferenc Kölcsey *Összes művei*, p.1460.

62 *Herders Werke*, vol XXV, p.323.

63 Petőfi, vol II, p.159.

64 Petőfi, vol II, p.87.

"meggyalázott / Ősének szelleme" *(A nemes)*, and shows no interest whatsoever in the plight of his homeland *(A magyar nemes)*. Petőfi's "people", precisely because they are portrayed realistically - or, in Erdélyi's sense, "individually" - are necessarily invested with a distinctively local or national character. They represent not the *ideal* rustic community of pastoral, but the individual and nationally specific community of the Hungarian folk world.

At the same time, however, Petőfi's *native* poetry is also informed by a further political consideration which, once again, takes it beyond the immediate terms of reference of the naive-native configuration we have been considering so far. Petőfi's intense patriotism, albeit qualified by his parallel aspiration towards "world liberty" (világszabadság - the liberation of all oppressed people, represented in *Egy gondolat bánt engemet* as the only cause worth dying for), and by the fact that many of his patriotic poems were written to address a revolutionary situation and as a call to arms during the subsequent War of Independence, none the less distances his work from the "Volksgeist" philosophy of Herder of which it is itself, in part, a product. For while Petőfi"s objection to foreign cultural influences *(Az utánzókhoz, Az én pegazusom)* suggests a direct continuity with the positions of Kölcsey and Erdélyi, his patriotic poetry tends towards a type of nationalism more extreme and schematic than anything which had gone before. Petőfi not only stresses the virtue of loving one's homeland, but also the *superiority* of his own nation over others:

Járjatok be minden földet,
Melyet isten megteremtett,
S nem akadtok bizonyára
A magyar nemzet párjára.
(A magyar nemzet)[65]

Magyar vagyok. Legszebb ország hazám
Az öt világrész nagy területén.
Egy kis világ maga. Nincs annyi szám,
Ahány szépség gazdag kebelén.
(Magyar vagyok)[66]

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[65] Petőfi, vol II, p.128.

[66] Petőfi, vol II, p.149. Admittedly, Petőfi goes on in this poem to express his shame in being Hungarian at the present time, but this is only because of what he sees as the failure of his contemporaries to live up to the greatness demanded by their nationality.

Here we have come a long way from the principles of Herder who, after all, rejected the idea of a "Favoritvolk" and insisted that: "To brag of one's country is the stupidest form of boastfulness."[67]

The literary populism which informs one important aspect of the work of Petőfi's decidedly less politically motivated friend and ally in this field, János Arany, remains, throughout the latter poet's career, substantially closer to the aspirations of Kölcsey, Erdélyi and even Bajza. In his response to Petőfi's famous, celebratory letter of February 4 1847, Arany welcomes, but immediately qualifies, the younger poet's populist programme:

> Önnek elveit a nép és költészete felől forró kebellel osztom ... hisz nekem *önzésből* is azt kell tennem! Nemzeti költészet csak azontul remélek, ha előbb népi költészet virágzott.[68]

In a letter to István Szilágyi - who exercised the single most important influence on Arany's early work before his acquaintance with Petőfi - Arany corroborates this sense of popular poetry as a means towards national poetry rather than as an end in itself: "Szeretem a nemzeti költészetet a népiesség köntösében még most, később majd pusztán."[69] (Arany to Szilágyi, September 6 1847). One month later Arany develops this idea still further in a letter to the poet Károly Szász. After quoting Petőfi's programme from his letter of February 4, he adds:

> Ezen óhajtásra én is *ament* mondtam, de mégsem úgy értettem azt, hogy minden költő *tisztán* népköltő legyen, mert illyesmi teljesülni soha nem fogna: hanem úgy hogy a költészet ne legyen ollyan, millyenné az a legújabb időben nemesült (?!) t.i. csak egynéhány tudósnak, vagy ábrándozó holdvilág-egyéniségnek nagy bajjal megérthető, a nagy többségnek pedig teljesen élvezhetetlen, hanem legyen egyszerűen nemes, erőteljes, a nép nyelvét megközelítő s ennek virágaival ékes, - szóval döntessék el a köz fal a népi és ma úgynevezett *fennköltészet* közt, és legyen a költészet általános, *nemzeti*![70]

In a phrase which recalls Bajza, he even writes to Petőfi on April 22 1848 that his aim is to "Emelni a népet az irodalomban lassan lassan."[71]

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67 Cited in Berlin, *Vico and Herder*, p.157.

68 Arany *Összes művei*, op. cit., vol XV, p.53.

69 Arany, vol XV, p.137.

70 Arany, vol XV, p.146-7.

71 Arany, vol XV, p.201.

Arany's attitude to what actually constitutes the "popular" (népies) in literature also differs from that of Petőfi. Before coming into contact with the letter, Arany had already proposed the idea of a heroic folk epic in a letter to Szilágyi of January 9 1847. Some three months later he admits (also in a letter to Szilágyi) that Homer himself had written two such epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, while Szilágyi, in his reply, draws Arany's attention to Herder's essay on Homer and Ossian, suggesting that the latter also produced fine examples of the genre. The configuration - Herder, Homer, Ossian - is, of course, a familiar one, and Arany's explanation of what he sees as "popular" in Homer's poetry serves as a good illustration of his proximity to the Herderian ideal of *Naturpoesie*:

> Nem egyebek ezek [the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*] egyszerű - tej mézzel folyó, népi költeményeknél. Bennök az egyszerűség a költői fenséggel párosulva van, s ha nem ez a népi költemény feladata, úgy nincs róla helyes fogalmam. Azt akarom mondani, hogy a népköltő feladata nem az, hogy elvegyüljön a durva nép közt, s legyen egyszörűvé velek, hanem az, hogy tanulja meg a legfensőbb költői szépségeket is a népnek élvezhető alakban adni elő. Ez lebegett előttem, midőn Toldit írtam, s ez úton haladok ezen túl is, ha lehet.[72]

At this stage in his development, Arany's interest in folk poetry is based above all on his desire to create a poetic language accessible to all sections of Hungarian society. In a further letter to Szilágyi (September 6 1847) he appeals to an article in Erdélyi's critical journal, *Magyar Szépirodalmi Szemle*, which

> teljesen kimondja az én elvemet, mellyre én a népies kezdet által készülök [...] *"legyen a költészet sem úri, sem népi, hanem érthető s élvezhető közös jó, mindennek, kit ép elmével áldott meg isten."* de ezen cél elérésére csak a most divatos népies modoron keresztül juthatni [...][73]

Although the editor of the journal may not have been the author of the article in question. Arany none the less suggests his direct theoretical debt to Erdélyi in the same letter - "Aestheticai utam az individualizálás elve" - and again, albeit somewhat lightheartedly, in a letter written to Petőfi the following day

> Aestheticai elvem (ha ugyan van valamillyen) határozottan az *egyéniség* (individualitat) elve; annál inkább fáj tehát, hogy most kénytelen vagyok az

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72 Arany, vol XV, p.77.

73 Arany, vol XV, p.137.

eszményiséghez (idealitat) folyamodni, s téged kedves Sandrim, és 'királynéd' kezecskéit csak *in idea* csókolni [...][74]

After the defeat of the revolution and War of Independence, however, Arany's attitude to literary populism changes significantly. Looking back over the development of the concept at the beginning of his sketch for a study entitled *Népiességünk a költészetben*, he writes:

Nem volt tiszta dolog; a nép számára írassanak-e ily költemények, vagy a művelt osztály számára, hogy a népet ismerje. Amúgy és így irányköltészetet akartak. Divat volt az egész: kapcsolatban a nép boldogítás eszméjével. Amint az korszerűtlenné lett, úgy a népiesség is.[75]

That Arany's new position is the result of a good deal of searching self-criticism can be seen from a letter to the young critic Pál Gyulai of January 21 1854. Having just read the first part of Zsigmond Kemény's major study of *Toldi*. Arany openly expresses his apprehension concerning the remainder of Kemény's evaluation:

Félek, hogy a hátralevő rész miatt pirulnom kell, pirulnom most, midőn Toldi (d.h. az enyém) nem *új szita"* többé s illő volna szép csöndesen a pad alatt hagyni. Mert vádol a lelki ismeret, hogy én is egy voltam azok közül, kik a magyar költészetet megbuktatták, behozván a nyers, pórias elemet [...] Aztán meg, minden új dicséret, ami Toldira irányoztatik, rám nézve szemrehányást foglal magában.[76]

Arany's self-criticism by no means leads him, however, to a wholesale rejection of his earlier (Herderian) populism. As he argues in a highly revealing review of a volume of poems by Achille Millien, *La Moisson*, published in Paris in 1860:

A nép*től* tanulni s ily módon a költészetet fölfrissíteni, nemzeti alapra helyezni: ebben áll a feladat: Mesterkélt, conventionális formák és érzelmek helyett elsajátítani a népköltészetből nemcsak a stíl egyszerűségét, hanem *erelyét* is, nemcsak az érzelem nyíltságát, hanem közvetlenségét is [...][77]

He still adheres to the organic traditionalism of Herder and Kölcsey, and continues to appeal to the opposition between the Hellenic and the Roman in support of this organicism:

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74 Arany, vol XV, p.142.

75 Arany, vol XI, p.380.

76 Arany, vol XVI, p.383.

77 Arany, vol XI, p.175.

> ha felveszi [the poet], továbbfejti a megszokott formákat, amint egy anyatejjel beszítt népi és nemzeti dallamokat, akkor a fejlődés természetes törvényének hódol, mely épen úgy kizárja az ugrást, octroyrozást a művészetben, mint a politikában, és tiszteli, alapul fogadja a történeti hagyományokat. Tekintsünk a hellén és római költészetre: amaz természetes belfejlődés útján jutott a tökély pontjára, ez idegen traditióhoz tapadva, legvirágzóbb szakában sem bírt teljes önállásra jutni.[78]

What is new in Arany's position is the rejection of his earlier principle of "accessibility" and his attempt to reconcile Erdélyi's opposing notions of the individual and the ideal. For the postrevolutionary Arany, the true poet:

> Felhagy [...] a törekvéssel, hogy minél nagyobb sokaságnak tetsző dolgokat írjon; célja, mint minden valódi költőé, egyedül a *szép* felé irányul; ha *egyszerű*, nem azért az, hogy fűfa által érthető legyen, hanem mert egyszerű eszközökkel *hatni tudni* erőnek a jele, s az egyszerű szép annál szebb; ha népi szólást használ, nem azért teszi, hogy Gyuri bojtár felrikkantson a jól ismert kifejezésre, hanem, hogy nyelvének erőt, bájt, zöngelmet, faji zamatot kölcsönözzön; ha ellesi az érzelmek természetes, közvetlen nyilatkozását, s ugyanazt visszaadja költeményében, célja nem oda megy ki, hogy - bocsánat a hétköznapi szólásért - *produkálja* a parasztot, hanem hogy az igazi páthosz nyomára akadjon, melyet színtelen társas életünk prózájában hiába keres [...][79]

If the phrase "egyedül a szép felé irányul" suggests an uncritical rapprochement with the aesthetic idealism of Bajza, Arany's later (posthumously published) *Töredékes gondolatok* reveal a more complex and qualified position. After dividing the "beautiful" into three categories - "Általános (emberi): Különös (nemzeti): Különösb (népi)"[80] - Arany comments:

> Minden *igaz* költészet *ideál*. Az, a mi *reál*nak mondatik kivül esik a költészet határán. Különbség csak az, hogy amit ideálnak szokás nevezni, lehány magáról minden időbelit és esetlegest, tisztán akar állani, általánosságban maradni, ezért egyhangú és szűkkörű lesz [...] Ellenben azon költészet, mely reál vegyületűnek mondatik, elfogadja az időbelit, az esetlegest, a különöst (speciale), például: nemzeti, népi, sőt egyénit is, de nem mint *lényeget*, mert akkor megszűnnék költészet lenni, hanem mint formát, melyben nyilatkozik. Ez által köre kitágul, hangja ezerféle változatot nyer s megszabadul az egyoldalúságtól. De ha

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78 Arany, vol XI, p.176.

79 Arany, vol XI, p.175-6.

80 Arany, vol XI, p.550.

lényeget nem az *idea* teszi, ha a *rés* külsejéből belsejébe tolakodik, akkor nem költészet többé.[81]

It is in and through this reconciliation of the ideal and the real, the universal and the specific, that Arany conceives the future of Hungarian poetry. In order to secure such a future, however, the national poetry must first free itself from the influence of one poetic genius whose work, for all its undeniable greatness, none the less represents a direction and a goal which can no longer be pursued:

Ne ámítsuk magunkat. Mondjuk ki tisztán, hogy Petőfi befolyása - mint minden nagy sükerrel nyilatkozó géniuszé - gátolta és gátolja nálunk még most is a költők egyéni fejlődését; így vagy amúgy, de még folyvást az ő képére és hasonlatosságára teremtettünk.[82]

Arany's most influential biographer in the first half of this century, Frigyes Riedl, suggests that, with the death of Petőfi, Arany not only "elveszítette legjobb barátját", but also "elveszítette hivatalát" and "elveszítette önmagát is".[83] Mihály Babits, however, the most important heir to Arany's poetic legacy in the 20th century, probably comes closer to the truth when, taking issue with Riedl in an early essay of 1904 *(Arany mint arisztokrata)*, he argues that:

Petőfi halála s a forradalom leveretése, bármi fájdalmas volt is érzékeny lelkére, mégis visszaadja őt önmagának; ekkor - éppen ekkor, mikor már *Letészem a lantot* kezdetű versét írta -, ekkor, ezután teremnek legnemesebb dolgai.[84]

Babits returns to this argument in a short essay on Petőfi written some five years later:

Arany kétségtelenül Petőfi-utánzóként lépett föl; de félreismerik vagy inkább nem ismerik Aranyt akik ezt a *népies* stílusát tartják a lényegesnek.[85]

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81 Arany, vol XI, pp.550-51.

82 Arany, vol XI, p.109.

83 Frigyes Riedl, *Arany János*, Budapest, 1982, p.19.

84 Mihály Babits, *Arany mint arisztokrata.* Unfinished manuscript from 1904, published in Mihály Babits, *Esszék, tanulmányok*, vol I, Budapest, 1978, p.803.

85 Babits, *Petőfiről*, in *Nyugat*, 1911, II. Reprinted in *Esszék, tanulmányok*, vol I, p.808. On populism in general, the young Babits makes the following remark in his *Arany mint arisztokrata*: "A népköltészetből az irodalomtörténet legendát csinált, melyből nagyrészt egy szó sem igaz. A nép a legnagyobb költő stb ...

The first part of this statement is something of an exaggeration. First, Arany cannot be seen, at any point in his career, as an imitator of Petőfi, and his conception of literary populism was anyway, as we have seen, substantially different from that of the younger poet, and had its roots in the thought of Herder and Kölcsey. Secondly, Arany's *Toldi* was written before his personal acquaintance with Petőfi, as a submission to the Kisfaludy Társaság competition of 1846, and as a response to the prevalent literary tastes of its decade. Thirdly, and most importantly, Arany's poetry prior to *Toldi* (above all the lyrics *Feléd, feléd* and *Elégia* and the comic epic *Az elveszett alkotmány*) have little in common with the populism of the 1840s, but much in common with Arany's later work. These considerations, only serve, however, to corroborate the second part of Babits's claim: that the literary populism which finds its most complete and accomplished expression in *Toldi* - the work which won Arany the admiration and friendship of Petőfi - does not constitute the most representative element of the poet's *oeuvre*.

While Petőfi's lines to the author of *Toldi* - "tűzokádó gyanánt / Tenger mélységéből egyszerre bukkansz ki" - suggest that he had not read, or simply ignored as insignificant, Arany's first publicly recognised work *Az elveszett alkotmány*, Petőfi's surprise is quite justified when we consider that there are few indications in Arany's work before the second half of 1846 to anticipate the popular idiom and theme of Arany's first major literary success. Even in February 1846, Arany could still write to Szilágyi that:

> Homért tanulom, Iliást eszem. Csak, csak, klassika literatura! Minél több új franczia, angol, német, s ezekből compilált magyar beszélyt, regényt, színművet olvasok, annál több Homért és Shakespearet hozzá. Az örvény ragad.[86]

In addition to his admiration for Homer, Arany also writes to Szilágyi (in a letter of December 4 1847) of his enthusiasm for Byron, enclosing his own translation of an extract from the third canto of *Don Juan*. In the same letter, in a reference to Byron's *Ode to Napoleon*, Arany coins the phrase "elegico-oda", anticipating the tonal and generic ambivalence of his own great lyrics of the 1850s. Byron's influence can also be felt throughout *Az elveszett alkotmány*, the epigraph from which is taken from Byron's *Werner* (Act II, Scene i): "Oh, thou world! Thou art indeed a melancholy jest."

Hogy miért kellene a majsi kántornak jobb verset csinálni Shakespearenél vagy Goethenél, azt nem foghatom meg."

In *Esszék, tanulmányok*, vol I, pp.804-5.

86 Arany, vol XV, pp.28-9.

It was, at least in part, the mixed reception of *Az elveszett alkotmány* which led to the creation of *Toldi*. On the one hand, the fact that the poem won the Kisfaludy Társaság competition for a comic epic in 1845 must have encouraged Arany to submit an entry to the competition of the following year where he could write consciously for a known audience. *Az elveszett alkotmány* had not been written specifically for the Társaság and, as Arany himself would later confess: "A darab, eredetileg, nem volt a nagyközönség elibe szánva."[87] On the other hand, while two of the three judges had praised the text, the third, and by far the most prestigious - Mihály Vörösmarty - considered it only the "most tolerable" of a bad batch of entries.[88] It was Vörösmarty's evaluation which, understandably, made the deepest impression on Arany, as he would recall in the same statement of 1855:

> bírálóim közül egy elismerőleg, egy szinte magasztalólag, szólt a műről: de fülemben csak ama harmadik szó hangzott: "nyelv, verselés ollyan, mintha irodalmunk vaskorát élnők." - Úgy véltem, hogy már most megállapodnom nem lehet, s 1846-ra népies költői beszély lévén feladva, meg az<on> év nyarán írtam *Toldit*.[89]

Az elveszett alkotmány is, of the two works, the more profoundly representative of Arany's poetic character and practice - partly because it was not tailored to conform to the pressures and limits of public taste, and partly because of the crucial continuities it suggests with Arany's later work. Arany's own description of *Az elveszett alkotmány* as a "humoristico-satitico-allegorico-comicus valami", might equally be used to characterise the postrevolutionary epics *A nagyidai cigányok* (1852) and *Bolond Istók* (1850, 1873). In all three texts the narrating subject shifts between genres and repeatedly intervenes in the story to reflect not only on the action, but also on the intervention itself. In each case the narration of a story soon loses its way and becomes the story of a narration in which statements of truth and value are perpetually qualified and undermined, while the poetic voice and the act of writing are rendered increasingly ironic. Arany's irony is not merely verbal or rhetorical, but embodies an attitude to reality as essentially paradoxical, to

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87 In a letter to Gyulai of June 7 1855. In Arany, vol XVI, p.561.

88 Vörösmarty's unenthusiastic response to *Az elveszett alkotmány* as a satirical epic may well be related to the (lasting) pain and embarrassment he had been caused by Petőfi's satire *A helység kalapácsa* (1844), much of which is quite clearly directed at Vörösmarty.

89 Arany, vol XVI, pp.561-2.

history as repetition rather than progress, and to the world as a "melancholy jest". It is the same irony which informs Arany's lyric poetry in the 1850s and 60s (eg. *Kertben, Az örök zsidó*) and which can be felt throughout the last great flowering of Arany's poetic genius, the *Őszikék* of 1877-82. Even in the ballads - which, precisely because they succeed in containing, or restraining Arany's tendency towards regressive self-qualification and ironization, are among the most polished of his works - events are governed primarily by the logic of a similar situational irony. Nor, finally, is the Romantic ironist ever far away in *Buda halála* (1863) - Arany's attempt to furnish Hungarian literature with the great "missing" epic on national origins he felt it so needed as a counterpart to the Greek *Iliad*, the German *Nibelungenlied* or the Finnish *Kalevala*. Here, in its juxtaposition of two essentially different species of tragedy - the psychological tragedy of Buda based on an individual flaw, and Etele's tragedy of fate, based on the will of "heaven"[90] - the work tends towards an ironic vision of history as an inevitable and irreconcilable conflict of opposites.

It is not, however, Arany the Romantic ironist who has, on the whole, been remembered by Hungarian literary history, but Arany the embodiment of the popular-national ideal. This aspect of his reputation was, in the second half of the 19th century, promoted above all by Pál Gyulai who in many ways succeeded Erdélyi as the next leading theorist of literary populism in Hungary. Gyulai also did much to determine the nature of Petőfi's reputation in the same period and published the first serious and extensive study of Petőfi's lyric poetry (*Petőfi Sándor és lírai költészetünk*, 1854). It was Gyulai who coined the (descriptive and prescriptive) phrase *nép-nemzeti* ("popular-national") to denote what he saw the most authentic, characteristic and desirable direction in the national literature as realised most fully in the work of Petőfi and Arany. Gyulai dominated Hungarian criticism for most of the second half of the 19th century from a position of considerable institutional power. In addition to his various key editorial positions, he became the secretary of the 1st Department of the Hungarian Academy[91] in 1870, Professor of Hungarian Literature at the Universety of Budapest in 1875, President of the Kisfaludy Társaság in 1879 and, from 1873, edited the most

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[90] This opposition may also be read in terms of free will and predestination. It is an opposition which returns throughout Arany's career as the poet struggles with his own Calvinism.

[91] The 1st Department of the Hungarian Academy is concerned with the study of language and literature.

influential cultural periodical in Hungary, *Budapesti Szemle*. In 1905, four years before his death, he was succeeded as Professor of Hungarian by the 49 year old Frigyes Riedl who also to a considerable degree inherited Gyulai's critical and literary historical legacy. We have already had cause to mention Riedl's two most important literary historical achievements, his biographies of Petőfi and Arany, which follow Gyulai in their deliberate understatement of the political implications of Petőfi's work, their overemphasis on Arany as an epicist and their further promotion of the popular-national ideal. After Riedl's death in 1921, the professorship, together with the ideological legacy of both Riedl and Gyulai, soon fell to János Horváth, a considerably more talented critic who wrote what remains to this day the most detailed and comprehensive history of Hungarian literary populism in the 19th century. While Horváth also produced a major critical biography of Petőfi (*Petőfi Sándor*, 1922), it was in the achievement of Arany that he saw the ultimate realisation of his own "national-classicist" ideal. Largely because of their attitudes towards the radical *political* orientation of Petőfi, the work of Gyulai, Riedl and especially Horváth came increasingly under attack from - for the most part dogmatic - critics professing very different political allegiances after the Second World War. The association of the national with the popular has, however, continued to survive in many shapes and forms, and can still be said to represent one of the leading cultural preconceptions of not only many current Hungarian literary historians, but also of the wider Hungarian reading public as a whole. The re-publication of Riedl's *Arany János* in 1982, of Gyulai's *Vörösmarty Mihály* in 1985, and of Horváth's *Petőfi Sándor* in 1989 may well suggest a conscious and conscientious return, in a changing political climate, to the naive traditions we have been outlining in these last three chapters.

All traditions are, however, of their nature the results of exclusion and omission; and this is no less true of the popular-national or national-classicist tradition projected by the likes of Gyulai, Riedl and Horváth and modified - politically and aesthetically - by more recent literary historians such as István Sőtér, Antal Wéber and István Fenyő. What this emphasis on the popular-national tradition in 19th century Hungarian literature has always been inclined to repress are the continuities - fundamentally European in character - between the late 18th century sentimental moment we described in Chapters Two and Three and the various coherently Romantic initiatives which can be identified in Hungarian literature during the course of the following century. It is to a consideration of a number of these "repressed" continuities that I shall now turn.

Chapter Seven

Repressed Romanticism

In a short article published in *Szépirodalmi Szemle* in 1847, János Erdélyi proposed an ingenious characterisation of Romanticism, the implications of which were to have a lasting effect on the connotations of the term in Hungarian literary history. Erdélyi's pragmatic definition of Romanticism is based on an attempt to "implicate" the etymology of the term within his own popular-national ideology. His point of departure is the assumption that the term "romance" initially denoted the new vernacular languages devired from Latin which had already developed their own nationally specific characteristics:

> ez a kifejezés: "római nyelv" hazai nyelvet jelente mindenütt, azaz midőn a francia, spanyol, portugál és olasz római nyelvűnek mondotta magát, értette alatta önön (rómaiból) hazaivá lett nyelvét, a mint aztán később mindegyik töredékfaj előmenvén a mívelődésben, saját forma és idom alatt nemzetté alakult és lett az, a mi.[1]

Associating romance literatures with the activity of translation through the verb "romancear" (ie. romancar, enromancier, romanz), Erdélyi comments:

> Romance szerint beszélni egy jelentésű volt az érthető, világos előadással, mi hazai nyelven képzelhető csak, mikép nyelvünkben a "magyaráz" ige is azon értelmét fejezi ki.[2]

Turning to the concept of Romanticism itself, Erdélyi is able to conclude that:

> A romanticizmushoz tehát megkívántatik a hazaiság, népiesség, mint annak első alapja és anyaga, melyből ahhoz-ahhoz képest kifejlődjék a nemzeti költészet a különböző népek jelleme és idoma szerint s a kor lelkének ihletése után.[3]

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1 János Erdélyi, *Valami a romanticizmusról*, in *Tanulmányok*, Budapest, 1890, p.501.

2 Erdélyi, p.501.

3 Erdélyi, p.502.

To this interpretation of Romanticism Erdélyi opposes what he sees as the "nem valódi romantika" of the likes of Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, and Lamartine, characterised by a certain "nehéz-nyavalyás modor" which "epileptikus görcsökben vonaglik végig sok vizenyős novellán."[4] In contrast to what he proposes as "authentic" Romanticism, whose essential constituents are "haziság, nemzeti sajátságok",[5] Erdélyi defines this second variant as a contemptible and inherently foreign "szó-romantika", closing his essay with the following unequivocal rejection:

> Ezt a szó-romantikát gyűlöljük mi s óhajtunk irodalmunknak a leginkább eláradt francia és minden idegen befolyástól minél előbbi felszabadulást.[6]

Erdélyi's direct and exclusive equation of the Romantic with the national and the popular continues to play a key role in most characterisations of Hungarian Romanticism today. Since the publication of the first extensive study of this theme, Gyula Farkas's *A magyar romantika*, in 1930, it seems to have been generally accepted that the first phase of Romanticism in Hungary is characterised by a preoccupation with national historicism, while the second phase involves the politically motivated "discovery" of folk poetry. Thus the Hungarian literary historian G. B. Németh has recently claimed that:

> As a general rule Romanticism in its first phase meant the birth or revival of a national consciousness and a sense of national identity; in the second an increasingly democratic process for the national culture [...][7]

while István Sőtér would argue that: "the special relationship with folk poetry can be regarded as the most significant mark of Romanticism."[8] In this way the concept of Romanticism has on the whole been subsumed under the broader literary historical category of the popular-national or national-classicist tradition in a manner of which Erdélyi would almost certainly have approved.

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4 Erdélyi, p.502.

5 Erdélyi, p.502.

6 Erdélyi, p.503.

7 Ed. Tibor Klaniczay, *A History of Hungarian Literature*, Budapest, 1984, p.213.

8 István Sőtér, *The Dilemma of Literary Science*, p.179. See also István Fenyő *Haza és emberiség*, Budapest, 1983: "A romantika áramában virágzott fel irodalmunkban a népiesség" p.35; "a népiesség szerves része nálunk a romantikának" p.37; and Károly Horváth *A romantika*, Budapest, 1965: "A romantika kiemelkedő vonása a népköltészet felfedezése" p.47.

Such an unequivocal equation of Romanticism with nationalism, historicism and, above all, literary populism is, however, highly problematic. Even if one is prepared to accept an essentially pluralistic approach to national "Romanticisms" of the type promoted most famously by A. O. Lovejoy,[9] it remains hard to conceive of a notion of the Romantic which does not foreground as one of its key, determining constituents the central role of the *individual, creative imagination*. This crucial constituent has, as we have seen, very little to do with the poetics of Hungarian literary populism, which seeks above all to establish and reproduce a stable and collective literary code based on an essentially closed set of common values, idioms and experiences. If, as I have attempted to show, Hungarian literary populism represents a naive resolution to the dilemma of sentimental alienation, its aspirations can hardly be reconciled with those of European Romanticism in its very different response to the same crisis. Where Hungarian literary populism identifies with an *already given* world of discourse, value and experience, the Romantic writer strives to forge a new and highly individual world after the fashion of his own creative vision or imagination. The basis of literary populism as articulated by the likes of Kölcsey and Erdélyi is still the collective imitation of the real; the essence of Romanticism, on the other hand, is the individual imagination of the ideal. Where aspects of folk culture do play a part in the Romantic formation, their function - as we saw in the case of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* - is not primarily the promotion of national character. Thus, when Novalis proposes the *Märchen* as "der Kanon der Poesie" and claims that "alles Poetische muss märchenhaft sein"[10] his reasons for doing so have little to do with Görres's conception of folk poetry as "der ächte innere Geist des deutschen Volkes". As Novalis explains:

> Ein Märchen ist eigentlich wie ein Traumbild ohne Zusammenhang, eine Ensemble wunderbarer Dinge und Begebenheiten, z.B. eine musikalische Fantasie, die harmonischen Folgen einer Aolsharfe - die Natur selbst.[11]

Romanticism is, by virtue of both its original etymology and its theoretical history since the end of the 18th century, an inherently supra-national term. While it is legitimate and important to identify local differences in the

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9 A. O. Lovejoy, *On the Discrimination of Romanticisms*, in *PMLA*, 29, (1924), pp.229-53.

10 Novalis, *Das allgemeine Broullion 1798-9*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Carl Seelig, Zurich, 1945, vol IV, p.165.

11 Novalis, p.172.

development of Romanticism in individual national cultures, it is equally crucial to establish a set of common characteristics without which any use of the term is ultimately meaningless. As one of the few literary historians to have pursued a consistently comparative approach to the question of Hungarian Romanticism has recently argued:

> Lehet azzal érvelni, hogy nemzeti romantikánknak főleg olyan jellegzetességei vannak, amelyek megkülönböztetik más romantikáktól - ez azonban fölöslegessé tenné magának a fogalomnak a használatát.[12]

The most productive basis for a coherent comparative characterisation of European Romanticism remains René Wellek's well-know proposal of three determining criteria in his seminal essay of 1949, *The Concept of Romanticism*: "imagination for the view of poetry, nature for the view of the world, and symbol and myth for poetic style."[13] In a retrospective article published some seventeen years later with the title *Romanticism Re-examined*, Wellek returns to this characterisation after considering the debate it initially provoked and the results of subsequent research. Wellek concludes his account of recent studies of Romanticism with the following suggestion of consensus:

> In these studies, however diverse in method and emphasis, a convincing agreement has been reached: they all see the implication of imagination, symbol, myth and organic nature, and see it as part of the great endeavor to overcome the split between subject and object, the self and the world, the conscious and the unconscious.[14]

I accept - and shall in what follows largely adopt - the terms of this consensus as the practical and productive foundations for a minimal working definition of Romanticism, and only wish at this stage to add two further points of emphasis before going on to consider Hungarian developments in the light of such a definition. My first point concerns the relationship between the Romantic formation and the sentimental structure of feeling, while my second concerns two crucial consequences of the Romantic endeavour to resolve the sentimental dilemma.

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12 Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, *A magyar irodalmi romantika sajátságai* in *Ars Hungarica* (1987, pp.21-29).

13 Reprinted in René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism*, Yale, 1963, p.161.

14 Wellek, p.220.

A particularly revealing and relevant articulation of both the continuities and the differences between the sentimental and Romantic moments can be found in the first coherent attempt in the history of Hungarian criticism to rehearse a number of the central arguments of Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, József Teleki's pioneering essay of 1818, *A régi és új költés külömbségeiről*. While many of the key terms of Teleki's opposition between the ancient (Hellenic) and the modern (Christian) are directly reminiscent of Schiller, several other emphases already suggest an attempt to articulate a new cultural moment and draw upon the critical discourses of Jean Paul Richter and A. W. Schlegel. Thus ancient poetry is characterised by "egyszerűség" and "természetesség"; its mode is "*tárgyas* (objektív)", and its inspiration is taken from living, present reality ("élő jelenvalóság"). Modern poetry, on the other hand, "a természettől mind jobban-jobban eltávozván, az ideálok országában elveszti magát"; its mode is primarily "*személyes* (subjektív)".[15] While the coupling of simplicity and naturalness, idealism and distance from nature, appears to have been taken directly from Schiller, Teleki attributes his use of the terms "objektív" and "subjektív" to, "among others", Jean Paul.[16] The new theoretical context in which Teleki is writing in 1818 helps to explain why he ultimately rejects as "erroneous" Schiller's use of the term "sentimentalisch" - which Teleki translates, anticipating the pejorative connotations it was to have for most of his century, as "érzékenykedő" - and replaces it with the term *"romántos"*.[17]

Thoughout the essay, Teleki's characterisation of modern poetry has more in common with Romantic theory than with Schiller's - by then perhaps already anachronistic - description of the sentimental dilemma. Thus, for example, Teleki stresses the centrality of the concept of the imagination in modern ("romántos") poetry. Where the ancients would describe in their poetry "amit láttak, tapasztaltak, éreztek",

> mi ellenben magunknak először képzeletünkben egy új, a jelenvalótól egészen különböző *költői világot* formálunk, s azt adjuk elő, amit ebben látnánk, tapasztalnánk és éreznénk.[18]

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15 József Teleki, *A régi és új költés külömbségeiről*, reprinted in *A magyar kritika évszázadai*, ed. István Sőtér, *2-3 Irányok*, vol I, pp.12-13.

16 Teleki, p.13.

17 Teleki, p.14.

18 Teleki, p.13.

While the ancients started out from nature and living reality, "az újabbak pedig egyedül képzetek által indítnak".[19] Teleki also draws attention to the distinctively Romantic quest to find "similitude in dissimilitude" (Wordsworth) and to unify, or fuse, the real with the ideal. The modern poet, he suggests, is no longer content to merely imitate the variety and specificity of his natural (and local) environment, but seeks "a különbségesnek romántos egyesülését, egybeolvadását."[20]

It is perhaps worth pausing at this point to consider what Teleki sees as the determining historical basis of this new "romántos" poetry. Like Kölcsey, Teleki interprets the idealism of modern poetry as a product of the new attitude to human and natural reality brought about by the advent, ascendancy and ultimate hegemony of Christianity in Europe: "A keresztény religyió támadásával az emberi elem gondolkozása módjában szörnyű változás történt."[21] The Christian faith provided mankind with a higher, indeed the highest possible, reality ("fő valóság") in place of the immediately apprehensible "élő jelenvalóság" of the ancients:

> Ezen *fő valósághoz* - mely a testiségünk által körülírt szoros láthatáron kivül esik - a szelíd Jézus mennyei tanításai segítségével egyszer felemelkedvén, a vakmerő emberi nem minden gondolataiban az emberiséget elhagyni bátorkodott, s merészen a földieken felyül emelkedett.[22]

Teleki then proceeds to relate this new Christian ideal to the prevalent subjectivity of modern poetry:

> A keresztény vallás némely külső, a teremtőhöz való tisztelet jeleivel nem elégedik meg, mint a görögöké; hanem az egész belső embert a legészrevehetetlenebb mozdulatjaiban magának tulajdonította. A jó kereszténynek legfőbb kötelessége a maga személyességét megvizsgálni, minden cselekedeteit, érzeményeit s gondolatait lelki esmeretének bíró ítélete alá vetni. Így a kereszténység által az emberi nem a külső tárgyak fő tekintetétől elvonattatván, a maguk megesmerésére, a személyesség kifejtésére vezéreltetett. Így eredett a keresztény költésbe egy bizonyos *személyesség*, melyről már feljebb is szólottunk mint a romántosság egyik, megkülönböztető jeléről, a görög költés tárgyasságának ellenkezőjéről.[23]

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19 Teleki, p.13.

20 Teleki, p.15.

21 Teleki, p.15.

22 Teleki, p.15.

23 Teleki, p.16.

Because the modern poet attempts to reach beyond the objective and the worldly into the realm of the subjective and the spiritual, his poetry will be both more emotional and more ephemeral. In the new "romántos költés": "az érzemények [...] erősebbek, a fantázia testetlenebb, a gondolat foghatatlanabb."[24] Here Teleki is undoubtedly drawing - almost to the extent of direct quotation - from A. W. Schlehel's description of modern poetry in his *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur:* "Das Gefühl ist im Ganzen bei den Neueren inniger, die Phantasie unkörperlicher, der Gedanke beschaulicher geworden."[25]

This - albeit unacknowledged - allusion to the younger Schlegel is highly significant in the context of Teleki's *evaluation* of Christianity's influence on the character of modern poetry. For, unlike Kölcsey whose source had been the Herder of the *Ideen*, Teleki does not interpret the rise of Christianity in Europe as a threat to national specificity and identity, but rather as the basis for a new and progressive idealism. He accepts with Schlegel that the "höhere Weisheit" of Christianity has taught us that

> die Menschheit habe durch eine grosse Verirrung die ihr ursprüngligh bestimmte Stelle eingebüsst, und die ganze Bestimmung ihres irdischen Daseins sei, dahin zurückzustreben, welches sie jedoch, sich selbst überlassen, nicht vergmöge.[26]

For all his nostalgia for the simplicity and naturalness of Hellenic culture, Teleki (like Schlegel, but unlike Kölcsey) sees Romantic poetry as both a historical necessity and as the poetry of the future:

> Hogy az említetteken kivül, az újabb költés romántosságának előmozdításán, öregbítésén a *századok száma* is nem kevéssé munkálkodik, kétségen kivül való dolog. Amint az emberi nem megélemedett korához napról napra közelít, s jobban kimíveltetik, éppen úgy láthatóképpen mind jobban-jobban eltávozik a természetiségtől, az ideálok kiterjedett országában, álmodozásaiban s fellengzéseiben elveszti magát. Méltán elmondhatni tehát, hogy a költésnek időjártával mindég még inkább romántosnak kell lennie.[27]

In addition to the new and Romantic stress on imagination, unification and idealism, Teleki's *A régi és az új költés külömbségeiről* also suggests one

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[24] Teleki, p.15.

[25] In A. W. Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften*, vol V, ed. Edgar Lohner, Stuttgart, 1966, p.26.

[26] A. W. Schlegel, p.25.

[27] Teleki, p.16.

further discontinuity between the sentimental and Romantic approaches to modern poetry and its objects. Teleki insists on differentiating between moral and aesthetic beauty: "A *szép* [...] az *ízlés tudományában* vett értelemben [...] az *erkölcsi széptől* nagyon külömbözik".[28] Although Teleki admittedly only makes this point parenthetically and does not seem to recognise the full extent of its implications, the distinction is, in literary historical terms, a none the less crucial one. While for the sentimental writer beauty is synonymous with *virtue*, for the Romantic writer it is synonymous with *truth*. The latter emphasis is, of course, the axiom of Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, and also informs - to cite only two further examples - Shelley's statement in the *Defence of Poetry* that "to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful",[29] and Novalis's related claims that "nur ein Künstler kann den Sinn des Lebens erraten", and that "Je poetischer, je wahrer."[30] If the terms of sentimental discourse are the sings of moral character, those of Romantic writing are the scars of an epistemological struggle for meaning and truth.

The most crucial discontinuity between the sentimental and the Romantic which can be abstracted from Teleki's essay, however, lies in his recognition of the Romantic quest for "egyesülés" or "egybeolvadás". All "modern" (as opposed to ancient) poetry starts out from the experience of alienation brought about by man's "fall" from nature, but where the sentimental poet can only foreground this alienation, the Romantic poet attempts to transcend it. In his essay on Kölcsey, Antal Szerb describes this difference in terms of activity and passivity.

> A szentimentális teljesen passzív csodavárás. Éppen ebben különbözik a romantikus hangulattól, mely szintén vágy, bánat és reménytelenség összetettje. De a romantikus belső célkitűzésében aktív; a romantikus vágya a végtelenbe tör [...][31]

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28 Teleki, p.11.

29 In Shelley *Complete Works*, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, vol VIII, London, 1930, p.111.

30 Novalis *Gesammelte Werke*, vol III, p.60 and p.141. See also Wordsworth's Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* in *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford, 1978: "Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing [...] its object is truth". p.737, and Keats, *Letters*, ed. M. B. Forman, Oxford, 1952: "What the Imagination seizes as reality must be truth" p.67.

31 In Antal Szerb, *Gondolatok a könyvtárban*, p.41.

While the sentimental poet *reproduces* his experience of the object world as essentially beyond his grasp - through a discourse of obscurity, loss, solitude, otherness, homelessness and aimlessness - the Romantic poet strives to reappropriate this lost world by *recreating* it in his own image. Both face - as the essential material of, and challenge to, their poetry - the same series of ontological dualisms or oppositions: subject and object, man and nature, self and society, throught and language, language and reality, art and life. But where the sentimental writer tends to elevate only one side of these dualisms - subjectivity and reflection over perception and imitation, style over content, art over reality, etc - the Romantic artist attempts to negate, by uniting, them. In the words of the younger Schlegel:

> Das griechische Ideal der Menschheit war vollkommene Eintracht und Ebenmass aller Kräfte, natürliche Harmonie. Die Neueren hingegen sind zum Bewusstsein der inneren Entzweiung gekommen, welche ein solches Ideal unmöglich macht; daher ist das Streben ihrer Poesie, diese beiden Welten, zwischen denen wir uns geteilt fühlen, die geistige und sinnliche, miteinander auszusöhnen und unauflöslich zu verschmelzen.[32]

The same notion of unification or fusion informs Coleridge's concept of the Romantic imagination. For Coleridge, the Romantic poet:

> diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power [...] reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature [...][33]

Or in the still more exalted formulation of Novalis:

> Das Individuum lebt im Ganzen und das Ganze im Individuum. Durch Poesie ensteht die höchste Sympathie und Koaktivität, die innigste Gemeinschaft des Endlichen und Unendlichen.[34]

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32 A. W. Schlegel, p.26.

33 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. J. Shaweross, London, 1965, vol I, p.12.

34 Novalis, p.23.

As Wellek recognises in *The Concept of Romanticism*, the Romantic attempt to "overcome the split between subject and object" was ultimately "doomed to failure".[35] What Wellek does not stress, however, is that the Romantics themselves were often only too aware of the ultimate vanity of their endeavours, and this awareness played a crucial part in their attitudes towards the nature and significance of not only their works, but also of the life of man as a whole. A. W. Schlegel, for example, was convinced that the new idealism inspired by the Christian search for the infinite would inevitably awaken the foreboding "die in allen gefühlvollen Herzen schlummert" that:

> wir nach einer hier unerreichbaren Glückseligkeit trachten, dass kein äusserer Gegenstand jemals unse Seele ganz wird erfüllen können, dass aller Genuss eine flüchtige Täuschung ist. Und wenn nun die Seele, gleischsam unter den Trauerweiden der Verbannung ruhend, ihr Verlangen nach der fremd gewordenen Heimat ausatmet, was andres kann der Grundton ihrer Lieder sein als Schwermut?[36]

Fichte expresses a similar notion of the unattainability of the ideal in terms of man's (Romantic) struggle to conquer the irrational:

> To master the irrational, to govern it freely according to its own laws is the ultimate purpose of humanity. This purpose is quite unattainable and must forever remain so if man is not to cease being human and to become divine. But he can and must approach this goal; hence the never-ending approach to this goal is the true destiny of humanity.[37]

Insofar as the Romantic artist recognises his ultimate goal - to reunite subject and object through the re-creation of the world according to the vision of his own imagination - to be unattainable, his approach to both his art and to reality will be determined by one (or occasionally by a combination) of two types of Romantic disposition: the tragic and the ironic. In the case of the tragic Romantic type, the project of the writer will be analogous to that of the new species of hero he brings into being. Like his own heroes - Faust, Prometheus, Manfred, Childe Harold or even Napoleon - the Romantic artist can never fully conquer the world through imagination. The imposition of his vision on the world, however masterfully sustained within the confines of his art, can only ever be the product of an illusion: a symptom of his alienation, rather than its ultimate resolution. The divinity to which he aspires - the

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35 Wellek, p.221.

36 A. W. Schlegel, p.25.

37 Cited in Oscar Walzel, *German Romanticism*, New York, 1965, p.41.

divine power of Creation and divine knowledge of Absolute Truth - lies eternally beyond his reach, and every effort he makes to attain it, every metaphor that seeks to sustian the illusion of a fusion of the ideal with the real, is a reflection of the tragic condition he strives in vain to transcend.

The Romantic ironist, on the other hand, while starting out from the same awareness of the vanity of human aspirations, scoffs at the pretensions of the Romantic hero from the outset. For him the world is not a tragic conflict, but a "melancholy jest". The ultimate self-image of the Romantic ironist is the anti-hero: Byron's *Don Juan*, Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, Arany's *Bolond Istók*. Romantic irony does not resolve the predicament of man's alienation, but renders it comic, tolerable and even, to a degree, governable. The Romantic ironist appears as the complete master of his text; he interrupts his own narrative, distorts it, mutilates it, even destroys it as he pleases. If he cannot aspire to the divine, he can at least avoid the pitfalls of illusion. For his irony represents the power of knowledge; in Friedrich Schlegel's phrase: "Ironie ist klares Bewusstsein der ewigen Agilität des unendlich vollen Chaos."[38]

The most impressive and consummate instance of the tragic Romantic type in 19th century Hungarian literature is Mihály Vörösmarty, and I shall consider the role of tragedy in his poetry in some detail later in this chapter. While Romantic irony played a considerably more important and widespread role in the development pf 19th century Hungarian literature, its influence can be felt primarily in the period between the defeat of the revolution and War of Independence in 1849 and the *Ausgleich* of 1867, which lies beyond the immediate concerns of this study. In addition to its role in the poetry of Arany (outlined briefly in Chapter Six), the other most accomplished and engaging achievements of Romantic irony in the post-revolutionaly period are Imre Madách's drama *Az ember tragédiája* (1861) and the novels of Zsigmond Kemény.[39]

If Vörösmarty is the only major writer in the period under discussion in this study whose work may, without continual qualification, be called "Romantic" in the broadly European sense of that term outlined above, certain aspects of his Romanticism are not without precedent, both theoretical and practical, in the development of the national literature after 1772. Without attempting to suggest the foundations for, or indeed even the possibility of, a

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38 Friedrich Schlegel, *Werke in zwei Banden* Berlin, and Weimar, 1980, vol I, p.271.

39 For an excellent study of Romantic irony in Hungarian literature, see Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, "Romantic Irony in Nineteenth Century Hungarian Literature" in *Romantic Irony*, ed. Frederick Garber, Budapest, 1988, pp.204-24.

developmental history of "Hungarian Romanticism", it will be useful to consider the emergence of a number of key Romantic concepts in Hungarian literature - in particular that of a new concept of the imagination - before turning our attention to Vörösmarty himself.

The first Hungarian writer to develop a coherent theory of the imagination as something more than the "power of visualization" (Wellek) it had signified for most of the 18th century, and as a concept crucial to the essence of "poetic" creation, is Ádám Horváth. His remarkable *Psychologia* (written in 1789 and publiched in 1792) is one of the most fascinating philosophical works of the Hungarian literary renewal at the end of the 18th century. It is considerably more original, and also more profound, than many of the discursive works of György Bessenyei, generally considered the most significant writer of philosophical prose in Hungarian during this period.

Horváth devotes two chapters (numbers II "A képző és érző tehetségről" and III "A képzelődő tehetségről, 's annak gyakorlásáról") to a discerning and elaborately differentiated examination of increasingly abstract forms of perception, cognition and imagination. Perception itself, Horváth argues, consists of three parts: first, the *"objektum"*, defined as "a' *dolog* mellyet a' *Képzésben, Perceptioban* a' Lélek képez magának"; secondly, "a' *kép idea* mellynek formál magának a' Lélek a' képzet dologról; and thirdly, "a' megtudás (képzés) cognitio, melly már a' Lélek nem szenvedő Passiva állapotja, hanem valóságos munkálódása."[40]

Horváth's next step is to differentiate between "képzés (cognitio)" and "képzelés (imaginatio)":

> A KÉPZELÉS, *Imaginatio*, a' Léleknek az a' munkája, mellyel valamelly tőlünk távoly lévő, de már képzett dolgot újonnan képez.[41]

At this stage in his exposition, Horváth has added little to the conventional 18th century sense of the imagination as a faculty which, in the words of Dr Johnson, "selects ideas from the treasures of remembrance."[42] Horváth goes on, however, to propose a further distinction which extends well beyond the neoclassical concept of the imagination and anticipates the Romantic view. For Horváth not only distinguishes between "kép" (idea), "képzés" (cognition)

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40 Ádám Horváth, *Psychologia*, Pest, 1792, p.15.

41 Horváth, p.26.

42 Cited in René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism*, vol I, p.96.

and "képzelés" (imagination), but also between "képzelés" and "képzelődés (phantasia)". This last term is used to signify the essence of poetic creation:

> A' képzelődéstől függ az embernek elméjének, az a' szép, de néha rossz munkája is, mellyet költeménynek vagy találmánynak, vagy inkább a szó eredete szerént *költésnek* nevezzünk. Vágynak képzelésünk sok féle ideákról, mellyeket az első képzéskori figyelmezés nem enged el-felejtenünk. Ha osztán ezeket a' képzelés *Imaginatio* által újra elő-hordjuk; és közülök ollyanokat rakgatunk öszve, mellyeket soha öszve-ragasztva, vagy ollyanokat választunk el egymástól, mellyeket az előtt el-választva nem képzeltünk, az a *Költő Tehetség*.[43]

Each of Horváth's abstractions from the initial root "kép" - formed in each case by introducing an additional formative suffix - suggests a further stage of remove and independence from the object. If both "képzés" and "képzelés" are still based in the neoclassical imitation of nature or reality, Horváth's highest term, "képzelődés", which is most closely associated with poetic talent ("költő tehetség"), involves the creation of a new order of images which has hitherto never existed in such a form or combination in the real world. In this way, Horváth's concept of "képzelődés (phantasia)" anticipates Wordsworth's characterisation of the Romantic imagination in his Preface to the 1815 edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*:

> Imagination [...] has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition [...][44]

In the Romantic theory of both Wordsworth and Horváth, imagination and originality replace imitation and taste as the key terms of poetic activity.

Horváth's gradatory exposition of perception, cognition and imagination also demonstrates an awareness, unparalleled in its day, of the possibilities of Hungarian as a language for discursive prose. While in Latin, Horváth argues, such closely related concepts as "idea", "perceptio", "imaginatio" and "phantasia" are expressed through terms which are morphologically unrelated,

> a' magyar ugyan azon eredésű szókkal, az el-nevezett dolgok természetéhez-képest ki tehet így: kép, képzés, képzelés, képzelődés.[45]

This leads Horváth to the following conclusion:

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[43] Horváth, p.40.

[44] Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, p.753.

[45] Horváth, p.27.

> Ezekből a' nevezetekből ki tetszik, melly alkalmatos volna a' Magyar nyelv, az illyen felséges tudománynak elő adásra, ha a' Nemzet hozzá szokna a' hoz, hogy a' maga előtt nagyon ismeretes szókkal, mellynek azonban némelly el-nevezett dolognak valóságát néha még jobban ki fejezik, mint a' más Nemzetek' elnevezései, haszonra élni neki szokna.[46]

It is at once remarkable and symptomatic that Horváth's *Psychologia* has been completely ignored by historians of Hungarian literature. The most comprehensive bibliography of Hungarian literature to date, *A magyar irodalomtörténet bibliográfiája*,[47] contains only one item relating to the work, an essay entitled *A magyar nyelvű psychológiai irodalom kezdete* published in a collection of psychological studies in 1967, which makes little more than perfunctory reference to Horváth. Like the major literary histories of Ferenc Toldy, Jenő Pintér and Antal Szerb, the Hungarian Academy's latest multi-volume *A magyar irodalom története* makes only passing reference to Horváth's text, giving absolutely no idea of its character or of the material it contains. All these histories focus above all on Horváth's extensive collection of folk songs, *Ó és Új mintegy Ötödfélszáz énekek* (completed in 1813, but first published in 1953), and "place" Horváth, together with Dugonics and Gvadányi, in the context of 18th century Hungarian Traditionalism. Not only his *Psychologia*, but also his popular verse astronomy, *Legrövidebb Nyári Éjtszaka* (1791), and his sentimental novel, *A felfedezett titok* (which is not even mentioned in *A magyar irodalom története*) have been generally ignored. Of these works, *Psychologia* is undoubtedly the most remarkable, and its complete neglect surely figures as one of the most bizarre and regrettable casualties of the inevitably selective popular-national tradition in Hungarian letters.

One important writer who did seem to have read and appreciated Horváth's *Psychologia* was Csokonai, who celebrates the work in his ode to its author of 1792. Horváth's concept of "képzelődés" as the faculty of creating new worlds of objects and combinations plays a crucial part in Csokonai's attitude to the function of poetry. In *A Magánossághoz*, for example, the poet is represented as one who appears:

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46 Horváth, p.27.

47 *A magyar irodalomtörténet bibliográfiája 1772-1849*, vol II, ed. G. Kókay, Budapest, 1975.

Mint a sebes villám setétes éjjel;
Midőn teremt új dolgokat
S a semmiből új világokat.[48]

As Kölcsey would differentiate between the "poéta" and the "versificátor" in his evaluation of Berzsenyi's poetry, so Csokonai - some two decades earlier - would distinguish between "verscsinálás" and "poézis". Where Kölcsey associates the "poéta" with the ideal, however, Csokonai associates "poézis" with *imagination* as an activity which "a gondolatoknak, a képzelődésnek, a tűznek természetében, és mindezeknek fölöltöztetésében áll".[49] Csokonai's dynamic concept of poetry has little in common with the neoclassical "imitation of nature", but is concerned with a creative, life-giving, spiritual power: "A poésis lélek, amely elevenít."[50] For Csokonai, the task of poetry - indeed of art in general - is to create new worlds. As he states in the introduction to the comic epic *Dorottya, vagyis a dámák diadalma a farsangon* (1798):

> Minden szép tudományoknak és mesterségeknek, jelesben a poézisnak is, fő végek az ámulás (Tauschung); ha tudni illik eleven és természeti előadásunkkal az olvasó, szemlélő vagy hallgató képzelődését annyira elámíthatjuk, hogy azt a mi költött scénánkba vagy indulatunkba, mint valamelly új világba, a maga reális situátiából általvarázsolhatjuk.[51]

The means Csokonai employs in his poetry to transport the reader into such "new worlds" also suggest a certain continuity with Hotváth's characterisation of "képzelődés" as the activity of forging new, original and unfamiliar combinations of conventionally unrelated images and ideas. Thus Csokonai's own unvonventional juxtaposition of images often takes the form of synaesthesia - a concept which, if as yet unnamed, was central to the Romantic "unification of the senses" - as in *A Magánosséghoz*:

A lenge Hold halkan világosítja
A szőke bikkfak oldalát [...][52]

More frequently, however, such juxtapositions are used to foreground the specificity, individuality and uniqueness of a particular emotion, such as "víg

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48 Csokonai, *Minden munkája: Versek*, Budapest, 1981, p.412.

49 Csokonai, *Minden munkája: Széppprózai művek*, Budapest, 1981, p.279.

50 Csokonai, *Széppprózai művek*, p.280.

51 Csokonai, *Versek*, p.425.

52 Csokonai, *Versek*, p.411.

borzadás" *(Az ember a poésis első tárgya)*, "vad unalom" *(Ó, unalom! vad unalom!)* or "vidám melancholia" *(Az estve)*.

Considering the degree to which the vast stylistic range of Csokonai's writing and the theoretical breadth of his reading make his *oeuvre* as a whole so hard to classify, it is not, of course, surprising that we are able to identify aspects of his poetry which anticipate Romanticism. Most of Csokonai's more profound and accomplished poems are, however - as I argued in Chapter Three - ultimately informed by the sentimental structure of feeling and the experience of alienation it articulates. In spite of the privileged place afforded in his work to a Romantic concept of the imagination, Csokonai's own poetry rarely ventures beyond the reproduction of this experience towards the Romantic illusion of its resolution through the creation of a coherent world of individual vision.

The situation is already substantially different with the poetry of Dániel Berzsenyi (1776-1836), who may also be regarded as a highly significant - if in this respect generally ignored - pioneer of Romantic theory in Hungarian literature. Like Horváth, Berzsenyi starts out from an essentially gradatory concept of the imagination. In his often somewhat eccentric, but none the less unduly neglected, treatise entitled *Poétai harmonistika* (1832), for example, he distinguishes between "képzelő erő" (the power or faculty of imagining) and "képzőszellem" (the spirit of imagination), seeing - with Jean Paul - the former as no more than the "prose" of the latter. For Berzsenyi, the highest form of imagination is the "transcendental" (as opposed to immediately empirical or perceptual) process by which "a képzelet képeit módosítani, el- és összerakni tudjuk."[53] This process he refers to, again with Horváth, as *költés* (presumably with the original sense of the Greek *poiesis* in mind), and explains its meaning in distinctly Romantic terms:

> [a] költés már oly szabad munkássága a léleknek, mely már a külvilág és képzelet képeivel meg nem elégszik, hanem azon fölülemelkedik, s azokat önnézetei szerint módosítani s új alakokká formálni igyekszik; következőleg a külvilágon és annak benyomásain uralkodni s így költeni - idealizálni akar. Ez tehát már oly létszere a poétai léleknek, mely nyilván a teremtő és képző ösztönből folyik.[54]

As for Wordsworth, poetry implies a fusion of perception and creation. The poet does not merely imitate nature, he conquers and idealises it according to

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[53] Berzsenyi, *Poetai harmonistika*, in Dániel Berzsenyi, *Összes művei*, Budapest, 1968, p.308.

[54] Berzsenyi, p.309.

his own inner vision. In this way, poetry may be seen as the continuation of the great work of Creation:

> a képzőszellem nem egyéb [...] mint a teremtés örökké folyó munkájának gyönyörben öltözött folytatója, mint valami isteni kéz minden iránylatit gyönyörnek örök folyamává bájolja, s gyönyör által vezeti lelkünket legfőbb célainkra, az élettökélyre és életterjesztésre, ezek által pedig legfőbb gyönyörre és boldogságra.[55]

Berzsenyi is thus led to an essentially *religious* interpretation of the function of the poetic imagination highly characteristic of Romantic theory:

> mi a leglelkibb poétai szép, mint az erényből folyó lelki szépnek s az istenérzetből folyó isteni szépnek harmoniás középlete vagy szép religio [...] a képzőszellem oly isteni tulajdona az emberiségnek, mely nemcsak egész földi életünket megszebbíteni, s azáltal boldogítani ösztönöz bennünket; de egyszersmind ösztöne valami szebb életnek és religiónak.[56]

In this Berzsenyi comes close to Novalis's conclusion that: "Der echte Dichter ist [...] immer Priester, so wie der echte Priester immer Dichter geblieben."[57]

In his embittered, but often deeply penetrating response to Kölcsey's critical evaluation of his poetry, *Észrevételek Kölcsey Recensiójára* (1825), Berzsenyi consciously equates his concept of the imagination with the historical moment of Romanticism. The context of this association is Berzsenyi's defence of such "exalted" phrases as "dithyrambok lángköre" and "gőztorlatok alpesi" which Kölcsey had rejected as "dagályos" (grandiloquent, flatulent). Berzsenyi argues in reply that such phrases should be seen as no more than "az exaltált képzelődés exaltált képei" insofar as:

> mikor a képzelődés annyira felmagasztaltatik, hogy az embert orkánnak, istennek és villámnak nézi, már akkor semmi köz-képet nem tűr, s a legmerészebbnek szemléletére el van készítve.[58]

According to Berzsenyi, poetic ideas and diction necessarily change in the course of history; thus the role of terms like *"nimbusz, lángkor, csillagkorona"* is "a romantikában csak az, ami volt a hellenikában a *koszorú*

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55 Berzsenyi, p.297.

56 Berzsenyi, pp.297-8.

57 Novalis, vol II, p.41.

58 Berzsenyi, p.191.

[...]"[59] The new poetic diction of Romanticism in an inevitable consequence of our changing image of the world:

> Így kell a romantikának egész stíljáról ítélnünk, mert valamint változtak az ideák, aszerint kellett változni az egész költői szellemnek és nyelvnek; sőt így kell azoknak változniok minden eredeti költőnél, mert minden új világszemlélettel új ideáknak, új ideáknak, új szellemnek s új nyelvnek harmóniája születik, s ahol ez nem születik, ott eredeti sincs. Ugyanazért a költői nyelvet nem a hellenikáéhoz, annyival inkább pedig nem a magunkéhoz méregetve kell megítélnünk, hanem leginkább az új s individuális szellem természete szerint.[60]

By the time Berzsenyi comes to formulate his *Poétai harmonistika* some seven years later, he no longer consciously associates his poetic theory with the "individual spirit" of Romanticism, and his allusions are almost without exception to Hellenic, as opposed to "modern", culture. The key terms of his poetics, however, remain no less "modern" and Romantic in emphasis and implication. This is particularly true of the central concept of his treatise, *harmonia*, which is informed throughout by a fundamentally Romantic preoccupation with ideas of fusion, integration, and unification. The quest for unity and wholeness already informs Berzsenyi's revealing morphological (mis)interpretation of the Hungarian term for beautiful, "szép": "szí-ép, azaz szé-ép, szép egész."[61] Berzsenyi's subsequent definition of the beautiful has much in common with the pursuit of "unity in diversity" promoted by the likes of Schlegel, Novalis, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley: "a szép annyi, mint a harmóniás különféleség - harmóniás különféleségű egész".[62] Insofar as the aim of poetry is the attainment or realisation of the beautiful, Berzsenyi goes on to argue, poetic form must represent the most complete harmonisation of the various faculties of the human soul: "Poétai forma az, melyben minden lelki erők harmóniás emeltségben vagynak."[63] For this reason, the discourse of the poet is not only more "harmonious" than that of the philosopher, in which reason alone plays a privileged role, but is also inherently "higher" and

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59 Berzsenyi, p.191.

60 Berzsenyi, p.191.

61 Berzsenyi, p.289.

62 Berzsenyi, p.289. Berzsenyi goes on, however, to reject the phrase "egység a különfélekben", laying his own emphasis on the *agreement*, rather than absolute unity, of the parts.

63 Berzsenyi, p.299.

more "complete". After all, Berzsenyi claims, "a poéta filozófussá tud lenni, de a filozófus poétává nem emelkedhetik."[64]

As well as constituting a fusion of both perception and creation, and art and philosophy, Berzsenyi's Romantic concept of poetic form also proposes the harmonisation of the natural and the artifical, the naive and the sentimental, the subjective and the objective, the real and the ideal:

> a valódi költészetek nem csupa személyes és tárgyas, hanem személyesb és tárgyasb osztályokra válnak; mert így azon kétféle színek középletét teszik fel.
>
> Így a dolog a naív és szentimentális, a természetes és ideális osztályokkal is. Mert itt is kell mondanunk, hogy a poézis nem csupa természetes és ideális; hanem ezeknek harmóniás középlete, mely természetesb és ideálosb szinekre oszolhat ugyan, de nem csupa természetesre és ideálosra.[65]

In "a valódi költészet", as in the concept of the beautiful itself, the natural and the ideal are inseparable because, as Berzsenyi claims in an earlier draft of *Poétai harmonistika*: "a szép annyi, mint idealizált természet, azaz az ideálnak és természetnek harmóniája és harmóniás középszere [...]"[66]

Berzsenyi's indefatigable pursuit of unity and harmony also leads him to the familiar Romantic emphasis on the "mingling of forms and genres" which already finds expression in Friedrich Schlegel's pioneering *Athenaum Fragment* No. 116, where it is seen as part of the destiny of Romantic poetry "alle getrennte Gattungen der Poesie wieder zu vereinigen".[67] In a section of *Poétai harmonistika* devoted to the forms of poetry ("Költészeti formák"), Berzsenyi accepts the three fundamental generic categories of classical poetics - epic, lyric and dramatic - but goes on to argue that

> a legfőbb költészet nem csupa líra, nem csupa dráma és eposz, hanem ezeknek harmóniás vegyületű középlete; oly középlet, mely a lírai muzsikát, drámai szobrozatot és eposzi festményt egy alakban egyesítvén, mindezen költészeti szépnek közönét és legfőbbjét alakítja.[68]

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64 Berzsenyi, p.299.

65 Berzsenyi, p.317.

66 *Poétai harmonistika*; "Harmadik fogalmazás (Töredékek)" (1828-31), in Berzsenyi, p.546.

67 Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Ausgabe*, vol II, ed. Hans Eichner, Münnich, 1967, p.182.

68 Berzsenyi, p.324.

From the point of view of Berzsenyi's own poetic practice, the most important aspect of harmonisation or unification foregrounded in his theoretical work is almost certainly his emphasis on the unity of thought and language, thought and image. The best illustration of this can be found in *Észrevételek Kölcsey Recensiójára*, where Berzsenyi takes issue with Kölcsey's charge that his poetry is rich in language, but poor in thought. For Berzsenyi, such a claim ammounts to nothing less than a contradiction in terms:

> vajon összeegyeztethető-e az, hogy a poéta a poétai kitételekben gazdag, a poétai gondolatokban ellenben szegény legyen, holott ez a kettő egy? Mert a poétai expressiók mik egyebek, mint megtestesült poétai érzelmek és gondolatok? Innét mondja *Jean Paul*, hogy *a stil nem egyéb, mint maga az ember és a lélek legtitkosabb sajátságainak második, hajlékony teste*; s innét mondja *Luden*, hogy *a beszéd nem egyéb, mint maga a lélek, az ő legeszköztelenebb megjelenésében.*[69]

Poetic language, therefore, can never be a matter of the mere *naming* of objects or the mere *statement* of thoughts. It is for precisely this reason that Berzsenyi at this point distances his poetic method from that of the poet with whom he is still most readily associated in Hungarian literary history, Horace:

> Horác névszerint hívja az isteneket Glycera Lararium ába, én pedig azokat jelképeiben hívom, s ez poétaibb hívás, mint amaz [...] Horác megelégszik a hívással, de én messzebb is terjeszkedem [...] mindenütt *festve*, nem pedig *mondva* van a gondolat, mely nem hibája, hanem fő charaktere a poézisnak.[70]

Among the most accomplished realisations of this principle in Berzsenyi's own verse are the poems *Levéltöredék barátnémhoz* and *A közelítő tél*, both written between the years 1804 and 1808. The concerns of *Levéltöredék barátnémhoz* are overtly "painterly", as Berzsenyi himself proposes in the opening line of the second stanza: "Lefestem szüretem estvéli óráit". The object of Berzsenyi's "painting", however, is not primarily the mimetic reproduction of an evening scence, but the metaphorical evocation of an inner state:

> [...] Agg diófám alatt tüzemet gerjesztem
>
> .
>
> Leplembe burkolva könyökemre dűlök,
> Kanócom pislogó lángjait szemlélem,
> A képzelet égi álmába merülök,

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69 Berzsenyi, p.205.

70 Berzsenyi, p.213.

S egy szebb lelki világ szent óráit élem.

Az őszi bogárnak busongó hangjai
Felköltik lelkemnek minden érzéseit,
S az emlékezetnek repdező szárnyai
Visszahozzák éltem eltűnt örömeit.

Életem képe ez. [...][71]

The world of Berzsenyi's poetic imagination is not only "egy szebb lelki világ", but also a world in which subject and object, thought and language, are inseparable. The images of the ancient oak, the fire the poet attempts to kindle and the flickering flame of the candle he observes, lead a double, yet indivisible, life. We do not question the "objectivity" of the scene they represent, but nor can we at the same time fail to recognise that they are also the embodiment of a highly personal and spiritual reflection: "Életem képe ez." It is impossible to abstract from the poem a hierarchy of perception and reflection, image and thought, object and subject. Rather than employing devices like the markers of simile to name the contiguity of inner and outer worlds, Berzsenyi offers a series of images in which such a dichotomy is already *in solution*. The "repdező szárnyai" of memory, for example, are no more than an extension of "az őszibogárnak búsongó hangjai". The relationship between the two images is not one of *pictura* to *sententia*, for the image is already the thought and the thought already the image: "mindenütt *festve*, nem pedig *mondva* van a gondolat."

This type of harmony is still more effectively achieved in *A közelítő tél* where the whole poem reads as an (unstated) metaphor for the poet's inner experience of mortality and mutability. Unlike Ábrahám Barcsay's treatment of the same theme in *A télnek közelgetése* (1774), where the description of winter's approach leads the poet to a philosophical conclusion about the transitoriness of human life expressed on a didactic and nonmetaphorical level, Berzsenyi's poem refuses to make a final distiction between the "tenors" and "vehicles" of his metaphors. Berzsenyi slides from the description of nature to the description of the self without any interruption of the metaphorical intensity of the poem:

Lassanként koszorúm bimbaja elvirít,
Itt hágy szép tavaszom: még alig ízleli

[71] Berzsenyi, p.80.

Nektárját ajakam, még alig illettem
Egy-két zsenge virágait.[72]

Berzsenyi originally entitled the poem *Ősz*, and it was Kazinczy who suggested the title by which the poem has been known ever since. In either case the poem evokes a tension between the explicitly *descriptive* suggestion of its title and the more ambiguously evocative emplications of the text itself. The tension is, of course, never resolved in the poem, and Autumn remains throughout a metaphor in which the worlds of subject and object, the life of man and the eternal laws of nature, are inextricably fused. In this way *A közelítő tél* finds its proper place among the great Autumn poems of the Romantics, such as Keats's *Ode to Autumn*, Lamartine's *L' Automne* and Eichendorf's *Herbstweh*.

One further comparative context for Berzsenyi's poetry is suggested by Szerb, who, in an essay of 1929 entitled *Az ihletett költő*, speaks of "a Berzsenyivel olyannyira rokon Hölderlin".[73] Szerb highlights as the basis for this comparison an essential homology in the two poets' elevated use of metaphor. He compares, for example, Berzsenyi's distinctive metaphor for poetry in what was probably his last poem, *A poézis hajdan és most*:

A szent poézis néma hattyú
S hallgat örökre hideg vizekben[74]

with the following famous lines from Hölderlin's *Halfte des Lebens*:

Ihr holden Schwäne
Und trunken von Küssen

Trunkt ihr das Haupt
Ins heilignüchterne Wasser.[75]

To this one might add as a further, and perhaps more convincing, basis for a comparison between Berzsenyi and Hölderlin the integral role of classical (and above all Hellenic) allusion in their verse. In both cases their apparent "classicism" has less to do with the measured and imitative neoclassicist poetics of the 18th century than with the more individual and visionary

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72 Berzsenyi, p.81.

73 In Antal Szerb, *Gondolatok a könyvtárban*, p.292.

74 Berzsenyi, p.144.

75 Quoted from *Friedrich Hölderlin, Edward Morike: Selected Poems*, ed. Christopher Middleton, Chicago, 1972, p.72.

Romantic Hellenism which informs much of the work of Byron, Shelley and Keats. This is not, of course, to deny that the single most important influence on Berzsenyi's *prosody* was the (Latin, if in inspiration no less Hellenic) verse of Horace, but rather to suggest that the consciously "modern", and implicitly Romantic, theoretical context through which this influence is mediated takes us way beyond the classicism with Berzsenyi's work has conventionally been associated.

The nature of Berzsenyi's reputation in Hungarian literary history was, for most of the 19th century, determined by the failure of his critics to appreciate the Romantic, metaphorical discourse of his finest poetry and the equally Romantic implications of his literary theoretical prose. Kölcsey, who would go on to attack both the effects of Romantic (modern, Christian) poetry on national character in *Nemzeti hagyományok* and the irrationalism of Romantic philosophy in his essays on mesmerism and animal magnetism,[76] saw in Berzsenyi's "exaltált képzelődésnek exaltált képei" little more than turgid affectation working against the interests of meaning. He is still able - as we saw in Chapter Four - to identify with Berzsenyi's idealism and subjectivism, but is entirely disorientated in the unfamiliar and highly individual world of Berzsenyi's poetic imagination. In this way Kölcsey's essay itself serves as a revealing indication of the boundaries between the sentimental and Romantic moments.

Erdélyi, in his evaluation of Berzsenyi's poetry, retains many of Kölcsey's reservations, but - writing in 1847 - is able to approach the "Hungarian Horace" from a more coherently elaborated popular-national position. Like Kölcsey, Erdélyi reproaches Berzsenyi for what he sees as semantically redundant grandiloquence ("gadályosság"), and (again like Kölcsey) returns to an implicit distinction between thought and language: "Berzsenyi idegen volt gondolatokban, de miénk a nyelvben."[77] While Erdélyi identifies Horace as the main source of the foreignness of Berzsenyi's thought, he also suggests that the poet's "festő költészete" is largely the product of (regrettable) German influences. To this aspect of Berzsenyi's poetry, Erdélyi makes the following passing objection:

> Mit tartsunk mi általában e költési fajról, talán elmondjuk máskor terjedelmesen, itt csak annyit jegyzünk fel, hogy az még akkor is, ha teljesen

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[76] Kölcsey, *Levelek a mesmerizmusról* (1823), *Az állati magnetizmus nyomairól a régiségben* (1828).

[77] Erdélyi, *Berzsenyi Dániel* (1847), in *Pályák és pálmák*, Budapest, 1886, p.68.

> sikerül, nem egyéb másodrangúságnál, "zu welchem wenig oder gar kein Genie gehort" (Lessing).[78]

Erdélyi's criticism of Berzsenyi is also informed by his attitude to the "nehéznyavalyás modor" of what he calls "szó-romantika" in his *Valami a romanticizmusról* - written in the same year as the Berzsenyi essay - or what he refers to as "szilaj romantika", azaz a művészietlen szabadság" in his Vörösmarty essay of 1845.[79] It is for this reason that he is unable to understand Berzsenyi's juxtaposition, in his reply to Kölcsey, of a defence of Romanticism with a rejection of "goth ízléstelenség". How can it be, Erdélyi asks, that "Berzsenyinek tetszett a romantica s nem a goth ízlés" when:

> semmi sincs oly mély, oly igaz, magát meg nem hazudtoló összeköttetésben, mint e két tüneménye az új idők művészetének.[80]

The answer to Erdélyi's question is that his conception of the Romantic (insofar as it is determined, like that of Kölcsey, primarily by the preconceptions of the popular-national ideology) is drastically limited and distorted.

The triumph of the literary ideology promoted by the likes of Kölcsey and Erdélyi, with its implicit rejection of the threat of "modern", "Christian" poetry to the integrity of national traditions, ultimately ensured that Berzsenyi's poetry would remain - for all the magnanimous and unanimous deference afforded to its impeccable craftsmanship - essentially alien and problematic to the key legislators of national taste for the rest of the century. Arany's brief comments on Berzsenyi's poems in his *Iskolai jegyzetek* are characteristic of this uneasy combination of somewhat routine deference with the received wisdom of Kölcsey's censure: "A nyelv, dikció bennük merész, bárha egyes helyek nem mentek a dagálytól."[81] In the criticism of Gyulai and Riedl, Berzsenyi's work occupies the still more disturbing space of a conspiruous silence, and it is only with János Horváth's penetrating study *Egy fejezet a magyar irodalom ízlés történetéből: Berzsenyi Dániel* (1924) that Berzsenyi first receives serious critical attention - and, what is more, as an essentially *Romantic* poet - from a champion of Hungarian "national classicism".

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78 Erdélyi, p.80.

79 Erdélyi, p.162.

80 Erdélyi, p.86.

81 János Arany, *Összes művei*, vol X, ed. Dezső Keresztury, Budapest, 1962, p.517.

The one major Hungarian poet in the first half of the 19th century who was able fully to appreciate, and indeed build upon, Berzsenyi's achievement was Mihály Vörösmarty. While Erdélyi would *complain* in 1847 that Berzsenyi

> nem elégszik meg a természet s az élet tulajdonainak tudásával [...] hanem a legközönebb (egyetemesb) életjelenetekre, a világ egészére megy át.[82]

Vörösmarty had, in his *Berzsenyi emlékezete* written some ten years before, treated such ambitions as inherent virtues:

> Az ihletettnek ajkairól dicsőn
> Kelt a merész dal, meghaladá porát
> A lomha földnek s fellegen túl
> A napot és nap urát köszönté.[83]

Vörösmarty makes few claims to our attention as a Romantic theorist. Most of his critical *oeuvre* is made up of highly uneven theatre reviews, where the emphasis mostly falls on problems of performance rather than on abstract questions of aesthetics and literary theory. The foundations of a Romantic concept of the imagination do, however, find expression quite early in his poetry, as, for example, in the opening stanzas of *Tündérvölgy* (1825):

> Mit tudtok ti hamar halandó emberek,
> Ha lángképzelődés nem játszik veletek?
> Az nyit menyországot, poklot előttetek:
> Belenéztek melyen, s elámul lelketek.
>
> Én is oly dalt mondok, világ hallatára
> Melynek égen, földön ne legyen határa
> Amit fül nem hallott, a szem meg nem jára,
> Azt én írva lelem lelkem asztalára.[84]

A similar challenge is proposed by the opening lines of his next epic poem, the unfinished *A Délsziget* (1826):

> Messze maradjatok el, nagy messze ti hítlenek innen!
> Nincs kedvem sem időm mindennapi dolgokat írni:
> Újat írok, nagyot is, kedvest is, rettenetest is [...][85]

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82 Erdélyi, p.102.

83 Mihály Vörösmarty, *Összes művei*, ed. Károly Horváth and Dezső Tóth, vol II, Budapest, 1960, p.216.

84 Vörösmarty, vol V, p.29.

85 Vörösmarty, vol V, p.57.

It is the richly metaphorical language Vörösmarty develops is order to bring this "great", "new" and "terrible" world of imagination into being which makes him not only the true successor of Berzsenyi, but also the most remarkable representative in 19th Hungarian verse of the Romantic endeavour to restore the "lost" unity of subject and object, thought and language, self and world. In Vörösmarty's great later lyrics, for example, it is impossible to identify a final referent or "world of objects" existing independently of, or somehow "behind" the language of the text. The central signifiers in poems like *Előszó* (1850) or *A vén czigány* (1851) do not function primarily as substitutes for a finally knowable, retrievable set of signifieds, but rather evoke or activate a chain of other signifiers: the text is presented as a world unto itself.

Előszó, for example, proposes a progression in *time* (Spring, Winter, Spring) as a deterioration in *value*, where the closing image of Spring reinterprets the already metaphorical significance of the opening image. Spring in the first section of the poem serves as a metaphor not only for the festival of nature ("ünnepre fordult a természet"), but also for youth, hope and - read in the context of the tempest which follows - for the confident and conscientious diligence of the Age of Reform. In the intensely symbolic return of Spring in the closing section of the poem, however, the season is represented in a new metaphorical light which distorts and undermines the implications of the original metaphor:

Majd eljön a hajfodrász, a tavasz,
S az agg föld tán vendéghajat veszen,
Virágok bársonyába öltözik.
Üveg szemén a fagy fölengedend,
S illattal elkendőzött arczain
Jó kedvet és ifjúságot hazud:
Kérdjétek akkor ezt a vén kaczért,
Hová tevé boldogtalan fiait?[86]

The object (or "tenor") of the second Spring metaphor is not so much Spring itself as the Spring metaphor of the first section of the poem. This graduation to a second stage of metaphorical remove takes us beyond the realm of representation into the world of creative imagination. The poet ventures out into a world of natural, social, historical referents and conventional discursive associations (Spring as youth, energy, hope, etc) which have an existence prior to, and independent of, his intervention, then goes on to appropriate

[86] Vörösmarty, vol III, p.180.

them by recreating them as the unique manifestations of his own individual vision.

In the same way, the tempest evoked in the central section of the poem serves to transform the objective reality of war and revolution to which the poet is subjected into the visionary creation of the subject himself:

> A vész kitört. Vérfagylaló keze
> Emberfejekkel lapdázott az égre,
> Emberszívekben dúltak lábai.
> Lélekzetétől meghervadt az élet,
> A szellemnek világa kialutt
> S az elsötétült égnek arczain
> Vad fénynyel a villámok rajzolták le
> Az ellenséges istenek haragját.
> És folyón folyvást ordított a vész,
> Mint egy veszette bőszült szörnyeteg.
> A merre járt, irtóztató nyomában
> Szétszaggatott népeknek átkai
> Sóhajtanak fel csonthalmok közöl;
> És a nyomor gyámoltalan fejét
> Elhamvadt városokra fekteti.
> Most tél van és csend és hó és halál.[87]

The project of the Romantic poet, as tragic hero, is to transform the experience of subjectivity from one of (alienated, sentimental) *subjection* into one of (heroic, Romantic) *agency*.

The range of meanings activated by the tempest metaphor in the central section of *Előszó* is rendered still more complex and subjective by the equally polyvalent role the metaphor plays in several of Vörösmarty's other major poems. The tempest figures, for example, as a metaphor for strength and struggle in *Az élő szobor* (1841):

> Oldódjatok ti megkövült tagok,
> Szakadj fel dúlt keblemből, oh sóhaj!
> Légy mint a földrendítő éji vész
> Bútól haragtól terhes és szilaj.[88]

for the death of the Romantic hero in *Világzaj* (1841), written to commemorate the funeral of Nepoleon:

> Megmozdult egy sír, s vele mozgani kezde a tenger
> Ős koronáival a földteke ingadozott;

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87 Vörösmarty, vol III, pp.179-80.

88 Vörösmarty, vol III. p.24.

S újra düh, harcz s mind a mi viszály rettent vala egykor,
Szaggatták a kor emberiség kebelét;
Újra felállt a nép osztozni világokon, és a
Béke derült arczán át vihar árnya repült.
Honnan e zaj és honnan e vész? A harczok urának
Holttestét vitték által a tengereken.[89]

for the vanity of human struggles and ambitions, expressed in almost Nietzschean terms in *Gondolatok a könyvtárban* (1844):

[...] Ixion
Bőszült vihartól űzött kerekén
Örvény nyomorban, vég nélkül kerengők.[90]

and in *Az emberek* (1846):

Hallgassatok, ne szóljon a dal,
Most a világ beszél,
S megfagynak forró szárnyaikkal
A zápor és a szél,
Könnyzápor, mellyet bánat hajt,
Szél, mellyet emberszív sóhajt.
Hiába minden: szellem, bűn, erény;
Nincsen remény![91]

and finally for a type of (albeit highly ambiguous) catharsis throughout *A vén czigány*. In this last poem, whose addressee may be read as the poet himself, the tempest metaphor also has crucial implications for Vörösmarty's attitude to his own poetry:

Véred forrjon mint az örvény árja,
Rendüljön meg a velő agyadban,
Szemed égjen mint az üstökös láng,
Húrod zengjen vésznél szilajabban,
És keményen mint a jég verése.[92]

It is, of course, highly significant that Vörösmarty should associate this tempest metaphor with the epitome of the Romantic hero, Napoleon, by whom the poet was fascinated throughout his career. In 1829, for example, he began to translate Barthelmey and Mery's epic *Napoleon en Egypte*, and four years

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89 Vörösmarty, vol III, p.24.

90 Vörösmarty, vol III, p.101.

91 Vörösmarty, vol III, p.145.

92 Vörösmarty, vol III, p.194.

later composed his own epigram to Napoleon which - in contrast to Berzsenyi's far more critical ode *Napoleonhoz* (1814) - refuses to condemn the boundless ambition of the fallen emperor:

> Nagy volt ő s nagysága miatt megdőlnie kellett;
> Ég és föld egyaránt törtek elejteni őt:
> Tűrni nagyobbat irígy lőn a sáralkatú ember,
> S tűrni hasonlót nem bírtak az istenek is.
> *(Napoleon)*[93]

Vörösmarty also planned to write a drama about Napoleon - of which only one preliminary sketch has survived - and it has been suggested that the figure of the Prince in *Csongor és Tünde* may have been written with the tragic fate of Bonaparte in mind.[94] In 1839, Ferenc Toldy presented Vörösmarty - as well as himself and Bajza - with an empty diary in which to record his thoughts on any important experiences or events in his life. Vörösmarty only filled two pages of this diary, and both are concerned with the possibility of the dramatic represention of Napoleon as a tragic hero. The roots of Vörösmarty's fascination with Napoleon seem to lie in an implicit analogy - on a metaphorical and probably quite uncoscious level - between the aspirations of the two figures as Romantic heroes. According to Vörösmarty, Napoleon "czélja a legfőbb, mi ember által elérhető: világuralkodás".[95] The poet's own endeavour to create a new world in the image of what the finds "written on the tables of [his] soul", and over which he has complete power, represents a hardly less Napoleonic ambition.

As Vörösmarty's epigram suggests, Napoleon's tragedy lay not in the emperor's weakness, but in his greatness. The tragic fate of human ambition is, for Vörösmarty, a matter of historical and existential necessity; tragedy is not merely an aspect, but the essential condition of human existence. If there is any meaning, nobility or grace to be obtained through human struggle, it will only be realised through the experience of tragedy. This is the ultimate message of *Gondolatok a könyvtárban*, whose logic is highly reminiscent of Fichte's meditation on man's attempt to conquer the irrational cited earlier in this chapter:

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93 Vörösmarty, vol II, p.118.

94 See, for example, József Túróczy-Trostler, in *Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Osztályának Közleményei*, vol VI, Budapest, 1955, pp.288-9.

95 Vörösmarty, vol II, p.347.

És még is - még is fáradozni kell [...]
Rakjuk le, hangyaszorgalommal, a mit
Agyunk az ihletett órákban teremt.
S ha összehordtunk minden kis követ,
Építsük egy újabb kor Bábalét,
Míg olly magas lesz, mint a csillagok.
S ha majd benéztünk a menny ajtaján
Kihallhatok az angyalok zenéjét,
És földi vérünk minden csepjei
Magas gyönyörnek lángjától hevültek,
Menjünk szét mint a régi nemzetek,
És kezdjünk újra tűrni és tanulni [...]
Mi dolgunk a világon? küzdeni
Erőnk szerint a lenemesbekért.[96]

A preoccupation with tragedy, defeat and decay informs the greater part of Vörösmarty's major poetry at every stage in his career. It can already be indentified in the peculiar emphasis of *Zalán futása*, which, paradoxically for a work celebrated as the first major poetic monument to the glories of the Hungarian Conquest, lives up to the promise of its title in its preoccupation with the tragedy of the defeated Zalán rather than the glory of the victorious Árpád.

Several of Vörösmarty's other longer narrative poems are informed by a relatedly tragic sense of the incommensurability of human actions and desires with the impenetrable laws of destiny. Thus in *Tündérvölgy* (1825) Csaba slays Dongore to win the fair maiden Jeve, only to find his victory rendered meaningless by the fact that Jeve, after being mortally wounded by Dongore's spear during the contest, is transported to fairyland. When at last Csaba finds his sweethart in the "valley of the fairies" he no longer recognises her. In *A két szomszédvár* (1832), Tihamér's full-scale revenge on the family and household of Káldor, the lord of the "neighbouring castle", proves still more meaningless. After finally - and unintentionally - causing the death of Káldor's beautiful daughter, Enikő, Tihamér finds himself perpetually haunted by her image in his sleep until "mint vad, melynek fekvét fölverte vadászeb, / A vadon életnek ment bolygani tömkelegében".[97] In *A Délsziget* (1826) the young hero Hadadur discovers a beautiful girl on an island where his "straying boat" has been carried by the sea. As soon as the young lovers kiss, however, the island parts beneath them and they are separated forever.

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96 Vörösmarty, vol III. pp.103-4.

97 Vörösmarty, vol V, p.243.

The nature of human desire - as Vörösmarty would also suggest in the early lyric poem *Földi menny* (1825) or in the later *Késő vágy* (1839) - is inherently and tragically ungratifiable. The same logic also informs the epic *A Rom* (1830), whose hero is granted three wishes by the deity of an ancient ruin, but still cannot find happiness and vainly yearns for a fourth wish. Vörösmarty's thoughts on the tragedy of human desire are made still more explicit in the drama *Csongor és Tünde*, written one year later in 1831. Meeting the three travellers (the Merchant, the Prince and the Scholar) for a second time, after they have all returned disillusioned from their respective quests for wealth, power and wisdom, Csongor is left to conclude: "Elérhetetlen vágy az emberé".[98]

Vörösmarty's tragic vision even tends to penetrate poems in which, either generically or thematically, it would seem to have no place. A particularly revealing example of this is *Szózat* (1836), Vörösmarty's famous call to the nation for unshakable loyalty which, when set to music by Béni Egressy, became Hungary's "second national anthem". Here, the *structure* of the poem seems to contradict the very object of its appeal. Thus the hope expressed by the negative relative clauses which open stanzas eight and nine ("Az nem lehet") is far outweighed by the positive vision of tragedy by which they are followed. Similarly, while the "jobb kor" anticipated in stanza ten is described in the space of a mere three lines, the evocation of its tragic alternative, "a nagyszerű halál", is not only twice as long, but also far more consistent with the series of images of historical disaster and defeat by which it is preceded.

A related emphasis is suggested by the two instances of syntactically modified repetition in the poem. Thus the shift from "még jőni kell, még jőni fog" in stanza ten to "Vagy jőni fog, ha jőni kell" in stanza eleven, actually changes our reading of the keyword "kell" (must). In the first instance, "kell" expresses the heartfelt *desire* of the speaker, while in the second it suggests a *necessity* beyond the speaker's control. It is perhaps worth noting that "kell" also appears with the same emphasis at the end of two other lines in the poem - at the end of the second and closing stanzas - where in both instances it is preceded by the word "halnod".

The second important variation concerns both the syntax and the lexis of the first and penultimate stanzas:

> Hazádnak rendületlenül
> Légy híve, oh magyar,
> Bölcsőd az s majdan sírod is,

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[98] Vörösmarty, *Költői művei*, vol II, Budapest, 1981, p.551.

Melly ápol s eltakar.
Légy híve rendületlenül
Hazádnak, oh magyar;
Ez éltetőd, s ha elbukál,

Hantjával ez takar.[99]

After the predominantly bleak and harrowing images of the intervening eleven stanzas, the new urgency - if not desperation - evoked by situating the verb in the focal position at the beginning of the stanza surely testifies to the force and magnitude of the historical process the nation is being called upon to resist. The modulation which occurs in the lines which follow also corroborates this emphasis. The equilibrium of positive and negative elements in the second stanza (bölcsőd/sírod; ápol/eltakar) is disrupted in the penultimate stanza, where the notion of "ápolás" (cultivation, nursing, cherishing) is replaced by an extension of the image of "eltakarás" (covering - here, with the earth of the grave), directly related to the image of the "nagyszerű halál".[100]

This preoccupation with the tragic prospect of the "death of the nation" (nemzethalál) was, of course, highly characteristic of Hungarian letters during the Age of Reform, and there are aspects of Vörösmarty's approach to questions of national tragedy which quite clearly owe much to their time and context. This approach seems to consist of three discrete emphases.[101] First, the spectre of a great national defeat or disaster is represented in terms of the nation's *inner* weakness, or tragic flaw. It is this concept of national tragedy which already informs Baróti-Szabó's *Egy ledőlt diófához* (1790), Berzsenyi's *A magyarokhoz* ("Romlásnak indult..." 1810) and Kölcsey's great Zrínyi poems of the 1830s *(Zrínyi dala, Zrínyi második éneke)*. Its most powerful expression in Vörösmarty's poetry is undoubtedly *Országháza* (1846) inspired in part by the reluctance of the Hungarian aristocracy to support the building

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99 Vörösmarty, *Összes művei*, vol II, pp.210-11.

100 Vörösmarty"s predilection for images of tragedy and decay also makes its presence felt in his "populist" poems, written mainly between the years of 1828 and 1830. Perhaps the most striking example of this is *A puszta csárda* (1829), which reads as a kind of antidote to Orczy's *A Bugaci csárdának tiszteletére*.

101 My treatment of ideas of national tragedy in Vörösmarty's poetry owes much to - while also extending, modifying and taking issue with - some of the central premises of Mihály Szegedy-Maszák's essay *A kozmikus tragédia romantikus látomása* reprinted in his *Világkép és stílus*, Budapest, 1980.

of a new parliament in Pest, and in part by the example of the Galician peasant uprising which broke out in February of 1846. The uprising - encouraged by Vienna as a means to supress the rebellious, liberal Polish nobility - demonstrated both the need for political unity across all classes of society, and the catastrophe in which the failure to secure such unity could result. It is the combination of these two contemporary events which form the wider political context of Vörösmarty's angry outburst against the lack of unity in his own nation:

> Nincsen egy szó
> Összehangzó
> Honfiaknak ajakáról,
> Nincsen egy tett
> Az egygyé lett
> Nemzet élete fájáról.[102]

The once sacred name of the homeland is now no more than a vile curse:

> Neve: szolgálj és ne láss bért.
> Neve: adj pénzt és ne tudd mért.
> Neve: halj meg más javáért.
> Neve szégyen, neve átok:
> Ezzé lett magyar hazátok.[103]

A second and rather different approach to the prospect of the death of the nation is developed in *Szózat*, where the nation is depicted struggling bravely and unitedly through centuries of oppression and defeat. Here the "nagyszerű halál" is not the slow death of internal degeneration evoked so powerfully by Berzsenyi, but a sudden, sweeping and total defeat, presumably at the hands of a foreign power. As suggested earliner, however, the sense of historical necessity which pervades the form of the poem seems to imply an irresistible process of tragic decline whose logic extends way beyond the contingencies and pragmatics of "foreign affairs". In this way *Szózat* already anticipates the third and most original aspect of Vörösmarty's approach to the spectre of national tragedy which finds its fullest expression in his lyrics of the 1840s and 50s. For the fact that *Szózat* closes with a *return* to its initial point of departure (its second and closing stanzas are identical) only foregrounds the tension between the object of its appeal - that the nation should change the course of its tragic history - and the structure of its vision. It is the same

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[102] Vörösmarty, vol III, p.148.

[103] Vörösmarty, vol III, p.148.

suggestion of a tragic return - this time as an unambignuous loss of value - which, as we have seen, informs the vision of national tragedy portrayed in *Előszó* in the very real context of historical defeat. For Vörösmarty, the logic of history is cyclic and circular, rather than linear and teleological.

It is this logic which takes us beyond the widespread concern with national tragedy characteristic of the Age of Reform to a more individual preoccupation with the tragic nature of human existence itself. The rejection of the enlightened ideal of human progress and perfectibility identifiable in *Gondolatok a könyvtárban*:

> Ez hát a sors és nincs vég semmiben?
> Nincs és nem is lesz, míg a föld ki nem hal
> S meg nem kövülnek élő fiai [...][104]

plays a crucial role in Vörösmarty's mature poetry from *Csongor és Tünde* (1831) to *A vén czigány* (1854). A particularly powerful example of this can be seen in the poet's most intense and embittered poetic response to the *universal* human significance of the Galician catastrophe, *Az emberek* (1846). Here, the despairing refrain repeated at the end of all seven stanzas evokes an irresistible sense of eternal recurrence:

> Az ember fáj a földnek; olly sok
> Harcz- s békeév után
> S testvérgyűlölési átok
> Virágzik homlokán;
> S midőn azt hinnők, hogy tanul,
> Nagyobb bűnt forral álnokul.
> Az emberfaj sárkányfog-vetemény:
> Nincsen remény! nincsen remény![105]

Vörösmarty's rejection of a teleological interpretation of human existence and history also extends his tragic vision to one final and more abstract dimension. For the tragic denial of direction and ultimate fulfilment in the life of the individual, the nation and mankind as a whole is also reproduced in the world of nature. Decay ("enyészet") and the perpetual return to origins are the elemental and eternal laws of the cosmos. This is the conclusion Vörösmarty reaches in the great monologue of the spirit of Night in *Csongor és Tünde*:

> A Mind enyész, és végső romjain
> A szép világ borongva hamvad el;

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[104] Vörösmarty, vol III, p.103.

[105] Vörösmarty, vol III, p.147.

És ahol kezdve volt, ott vége lesz:
Sötét és semmi lesznek: én leszek,
Kietlen, csendes, lény nem lakta Éj.[106]

It is also the ultimate message of *Előszó*, in which the "second coming" of Spring signifies not development, but regression and death. Growth and renewal are treated with intense irony as no more than the artifice of a "hajfodrász" and the lies of a "vén kaczér".

The situation is similar, if finally more complex, in *A vén czigány*, one of Vörösmarty's very last poems. Here too, Vörösmarty stresses the circularity and directionlessness of human existence:

Mindig így volt e világi élet,
Egyszer fázott, másszor lánggal égett;[107]

and speaks of human life in terms of "Prométheusznak halhatatlan kínja".[108] And here too Vörösmarty goes on to raise this vision of human tragedy to a higher cosmic dimension:

A vak csillag, ez a nyomorult föld,
Hadd forogjon keserű levében [...][109]

These last two lines, however, are followed by an altogether less familiar suggestion of the possibility of a type of purification or catharsis:

S annyi bűn, szenny s ábrándok dühétől,
Tisztuljon meg a vihar hevében,
És hadd jöjjön el Noé bárkája,
Mely egy új világot zár magába.[110]

This suggestion of catharsis and its development in the closing stanza of the poem has led most commentators to interpret *A vén czigány* as a final expression of hope and faith in life. The overall effect of the poem is, however, considerably more ambiguous than is generally recognised. First, there is the problem of the refrain. After the opening six lines of the sixth stanza quoted above, the reader might reasonably expect some modification to

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106 Mihály Vörösmarty, *Költői művei*, vol II, Budapest, 1981, p.541.

107 Vörösmarty, *Összes művei*, vol III, pp.193-4.

108 Vörösmarty, vol III, p.195.

109 Vörösmarty, vol III, p.195.

110 Vörösmarty, vol III, p.195.

the weary and resigned tone of the refrain which has closed every stanza up to this point:

Húzd, ki tudja meddig húzhatod,
Mikor lesz a nyűtt vonóból bot,
Szív és pohár tele búval, borral,
Húzd rá czigány, ne gondolj a gonddal.[111]

No such modification is offered in stanza six, and the effect of yet another reiteration of resignation inevitably qualifies our response to the prospect of the desired catharsis. When the refrain is finally modified in the seventh and closing stanza of the poem, the new inflexion is of enormous significance. The closing line of the poem, for example, reads: "Húzd, s ne gondolj a *világ* gondjával" (my emphasis). The tune the poet implores the old gypsy (who is, of course, the dying Vörösmarty himself) to play in the final stanza is no longer a song of *this* world:

Majd ha elfárad a vész haragja,
S a viszály elvérzik csatákon,
Akkor húzd meg újra lelkesedve
Isteneknek teljék benne kedve,
Akkor vedd fel újra a vonót,
És derüljön zordon homlokod,
Szűd teljék meg az öröm borával,
Húzd, s ne gondolj a világ gondjával.[112]

The song will only be renewed after the passing of the "vész" and "viszály" which - considering both the association of storm and song is stanza two and the role of the tempest metaphor throughout Vörösmarty's work - may surely be read as metaphors for the poet's own activity and trouble life on earth. Only after the storm of life has passed can the gypsy forget the troubles of this world and play purely for the pleasure of the gods. *A vén czigány* is the highly equivocal song of a dying man: its final vision may well be read as an anticipation not so much of joy on earth, but of peace and purification in death.[113]

The hapless circumstances in which Vörösmarty wrote this poem themselves tell us much about the paradoxical nature of his reputation in

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[111] Vörösmarty, vol III, pp.194-5.

[112] Vörösmarty, vol III, p.195.

[113] I do not wish to make any special claims for this latter reading; merely to emphasize the *ambivalence* of the closing stanzas of the poem.

Hungarian literary history. The highly acclaimed author of Hungary's first major epic on the Conquest died in poverty unable to sell his own work. In the month from which *A vén czigány* is generally dated (August, 1854), Vörösmarty wrote to the poet Lőrinc Tóth:

> Annyira kifogytam a pénzből, hogy még Baracskára sem tudok elmenni. Kaparj össze, az isten áldjon meg, néhány forintot, lelkesítsd Kemény Zsigót is, s ha másképp nem, küldd ki postán. Adósság, tehetetlenség, sánta remény, hidd el, alig nevezhető életnek. Itt a lelkierő oszlop, melyről elpusztult a híd.[114]

Vörösmarty's financial difficulties (together with the general lack of public interest in the work of one of the nation's most "respected" poets) does not merely originate from the adverse conditions caused by the defeat of the Hungarian revolution and War of Independence. Ten years earlier in 1839 Vörösmarty could already complain:

> Hova lettek a szegény költőnek büszke álmai? Mi lett belőled szép remény? Egy pár kötet vers, melyet már csak névről ismernek, melyet mindenki megdicsér inkább, mint elolvasson. Keserű jutalom![115]

By 1842 Vörösmarty's financial circumstances had deteriorated to such a degree that he was threatened with legal distraint. Kossuth himself felt bound to come to the poet's defence in a leading article for *Pesti Hírlap* of June 2 1842:

> A tény egyszerűen meztelenségében ennyiből áll: Vörösmarty, miután a közvélemény által már rég a nemzeti költészet elsőrangú képviselői közé soroztaték, lángszellemének szétszórt műveit összeszede, s önköltségére kinyomtattata - és piruljunk uraim! - Vörösmarty munkáiból alig kelt el három négy év alatt a két magyar hazában kétszáz példány! Ő e napokban közel volt ahhoz, hogy a nyomtatási költségek miatt bírói foglalás alá kerüljön, mert nem vett be annyit, amennyi csak e költségeket is födözhetné.[116]

Some three years later, in a letter to Miklós Wesselényi dated August 13 1845, Vörösmarty provided the following bitter assessment of the ambivalent reception of his poetry which still remains pertinent today: "Verseimmel úgy bánik a közönség, mint a vízzel; dicséri s bort iszik helyette.[117]

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[114] Cited in Vörösmarty, vol III, p.574.

[115] Cited in Vörösmarty, vol III. p.363.

[116] Cited in Vörösmarty, vol III, p.364.

[117] Cited in Vörösmarty, vol III, p.364.

This paradox - which so closely mirrors the antinomies of the reaction to the achievement of Berzsenyi - is frequently reproduced in Gyulai's critical writings on Vörösmarty. Although Gyulai produced the first extensive critical biography of the poet *(Vörösmarty életrajza)* in 1866, even here he is inclined to locate Vörösmarty's central importance in the degree to which he supposedly paved the way for the real architects of the popular-national tradition in Hungarian poetry, Petőfi and Arany. Elsewhere, Gyulai's essential deference towards Vörösmarty as a national poet is repeatedly qualified by serious reservations. Thus, discussing *Zalán futása* in his *Szépirodalmi Szemle* (published in *Budapesti Hírlap* in 1855) Gyulai comments:

> Vörösmarty a mondai alapot nem fogta fel naivul, mythologiát képzelméből teremtett, kevéssé játszott a népszellem húrjain, s népdallamok helyett görög hexametereket használt, melyek ugyan nyelvünk szépségeit új oldalról tüntették föl, de reánk nézve örökre idegenek maradtak.[118]

Similarly, in the first volume of his *Dramaturgiai dolgozatok*, Gyulai has this to say about *A vén czigány*:

> e költemény első versszaka kitűnő szép, a másodikban már kiesik a költő az alaphangulatból, többhelyt dagályba csap, míg forma tekintetében nem mindenütt ismerhetni meg benne a régi Vörösmartyt.[119]

It was only with the writers associated with the journal *Nyugat* at the beginning of the 20th century (in particular Mihály Babits and Aladár Schöpflin) that what Gyulai saw as the weaknesses of Vörösmarty's poetry were reinterpreted as major strengths. Thus Schöpflin, for example, directly takes issue with Gyulai's evaluation of *A vén czigány* in a pioneering essay on *A két Vörösmarty* published in *Nyugat* in 1908:

> A *Vén Cigány* [...] ma a költő leginkább élő műve. Ezzel Vörösmarty átnyúlik a ma költészetébe [...] Mi nem látunk benne dagályt, mint látott Gyulai, ha nem világlik is ki mindig egy pillantásra a szavakból, hogy mi élt s tört kifejeződésre a költő lelkében. Nem lehet dagály ott, ahol igaz érzés közvetlenül szól a versből s ebben a versben benne van a lehanyatló Vörösmarty egész szegény, beteg, elkínzott szive [...] A mai emberhez az az öreg, beteg Vörösmarty áll közelebb, mert az ő lelkében ismerünk rá jobban a mi ellentétektől szaggatott, diszharmóniák közt vergődő, bénulásában időnként görcsösen föllobbanó lelkünkre.[120]

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118 Reprinted in Pál Gyulai *Kritikai dolgozatok (1854-1861)*, Budapest, 1908, p.93.

119 Cited in Vörösmarty, vol III, pp.579-81.

120 Cited in Vörösmarty, vol III, p.582.

Gyulai's reservations concerning Vörösmarty's poetry are - like those of Kölcsey, Erdélyi and indeed Gyulai himself concerning the work of Berzsenyi - based above all in the fundamental hositility to (European) Romanticism implicit in the popular-national disposition. It is for this same reason that Gyulai is even forced to reject one important aspect of Petőfi's poetry, which he otherwise sees - together with the *oeuvre* of Arany - as the paradigm of the popular-national ideal. The aspect of Petőfi's work in question is a cycle of poems written during a period of profound personal depression between August 1845 and March 1846, most of which were published in the volume *Felhők* (1846). These poems have nothing of the naive sense of belonging and community so characteristic of Petőfi's "populist" poetry, but are instilled throughout with an almost Byronic sense of *Weltschmerz* and alienation. Petőfi's response to this experience of alienation is a distinctively Romantic one: logic and representation are subordinated to metaphorical re-creation; thought and image are inseparable, subject and object appear to be one:

A bánat? egy nagy óceán.
S az öröm?
Az óceán kis gyöngye. Talán,
Mire fölhozom, össze is töröm.
(A bánat? egy nagy óceán)[121]

Emlékezet!
Te összetört hajón egy deszka szála,
Mit a hullám s a szél visszája
A tengerpartra vet ... - -
(Emlékezet)[122]

In his *Petőfi Sándor és lyrai költészetünk* (1854) Gyulai claims that these poems "[Petőfi] több műveihez mérve nem bírnak nagy becscsel",[123] adding one year later that most of these "dark epigrams" are "pusztán csak dagályos ellentét vagy bizarr ötlet."[124]

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121 Sándor Petőfi, *Összes művei*, vol II, Budapest, 1951, p.28.

122 Petőfi, vol II, p.24.

123 Reprinted in *Kritikai dolgokatok*, p.34.

124 *Kritikai dolgozatok*, p.207.

Again, the keyword is the pejorative "dagályos" - used by Kölcsey and Erdélyi of Berzsenyi, and by Gyulai himself of Vörösmarty's *A vén czigány*.[125] The ultimate referent of this term would seem to be little more than any deviation from (what is presumed to be) the lexis and idiom of the "people". In this way, the phrase "magyar-ellenes" (anti-Hungarian) used widely of the new idiom of the *Nyugat* circle at the beginning of this century may also be seen as a product of its polymorphous progeny. The implications of the ideology it serves have proved, in the determination of the national literary taste and self-image, decisive and far-reaching, extending well beyond the period under review in this study. It is to a brief consideration of a number of these implications that, by way of conclusion, I shall now turn.

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125 Erdélyi also uses the term in his critical evaluation of Vörösmarty (*Vörösmarty Mihály*, 1845) where he identifies a certain 'odaic tone' which "Vörösmarty sohasem tudott úgy tartani, hogy dagályba ne tévedt volna". In *Pályák és pálmák*, p.188.

Chapter Eight

Perspectives

That the historical scope of this study has been confined to the period 1772-1848 should not be taken to suggest that the latter date represents a radical break or change of direction in the history I have been attempting to reconstruct. The continuities I have highlighted in the work of Arany and Vörösmarty alone should make one wary of any such suggestion. My purpose has rather been to show how, in the period under review, Hungarian literature developed a *lasting* identity based in a polemic between national specificity and European influence and community which is still very much alive today.

It was above all my concern to examine the origins of this polemical and ambivalent identity which led me to devote four chapters to the last three decades of the 18th century. Here it was necessary to demonstrate that, far from representing a "belated" Age of Enlightenment, the years 1772-1795 saw an attempt in Hungarian letters to come to terms with the most modern and broadly European questions and challenges of the period in which the national literature came to consciousness. In characterising the new moment in terms of Schiller's concept of the sentimental, I sought to challenge the hitherto dominant - but historically and theoretically untenable - interpretation of the subsequent rise of Hungarian literary populism as a continuation or residual manifestation of the aspirations of the Enlightenment. For it now became possible to understand the endeavour to restore the "lost" and naive harmony with "simple", "natural", "organic" national traditions as itself an inherently sentimental impulse. The sentimental dilemma and the quest for its naive resolution are, as Schiller argues so persuasively, two sides of the same "modern" predicament. The modern restoration of "lost nature" is necessarily artificial, just as the identification with the "natural language" of a "natural (national) people" is in essence a *misidentification*. The case of Ossian represents, of course, the paradigm of both illusions.

While it would be frivolous to ascribe too much significance to the "genealogies" of some of the key architects of Hungarian populism (the ancestors of Gvadányi were Italian, Dugonics's parents were Dalmatian, and

Sándor Petrovics - who changed his name to "Petőfi" in the 1840s - was the son of a master-butcher of Serbian origin and his Slovak wife), the fate of both Petőfi and Arany at the hands of the "people" in the parliamentary elections of 1848 does suggest a further example of misidentification. Both writers would, in their correspondence, express their disappointment in the very class they to represent with the same somewhat supercilious phrase: "Szegény nép!"

In spite of the profoundly reflective and self-critical work of Arany, Kemény and Madách in the 1850s and 60s, the dominant literary identification with the "natural language" and "national character" of the "people" survived the defeat of the revolution. While ever more diluted variants of the *Volksstück* continued to dominate the Hungarian stage, the most popular new poets to emerge in this period were little more than imitators of Petőfi or - to a lesser extent - of Arany. In this way, the image of the national and the popular in the poetry of Kálmán Lisznyai and Kálmán Tóth in the 1850s, or even of poets like Lajos Pósa, Mihály Szabolcska and Miklós Bárd towards the end of the century, is already hardly more than an image of an image. Their poetry has little of the social commitment of the Age of Reform or the political radicalism of Petőfi, and is, ironically, best described by the pejorative sense of the terms naive and sentimental current today. As Babits would comment, looking back on the poetry of the Hungarian *fin de siècle* in an essay of 1935:

> A Váradi Antalok és Ábrányi Emilek kora volt ez, másfelől pedig a Szabolcskáké és Pósáké. Nekünk, szigorú fiataloknak, nagyon sommás ítéletünk volt erről az egész korunkbeli költészetről. Nem volt ez a mi szemünkben más, mint üres szónoklat vagy útszéli érzelgés. Egyik oldalon a frázis, másikon a nóta![1]

Babits's case is undoubtedly overstated. It ignores the survival and development of the "repressed" Romantic initiatives outlined in the previous chapter in the poetry of the three most accomplished Hungarian poets of the 1870s and 80s: János Vajda, Gyula Reviczky and Jenő Komjáthy. All three poets reject the illusions of the anachronistic Hungarian gentry in its nostalgic identification with the idealised values of folk culture, and attempt to face new challenges of existential anxiety, isolation and alienation by means of a poetic discourse which stands between the Romanticism of Vörösmarty and the symbolism and decadence of *Nyugat*. All three were solitary figures who died

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1 Mihály Babits, "A mai Vörösmarty", in *Esszék, tanulmányok*, vol II, p.483.

in poverty, neglected or - in the case of Vajda - rejected by their contemporaries.

The "operetta" populism of the post-*Ausgleich* period inevitably inspired a reaction. This came at the turn of the century, first with the emergence of a new and consciously *urban* literature (centred above all around the journal *A Hét*), and the with the more spectacular cultural renewal heralded by the appearance of *Nyugat* in 1908. If *Nyugat*, as its title suggests, looked West, it did so only to renew and not to reject its own national traditions. Its critics did not only "discover" the likes of Baudelaire, Verlaine, Browning, Rilke and Musil, but also rediscovered and retrieved for the national memory Csokonai, Berzsenyi, Vörösmarty, Vajda, Reviczky and Komjáthy. For *Nyugat*, "Nation and Europe" - as Babits would insist in an essay of that title - were complementary, rather than mutually exclusive terms. Or, as Babits would claim in a short history of Hungarian literature initially written for the French *Revue Mondiale*:

> A *Nyugat* szó nem valami új nyugati irányok utánzását tűzte ki, csak eszmélést rájuk, s eszmélést a magyarság helyzetére a modern Európa szellemi életében. Ez nem elszakadás a régi magyarságtól: ellenkezőleg, a magyarság új európai feladatainak átérzése új bányászására vezet a régi bánya minden értékének s erejének, ami az új Európában is érték és erő lehet. S csakugyan ez az iskola, melyet hazájában még ma is leghevesebben támadnak, mint nemzetietlent, az európai irodalomnak oly műveket adott, melyek éppen e különös nemzet lelkének szinei által hozhatnak ösztönzést és gazdagodást Nyugatnak is.[2]

The First World War and its disastrous consequences for Hungary constituted a major blow to the more European aspirations of *Nyugat*. The shock of Trianon even left its mark on Babits's poetry, although from the new vantage point of his retreat on the hills of Esztergom, Babits could see not only the new borders, but also the prospect of a wider human community which lay beyond. While *Nyugat* itself survived until Babits's death in 1941, the interwar period saw the revival of the more inwardly national and populist tradition it had originally challenged. The new populism of the late 1920s and 30s itself rejected the "üres szónoklat és útszéli érzelgés" of the pre-*Nyugat* generation and sought to restore to the popular-national tradition the social commitment of the Age of Reform. While in their fastidiously detailed and uncompromisingly critical depictions of the harsh realities of peasant life, the populists produced some of the most impressive literary and sociographical achievements of the period, their commitment to what László Németh would

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[2] Babits, p.198.

refer to as "deep Hungarianness" undoubtedly led many to obsessive nationalism and anti-semitism.

In the period of dogmatic Stalinism which soon followed the end of the Second World War the "identification with the people" inevitably took on new resonances and implications. The simplicity and accessibility of the folksong was again promoted as the appropriate discourse for a "People's Republic", finding its new vocation in the singing of paeans to political leaders and stakhanovite workers. But the pragmatic alliance of populism with Hungarian "socialism" also had more substantial roots in the first decades of the postwar period. Many of those populists whose nationalism had not led them into allegiances with the political right in the 1930a and 40s (from premier Gömbös's "New Spiritual Front" to various forms of National Socialism), welcomed the - albeit shortlived - land reform of 1945 and identified with many of the aspirations of the Hungarian Communist Party. Péter Veres's tract on *Népiesség és szocializmus* (1942) and József Révai's *Marxizmus és népiesség* (1938) have more than merely their titles in common, and in 1947 even György Lukács could claim that the communists were "a népi irodalom igazi barátai."[3]

In today's very different political climate variants of the popular-national ideology continue to survive and thrive with remarkable tenacity. This is now quite evident on an overtly political, as well as cultural, level: the old Peasant Party was revived in 1990 and a new People's Party was also formed out of the Péter Veres Society, itself founded in 1988. While the composition and scope of the Hungarian Democratic Forum - which formed the first freely elected government after the collapse of communism in 1989 - is consiberably wider, most of its key literary representatives would associate themselves with the national values and traditions of Hungarian literary populism. That these new voices are now calling for Hungary's "return to the European fold" is perhaps a sign of a new faith in the reconcilability of national character and European identity. It may also, however, represent a failure on the part of contemporary Hungarian populism fully to recognise the antinomies of the traditions it claims to inherit and uphold. For the historical resources for such a reconciliation can hardly be seen to lie in the construct of national character which informs Kölcsey's dismissal of one of the main centres of humanist

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3 György Lukács, "A népi irodalom múltja és jelene", in Lukács, *Új magyar kultúráért*, Budapest, 1948. Lukács's claim amounts to little more than rhetorical opportunism; its context is a lecture to the Academy of the "People's Colleges" movement (NÉKOSZ) of December 5 1947.

culture in Renaissance Europe (the "foreign" court of Matthias Corvinus), Erdélyi's rejection of the "foreignness" of Berzsenyi's thought, or Gyulai's objections to the "foreignness" of *Zalán futása*. When one remembers that even a critic of the stature of János Horváth could (in 1912) publish an essay on the "Un-Hungarianness of *Nyugat*" - a journal which really did seek and achieve a fusion of the national and the European - it is hard to escape the conclusion that contemporary Hungarian populism would do well to look again at its own history.

To question the - ofter highly ambivalent - ideological assumptions of the popular-national tradition is not to identify with the other side of the populist-urbanist divide which has played such a crucial role in the development of 20th century Hungarian culture. Any form of radical cosmopolitanism which ignores the local determinants of its own history and fails to recognise the achievements of the national traditions it resists will surely have little to offer to the richness and diversity of a culturally heterogeneous Europe. As Goethe would insist, in characterising his notion of *Weltliteratur*: "Was ist das Allgemeine? Das Besondere."

If there is a "third way" - to give a rather different sense to one of the keywords of interwar Hungarian populism - its roots must surely lie in the projects of the writers considered in the previous chapter. In the work of Csokonai who would, in *Marosvásárhelyi gondolatok* (1798), appeal to his nation to fulfil its destiny as the last outpost of European culture; or Berzsenyi who could write some of the finest national odes in the history of Hungarian literature alongside a body of poems which so clearly belong to the wider context of European Romanticism; or Vörösmarty whose poetry moves so powerfully and naturally between individual, national and universally human concerns. And in our own century it will be necessary to look again at the achievement of *Nyugat* (on which there is still no book-length study in Hungarian) and the fusion of the national and the European towards which its writers strove. Here we should remember not only Babits on the likes of Swinburne and Vörösmarty, or Kosztolányi on Rilke and Arany, but also Ady's defence of the Romanian poet Octavian Goga and Bartók's interest in the folk music of Romania and Slovakia.

It is fitting that one of Babits's most memorable contributions to *Nyugat* should have been an essay on István Széchenyi (*A legnagyobb magyar*, 1936). For Széchenyi - in his untiring criticism of national preconceptions, his profound understanding of the culture and history of Europe, his sympathy for the plight and interests of Hungary's national minorities, and his commitment

to the material and spiritual improvement of his homeland - represents perhaps the most inspiring embodiment of a reconciliation of national character and European identity in the history of Hungarian letters. If I have not considered his writings in this study, it is not because his work is in any way lacking in literary interest, but because any serious consideration of his achievements, as above all a politician and social reformer, would inevitably extend far beyond the scope of a history of this kind. I have attempted throughout, however, to bear in mind both Széchenyi's critical example and his faith in a concept of a Europe in which national specificity is seen to enrich, rather than to preclude, a sense of common identity.

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Összefoglás

A modern magyar irodalom a legszélesebb értelemben vett európai és a jellegzetesen nemzeti jellemvonások és törekvések meglepő keverékéből született meg, s a mai napig is ezeket az irányzatokat testesíti meg. Ahhoz, hogy ezt a kettősséget a magyar irodalom talán egyik legfontosabb történeti szakaszában (1772-1848) is értelmezni tudjuk, először azt a bonyolult kulturális-történelmi helyzetet kell megvizsgálnunk, amelyben a nemzeti irodalom öntudatra ébredt.

A múlt században Toldy Ferenc 1772-re tette a modern magyar irodalom megszületésének dátumát, ugyanis ebben az évben látott napvilágot Bessenyei György négy fontos munkája. Az irodalomtörténészek azóta is ezt a dátumot fogadják el kiindulási alapnak. Ezzel a korszakolással együtt terjedt el egy másik közkeletű felfogás is, mely a modern magyar irodalmat a felvilágosodás gyeremekének tekinti. Ezt a véleményt osztja a MTA által kiadott, többkötetes *A magyar irodalom története* c. mű is: „Művelődés- és irodalmtörténetünk első, tudatosan világi eszmei mozgalma a felvilágosodás [...] Bessenyei György felléptével 1772-ben indul meg a magyar felvilágosodás." (Budapest, 1965, III. kötet, 11-12. o.) Az efféle korszakalkotó dátumok értéke azonban mindig kétséges és használhatóságuk is mindenekelőtt attól függ, hogy milyen történelemértelmezést tesznek lehetővé. És noha az 1772-es évszám ebből a szempontból éppúgy megfelel kiindulási pontnak, mint bármelyik más dátum, az évszám összekapcsolása a magyar „felvilágosodás" fogalmával már sokkal több problémát vet fel.

Két okból is körültekintéssel kell kezelni azt a bevett felfogást, mely az 1772 és 1795 közé eső magyar irodalmi korszakot „megkésett" felvilágosodásnak tekinti. Az első a felfogás tartalmi részét érinti. Noha tagadhatatlan, hogy - Edmund Burke szavaival élve - nem lehet egyetlen kifejezéssel vádat emelni egy egész évszázad ellen, bizonyos társadalmi és szellemi összetevők hiányában mégsem lehet felvilágosodásról beszélni. Ilyen az empirikus tudományos módszer melletti elkötelezettség, a racionalizmus a természet jellemzésében, az univerzalizmus az emberi természet leírásában, a kozmopolitizmus a szellemi életben és az ízlés kérdéseiben és az *ancien régime* értékeinek és „babonáinak" gyökeres elutasítása. Noha a 18. század

végi Magyarországon kétségkívül akadt egy-két magányos ember, akinek érdeklődési területe és törekvései sokban kapcsolódott a nyugat-európai felvilágosodás értékeihez, mégis a korszak magyar nyelvű irodalmáról nem lehetne átfogó és összefüggő képet kapni, ha kizárólag az ő működésüket és hatásukat vizsgálnánk.

Bessenyei esete különösen jól illusztrálja ezt, hiszen az idő előrehaladtával munkáiban nem annyira a Voltaire világpolgára által megtestesített szellemi univerzalizmust fedezhetjük fel, hanem Herder kulturális relativizmusával és nemzetkarakterológiai érdeklődésével rokon jegyeket. Keresve sem találhatnánk jobb dátumot eme ellentmondás szemléltetésére, mint éppen az 1772-es évszámot. Bessenyei ebben az évben adta ki első változatban *Az embernek próbája* című művét, mely a felvilágosodás központi gondolatait tömörítő, klasszikus mű, az Alexander Pope által írt *Essay on Man* (Esszé az emberről) ideologikus töltésű és rendkívül sokat eláruló *félreolvasata*. A két mű közötti alapvető különbségről már Bessenyei címválasztása is sokat jelez: Pope pragmatikus optimizmusával szemben Bessenyei az emberi létet végső soron reménytelen próbának látja és az egész művet egy tipikusan felvilágosodásellenes kijelentéssel zárja: „tsak tudatlanság zúg az emberekbe". Bessenyei pályafutása jól tükrözi azt a folyamatot, melynek során a magyar irodalom egésze szembe találta magát a nyugat-európai felvilágosodás kozmopolitizmusával és racionalizmusával, majd viszonylag gyors eltávolodott tőle. Bessenyei, akit kezdetben a racionalista-empirista Voltaire vonzott, a későbbiekben egyre inkább a nemzeti nyelv, azonosságtudat és karakterológia kérdéseibe merült bele, s élete végén, „bihari remeteként" mély gyanakvással közeledett a felvilágosult gondolkodás értékeihez. Bessenyei utolsó nagy művében, a Tarimenes utazásában, Kirakades, a „nemes vadember" már ezt mondja Trezeninek, a „felvilágosult" állam uralkodójának (akiben nem nehéz felismerni Mária Teréziát): „Oly igaz az, hogy mentül tanultabb, bölcsebb az ember, annál kevesebb vígassággal élhet; ellenben mentül oktalanabb, annál több örömök közt lakózik." Az emberi értelembe vetett felvilágosult hitből való kiábrándultság Bessenyei számtalan kortársánál visszacseng.

Még egy okból problematikus „magyar felvilágosodásról" beszélni az 1772 és 1795 közötti korszakban, s ez az ok történelmi. A 18. század végére a felvilágosodás legfontosabb művei már megszülettek, és Kant 1784-ben feltett híres kérdése - „*Was ist Aufklärung?*" - is részben már a múltra vonatkozott. A század végére a felvilágosodás alapvető tanai és értékei válságba kerültek és egy újfajta szellemi mozgalom és kulturális érzékenység ütötte fel a fejét. Rousseau *Emil*jében és *Vallomások* c. művében már nem az első és második *Értekezés* önbizalomtól duzzadó filozófusa szólal meg. Pope és Voltaire

klasszikus eszményeinek helyébe a Richardson *Pamelájából*, Young *Éji gondolatok*jából és Goethe *Werther*jéből megismert új „szentimentális" irodalmi modell lépett. A fejről a szívre, a rációról, az érzésekre irányult a figyelem, s ezt a változást tükrözi Rousseau híres kijelentése is a *Levelek az erkölcsről* c. értekezésből: „Csak akkor létezhetünk, ha érzünk; és érzékenységünk vitathatalanul megelőzi rációnkat.". A 18. század utolsó harmadában az itt említett változáson felül egyre nagyobb fontosságot kezdenek tulajdonítani a nemzeti karakternek és a hagyományoknak, s ez a fordulat is megjelenik Rousseau késői írásaiban, például *A lengyel alkotmánytervezet* c. (1770-71) művében is. Épp ezért a modern, öntudatra ébredt magyar irodalom egy olyan kulturális-történelmi környezetben vált nagykorúvá, melynek már nem az „Ész Kora", hanem a felvilágosodás válsága adta a hátterét. A magyar tollforgatóktól távol állt, hogy a felvilágosodás régi érveit próbálják megkésve átültetni magyar környezetbe; törekvéseik meglepően összhangban voltak az új irányzat eszméivel.

A kultúrtörténészek a mai napig is vitatkoznak 18. század végén jelentkező új kulturális mozgalom jellegéről, korszakolásáról és tartalmáról. Legtöbbször a *Sturm und Drang*, az „érzékenység kora" és a preromantika definicióját használják erre a korszakra; a névhasználat mögött megbúvó érvek azonban minden esetben problémákat vetnek fel. A *Sturm und Drang* túlságosan helyhez és történelemhez kötött fogalom, s ennek alapján nem lehet felismerni azokat az (országhatárokon is átnyúló) folytonosságokat, melyek olyan eltérő írókat kötnek össze, mint Sterne, Prevost, Goethe és Kármán. Az „érzékenység" -mely kétségtelenül kulcsfontosságú kifejezés az új korszak szótárában - ellenben túlságosan átfogó fogalom: végtére is a mozgalom másról sem szólt mint egy különleges, „újnak" mondott érzékenység megteremtéséről. Ha a preromantikát használjuk, akkor a szó teleológiájával gyűlik meg a bajunk, hiszen így a 18. század második felét elkerülhetetlenül a 19. század első évtizedeinek fényében értelemezzük. A korszak talán leghasználhatóbb jellemzése magában a korban született meg Schiller művében az *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*ban (A naiv és a szentimentális költészetről, 1795), melyben Schiller saját korának *szentimentalizmusát* az elődök alapvető *naivitásával* állította szembe.

Schiller a modern író szentimentalizmusát a természettől, a társadalomtól és saját beszédmódjának a tárgyaitól való elidegenedésre vezeti vissza. Míg a felvilágosodás korában nem feszült ellentmondás az emberi ráció és a racionálisan működő természet, az egyén és a társadalom érdekei között, addig a 18. század végén egyre inkább úgy látszik, hogy ember és természet, egyén és társadalom, szubjektum és tárgy kibékíthetetlen ellentétei

egymásnak. Schiller modern, szentimentális költőjének ezzel a dillemával kell szembenéznie. A szentimentális költő érzése „a természet iránt hasonlít ahhoz, amelyet a beteg érez az egészség iránt." A költő csalódott az emberiség körében szerzett tapasztalataiban és nincs más vágya, mint hogy elmeneküljön ebből a világból; a szentimentális költészettel „megszületik az elszigeteltség". A szentimentális költő még inkább elszigetelődik az őt körülvevő világtól azzal, hogy „nem szenvedhet benyomást anélkül, hogy mindjárt nézője ne legyen saját játékának, s azt, ami benne végbemegy reflexió által magával szembe - és magából ki - ne helyezze."

Schiller a szentimentális költő dilemmájban alapvetően modern dilemmát látott; épp ez, a Schiller által leírt jelenség modernsége teszi alkalmassá a szentimentalizmust arra, hogy az öntudatra ébredő, a legújabb európai kulturális fejlődést asszimilálni és túlhaladni igyekvő nemzeti irodalmak irodalmi és kulturális toposzként használják. Különösen jól szemlélteti ezt az ifjú Kazincy fordítási tervei. Kazincy először Gessner *Idillek* c. művét fordítja le, melyet Schiller az *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*ban a szentimentális idill mintaműveként említ. Aztán J. M. Miller *Siegwart* (Szigvart klastori története, 1787) c. munkája következik, melyet Schiller a szentimentális elégia példájaként hoz fel, majd különféle szövegeket fordít Wielandtól, akit Schiller a szentimentális szatírával foglalkozó részben említ, s „érzései komolyságát" követendő példaként hozza fel a Voltaire műveiben túlburjánzó intellektussal szemben. Kazincy le akarta fordítani Goethe *Werther*jét is, melyről Schiller azt írta, hogy „mindaz, ami tápot ad a szentimentális jellemnek, mily szerencsés ösztönnel van összesűrítve" benne, és Bácsmegyei c. műve előszavában maga Kazincy mondja el, hogy csupán a körülmények vitték arra, hogy Kayser *Roman in dem Geschmack der Leiden Werthers* (Román a szenvedő Werther ízlése szerint) c. művét fordítsa le inkább helyette.

Schiller szentimentalizmus-elmélete a 18. század végi magyar irodalomban azonban nem csupán egyszerű irodalmi hatásként jelentős. Schiller ugyanis egy olyan kulturális irányzatot ír le, melyben a magyar irodalom már tevékeny szerepet játszott. Azok az irodalmi toposzok, melyeket Schiller az elidegenedett „szentimentalizmus" fogalmával próbált értelmezni, a 18. század utolsó negyedében már széles körben elterjedtek a magyar irodalomban is. A szentimentális én elszigeteltség-érzéséből fakadó magány kultuszra Csokonai költészete a legkézenfekvőbb példa, de számtalan más költő, így Kármán vagy később Bessenyei költészetében is felbukkan ez a téma. Az elidegenedett én szentimentális kivetítése a természeti tárgyakra nem csak Ányos és Dayka költészetének egyik fő jellemvonása, de a „klasszikus" Révai

verseinek is. De a szubjektum és a tárgy, a költői én és a megközelíthetetlen világ szentimentális elidegenedését más íróknál is tetten érhetjük: például Kazincy azon írásaiban, melyek a stílust önmagában, az irodalmi ábrázolás tárgyától függetlenül is erénynek tekintik. A természettől és a társadalomtól elidegenedett szentimentális költő minden esetben a jelek világán keresztül érzékeli a valóságot. Werther szerelme Lotte iránt például nem annyira szexuálisan, hanem textuálisan jut kifejezésre, mikor a pár Klopstock, Gessner és Ossian olvasása közben jut el az extázisig; Kármán Fanni hagyományai c. regényében a Fanni és T. Józsi közötti kapcsolat legkritikusabb pillanatában Józsi Gessnert olvas.

A költő „vagy *maga* a természet vagy *keresni* fogja a természetet." (Schiller) Az első esetben költészete „naiv" lesz, a második esetben „szentimentális". A modern költő természetesen megpróbálhatja legyőzni elidegenedettség-érzetét azzal, hogy megkísérli helyreállítani az elődök „egyszerű" és „természetes" világában uralkodó „elveszett" és naiv harmóniát, de ez a törekvés is jellegzetesen szentimentális tőről fakad. A szentimentális dilemma és a naiv megoldások keresése ugyanannak a modern érmének a két oldala, érvel Schiller igen meggyőzően. A magány és a szubjektivitás szentimentális kultusza mellett a 18. század végi magyar irodalomban tanúi lehetünk egy másik törekvés megszületésének is, amelyik egy „naivabb" közösségi tudatot és hitelességet kutatott és amelyik különösen a nemzeti irodalom későbbi fejlődésében játszott meghatározó szerepet. E kutatás irodalmi tárgyát talán a Herder féle *Naturpoesie* fogalomban kereshetjük, noha nem szabad elfeledkezni arról, hogy a 18. század végén Herder csak rendkívül áttételesen hatott a magyar irodalomra. Herder szerint a *Naturpoesie* szerves egységet alkot közvetlen környezetével és a nemzeti hagyományokkal, ez az egység azonban elveszett a modern *Kunstpoet* számára, aki már egy szervetlen, imitáló, saját kollektív azonosságtudatától megfosztott kultúra terméke. Magyarországon ennek az azonosságtudatnak a visszaállítása az egyik legfontosabb kulturális és politikai foglalatosság lett a 18. század végén és a 19. század elején, különösen a II. József által bevezetett központosító és németesítő reformokat követően. A magyar irodalomban ez a törekvés mindenekelőtt a „naiv" azonosságtudat visszaállítást célzó három irányzatában jelent meg. Az első irányzat, mely Bessenyei történelmi tragédiáitól, Horváth Ádám *Hunniasán* és Csokonai, Ráday és Virág epikus honfoglalás-töredékein át, egészen az 1790-es években virágzó „Mohács" költészetig ível, a nemzeti múlt elveszett és elfelejtett dicsőségét felélesztve akarta helyreállítani a kollektív történelmi céltudatot. A második irányzat a nemzeti hagyományok és szokások feltámasztásában és művelésében látta a

közös értékek forrását, s ezt olyan művek képviselik, mint Orczy *A bugaczi csárdának tiszteletére* vagy Gvadányi *Falusi nótárius* c. műve. A Kazinczy és követői által képviselt harmadik irányzat pedig a természetesség, az egyszerűség és a közvetlenség elveszett nyelvét akarta visszaállítani az imitáló, modern és kifinomult nyelvvel (a fentebb stíllel) szemben. E nyelvet az élő magyar népköltészet alapján akarták létrehozni, részben annak hatására, hogy a nemzeti-kulturális önmeghatározás kulcsfontosságú eleme lett a „völkisch" (a népi) és az „autentikus" nemzeti jelleg között felállított megfeleltetés. Révai 1782-es a régi versek és a népköltészet gyűjtésére buzdító felhívásától Kölcseynek a népi és a nemzeti közé egyenlőségjelet tévő *Nemzeti Hagyományok* (1826) című művéig, a népies beszéd és a népi kultúra értékeivel való naiv azonosulás vetette meg a mai napig élő kultúrális népiesség alapjait.

A 18. század második felében Európa szerte megélénkült az érdeklődés a népköltészet és a régi költészet iránt. Ezt bizonyítja Thomas Percy *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (A régi angol költészet emlékei) és Herder *Stimmen der Völker* (A népek hangja a dalaikban) c. gyűjteménye vagy Ossian széles körben elterjedt kultusza. Az angol irodalomban Wordsworth 1797-es *Lyrical Ballads* (Lírai balladák) c. kötete jelenti a „falusi élettel" és a „valódi emberi beszéddel" való „naiv" - schilleri értelemben naiv - foglalatoskodás művészi csúcsteljesítményét. A késő 18. századi és reformkori magyar irodalmi népiesség azonban abban különbözik a wordsworthi elképzeléstől, hogy benne a „naiv" és a „nemzeti" jelleg keveredik. Wordsworth a Lírai Balladák híres előszavában az egyszerű, falusi élet iránti érdeklődését azzal a vággyal magyarázza, hogy felfedje „természetünk elsődleges törvényeit", s itt a többes szám első személy nem valamiféle nemzeti, hanem egy egyetemes emberi közösségre utal. Wordsworth szemében a költő nem a nemzetéhez szózatot intéző bárd, hanem „ember, ki a másik emberhez szól". A népi kultúrával szembeni magyar érdeklődés középpontjába - különösen a 19. század első négy évtizedében - sokkal inkább a a nemzeti értékek és azonosságtudat feltárása és művelése állt. Ez különösen jól tetten érhető Kölcsey Ferenc munkáiban, hiszen 1826-ban azt írta, hogy „a való nemzeti poézis eredeti szikráját a köznépi dalokban kell nyomozni."

Kölcsey irodalmi fejlődése szemléletes példáját adja annak, hogy milyen közeli kapcsolatba kerültek a naiv és a szentimentális irányzatok a magyar irodalmi élet eme sorsdöntő szakaszában. Noha legkorábbi ódái Csokonai félreismerhetetlen hatásáról tanúskodnak, Kölcsey 1808 és 1818 között mégis Kazinczy szentimentális befolyása alá kerül. Erre a korszakra visszatekintve Kölcsey később maga állapította meg, hogy „1808-ban és 1809-ben

sentimental-lyrisch voltam". 1810-es években keletkezett legjobb költeményei nagyrészében Kölcsey Young kifejezéseit, Ányos és Dayka hangnemét, hangulati világát választja mintának. A Kazincy által vallott értékek nagy befolyással voltak ez időben keletkezett kritikai munkáira is: ezt a hatást érhettjük tetten például abban a csodálatban, mellyel Kölcsey az „új századok manierját..., a sentimentalismust" fogadta, s ennek a hatásnak tulajdonítható, hogy 1815-ben szembeszállt Földi Jánosnak azzal a megállapításával, hogy a „köznépé az igaz magyarság, az idegennel nem egyveleges magyarság." Az álláspontjában 1818 után bekövetkező gyökeres fordulat jórészt a megváltozott politikai körülmények eredménye: a költő tevékenyen elkötelezte magát a reformkor politikai törekvései mellett, melyek az összes állampolgár képviseletét ellátó modern nemzetállammá kívánták átalakítani a feudális *natio Hungaricát* . Ehhez a törekvéshez az irodalmi népiességben megjelenő eszmények egy olyan potenciális kulturális alapot nyújthattak volna, melyen létre lehett volna hozni a magántulajdonon és a társadalmi osztályokon átívelő közös nemzeti azonosságtudatot. Az igaz magyar hazafi feladata annak biztosítása, mondja Kölcsey, hogy „az adozó nép nagy tömege egyszer már a polgári alkotmányba belépjen." A nemzeti egységnek ezt a liberális felfogását Kölcsey legérthetőbben *Nemzeti hagyományok* (1826) c. művében fordítja le a kultúra nyelvére, és ez egyben Kölcsey legfontosabb hozzájárulása a reformkor értekező prózájához. Ebben az írásban már nyomát sem találni a „szentimentális" Kazinczy hatásának, itt már szinte csak a „naiv" Herder befolyása érvényesül. Egy szempontból a *Nemzeti hagyományok* még jóval messzebb is megy mint Herder, akinek a szemében nem létezett „Favoritenvolk". Kölcsey ugyanis kitart azon nézete mellett, hogy a nemzeti karakter kialakításánál károsak a külföldi hatások. Még a Hunyadiak 15. századi „hőskorát" is ezért bírálja: „Fájdalom, mi már akkor is idegen befolyásnak adtunk helyet." A külföldi kulturális hatásokkal való szembenállás és a népi és a nemzeti irodalom azonosítása a magyar irodalmi népiesség következő nagy teoretikusának, Erdélyi Jánosnak a munkásságában is felbukkan.

Az 1840-es évekre az irodalmi népiesség lett a legbefolyásosabb kulturális ideológia Magyarországon. Ennek az ideológiának pedig kétségkívül Petőfi Sándor volt a legjelentősebb képviselője a költészetben. A magyar irodalomban Petőfi testesíti meg Schiller naiv zsenijét. Egy olyan közösség nevében szólal meg, melyben látszólag teljesen otthonosan mozog, dikciója természetes és könnyed. Schiller szerint a naiv költő „maga a Teremtés, a Teremtés pedig maga a költő". Petőfi esetében is szinte lehetetlen határvonalat húzni költészete és élerajza, a művészet és az élet között. Úgy

tűnik, Petőfi számára minden élmény magában hordozza a költészetet és a költészet is alig több mint az élmény formája és közvetítője. Schiller szentimentális költőjétől eltérően, aki azon munkálkodik, hogy a valóságot felemelje az eszményihez, a naiv költő a „valóság minél teljesebb imitációját" tekinti céljának. Ez az imitáció pedig aligha teljesedhetne ki jobban, mint Petőfi költői tájleírásaiban. A természetről szóló költeményeiben nyomát sem lelni a romantikus panteizmusnak, nemigen találjuk meg bennük a természetnek Ányosra vagy Daykára jellemző szentimentális szubjektivizálását, és hiába keresnénk a természetnek azt a látomásos, metaforikus átalakítását, melyet Vörösmartynál találunk. Ezeknek a költői eszközöknek a forrása valamennyi esetben a szubjektum és a tárgy, az ember és a természet elidegenedése, és erre Petőfi verseiben nemigen találunk példát. Az 1830-as években működő Aurora kör népdal-utánzataival ellentétben Petőfi mindenféle „népieskedés" nélkül azonosulni tudott a köznéppel és kultúrájával. Petőfi nem kívülállóként gyűjtötte a népdalokat, hanem „belakta" ezeket a dalokat, s belülről tágította nyelvezetüket. Kölcsey és Erdélyi törekvése egy újfajta, a népköltészetet befogadó és továbbfejlesztő nemzeti költészet megteremtésére, éppen Petőfi munkáiban - és Arany korai költészetében - valósul meg.

A 19. század végére Petőfi és Arany népies szellemben fogant munkái már kanonikus rangra emelkedtek. A nép-nemzeti kifejezés a század második felének vezető kritikusától, Gyulai Páltól származik, aki így nevezte el azt az általa leghitelesebbnek és legkívánatosabbank vélt irányzatot, melyet a nemzeti irodalomnak követenie kellene, és melyet az általa leginkább csodált két költő bizonyos megnyilvánulásaiban is felfedezni vélt. A saját múltértelmezéssel, értékrendszerrel és interpretációs módszerrel rendelkező nép-nemzeti eszmény leíró és előíró hagyományként egyaránt tovább él századunkban. Mint mindent hagyomány, ez is egyfajta szelekció, kirekesztés és kihagyás eredménye, s bizonyos időszakokban még a példaképnek számító írók egyes megnyilvánulásait is a háttérbe szorította. Petőfi nevezetes *Felhők* ciklusát Gyulai szinte semmibe vette, mondván „dagályos", de erre a sorsa jutottak Arany kísérletezőbb, irónikusabb próbálkozásai is (*Az elveszett alkotmány*tól kezdve egészen a forradalmat követő korszak hatalmas lírai költeményeiig), melyek nem sok közös vonást mutatnak a népiességgel és amelyek Arany legnehezebben értelmezhető és legérettebb munkái, noha akadnak, akik ezt vitatják.

A nép-nemzeti hagyománynak vannak azonban sokkal vitathatóbb irodalomtörténeti megállapításai, s ezek a magyar romantika jellegét és jelentőségét érintik. „A romanticizmushoz [...] megkívántatik a hazaiság,

népiesség mint annak első alapja s anyaga, melyből ahhoz-ahhoz képest kifejlődjék a nemzeti költészet a különböző népek jelleme és idoma szerint s a kor lelkének ihletése után", jellemezte a romantikát Erdélyi János (*Valami a romanticizmusról*, 1847), s ezzel egy olyan irodalomtörténeti közhely alapjait vetette meg, mely a mai napig is fennmaradt. A magyar romantikáról született első átfogó tanulmány (Farkas Gyula, *A magyar romantika*, 1930) óta széles körben elfogadott nézet, hogy Magyarországon a romantika első szakaszát a nemzeti historizmus jellemezte, míg a második szakaszban a népköltészet politikai indíttatású „felfedezése" került az előtérbe. Sőtér István egészen odáig megy, hogy *Az irodalomtudomány dilemmája* (1973) c. írásában kijelenti: „a népköltészettel tartott különleges kapcsolatát a romantika legfontosabb jellemvonásának kell tekintenünk." Ily módon a romantika fogalmát igen gyakran egy sokkal szélesebb irodalmi kategória, a nép-nemzeti vagy nemzeti-klasszicista hagyomány alá sorolták be, s tették ezt oly módon, ami minden bizonnyal elnyerte volna Erdélyi tetszését is.

A romantika és az irodalmi népiesség ilyen egyértelmű azonosítása azonban rendkívül sok problémát vet fel. Noha tagadhatatlan, hogy Európa szerte számos romantikus költő akadt, aki komolyan foglakozott a népköltészettel, azt azonban mégsem lehet kijelenteni, hogy egy már létező irodalmi kód vagy beszédmód asszimilálása lenne költészetük elsődleges „romantikus" vonása. Nehéz elképzelni egy olyan romantika-értelmezést, melyben ne szerepelne központi, meghatározó helyen az *egyén* és a *kreatív képzelet*, márpedig ezek a fogalmak lényegükből fakadóan összeegyeztethetetlenek a kollektivitást hangsúlyozó népiességgel.

René Wellek híres definicója az európai romantika három alapvető jellemvonásáról továbbra is hasznos kiindulópontja lehet bármiféle vitának, mely érdemben hasonlítja össze a műveket: a romantika „a költészetet a képzelet, a világot a természet, a potéikai stílust pedig a szimbólum és a mítosz" oldaláról közelítte meg. Természetesen teljesen legitim és fontos is számba venni a romantikus fejlődés helyi eltéréseit az egyes nemzeti kultúrákon belül, de soha nem szabad szem elől téveszteni azt a nemzetekfölötti környezetet, melyben a romantika megszületett és melyben elméleti öröksége a 18. század vége óta fejlődött. Ahogy Szegedy-Maszák Mihály írja: „lehetne azzal érvelni, hogy nemzeti romantikánknak főleg olyan jellegzetességei vannak, amelyek megkülönböztetik más romantikától - ez azonban fölöslegessé tenné magának a fogalomnak a használatát." Ezzel nem a nagyon is fontos romantikus hagyomány létét tagadom a magyar irodalomban, csupán arra szeretnék utalni, hogy a nép-nemzeti irodalomtörténeti irányzat hajlott arra, hogy félreértelmezze, sőt teljesen

figyelmen kívül hagyja ezt a hagyományt - és a hagyományban testet öltő történelmi folytonosságokat.

Ezek a folytonosságok különösen akkor válnak szembetűnővé, ha az ember ismét összehasonlító szemszögből veszi szemügyre a magyar romantikát. Wellek szerint a romantika három jellegzetessége „része annak a nagyszabású törekvésnek, hogy áthidalják a szubjektum és a tárgy, az én és a világ között tátongó törést", s ez a megfogalmazás már önmagában is sejteti, hogy valamiféle kapcsolat áll fenn a romantika és a korábban már vázolt szentimentalizmus között. A szentimentális és a romantikus irányzatok közötti folytonosságokat és különbségeket különösen szemléletesen világítja meg Teleki József 1818-ban keletkezett úttörő esszéje *A régi és az új költés külömbségeiről*. Teleki szerint a régi költészetre az „egyszerűség" és a „természetesség" volt a jellemző, s ez az elképzelés közvetlenül merít a Schiller által kidolgozott naivitás elképzelésből, ugyanakkor a modern költészet tárgyalásakor a költői képzeletről szólva már saját, tudatosan romantikus elképzelését is ismerteti Schillerén felül. Míg a régi költők azt írták le, „amit láttak, tapasztaltak, érzetek", addig a modernek, akiknek csoportjába Teleki magát és kortársait érti, „magunknak először egy új, a jelenvalótól egészen különböző költői világot formálunk, s azt adjuk elő, amit abban látnánk, tapasztalnánk, éreznénk." Teleki egyetért Schillernek azzal az okfejtésével, hogy a régi költészet „tárgyas (objektiv)" volt, míg a modern „személyes (subjektiv)", de kitart álláspontja mellett, hogy a modern, romantikus költő képzeletereje segítségével felülemelkedik az objektív világtól való szentimentális elidegenedettségén.

Annak az éles meglátásokkal teli elemzésnek a segítségével, melyet Teleki adott a szentimentális és a romantikus költészet összefüggéseiről, már jobban fel tudjuk mérni, hogy mennyire fontos, sőt vezető szerepet játszott Horváth Ádám, Csokonai és Berzsenyi a romantikus elmélet és gyakorlat magyarországi meghonosításában. Az a figyelemre méltó elemzés, melyet Horváth a méltatlanul elfeledett 1792-es *Psychologia* című művében adott a képzelet fogalmáról, már egyértelműen a fogalom romantikus használatát vetíti előre, és a képzeletről vallott romantikus szemléletmód Csokonai költészetében és Berzsenyi rendkívüli eredetiségről tanúskodó *Poétai harmonistika* c. művében is egyértelműen tetten érhető (Csokonai egyébként Horváthoz írt 1792-es ódájában felmagasztalta a *Psychologiát*). Verselésének tagadhatatlan klasszicizmusa ellenére Berzsenyi költészetének egyéni és gyakran látomásos metafora-használata is a romantika irányába mutat és *A közelítő tél* c. versének a romantika nagy ősz-költeményei között a helye

Keats *Ode to Autumn* (Óda az őszhöz), Lamartine *L'Autome* Ősz vagy Eichendorff *Herbstweh* (Őszi bú) c. versének társaságában.

A magyar irodalomtörténetben a 19. század nagy részében Berzsenyi értékelésében döntő szerepet játszott, hogy kritikusai képtelenek voltak méltányolni legsikerültebb versei romantikus képi világát. Kölcsey, aki a mesmerizmusról és az állati delejességről írt esszéiben támadta a romantikus filozófia „irracionalizmusát", Berzsenyi „exaltált képzelődésének exált képeiben" csupán az értelem ellen dolgozó dagályos szenvelgést látott, de még a nagyobb elméleti háttérrel rendelkező nép-nemzeti irányzatot képviselő Erdélyi szerint is Berzsenyi „festő költészete" jórészt a sajnálatos német hatás eredménye. Arany is támasztott kifogásokat Berzsenyi dagályossága ellen, és Gyulai és Riedl kritikai munkáiban Berzsenyi művei zavaró hiányukkal hívják fel magukra a figyelmet. Csak Horváth János 1924-es *Egy fejezet a magyar irodalom ízlés történetéből: Berzsenyi Dániel* c. remek tanulmányában kap Berzsenyi először komoly kritkai méltatást a magyar „nemzeti-klasszicizmus" bajnokától - de talán még ennél is fontosabb, hogy Horváth alapvetően romantikus költőként méltatja Berzsenyit.

A 19. század első felében csupán egyetlen költő akadt, aki jelentőségéhez mérten tudta értékelni Berzsenyi költészetét, és saját műveiben is felhasználta eredményeit: Vörösmarty Mihály. Vörösmarty volt a legnagyobb magyar romantikus költő, a szó legteljesebb európai értelmében. A képzeletről vallott romantikus elképzelés már korai eposzait, így a *Tündérvölgy*et és a befejezetlenül maradt *Délszigetet* is áthatotta, és ezekben a művekben nyomokban már fellelhető az a tragikus látásmód, mellyel Vörösmarty az emberi vágy kielégíthetetlen természetét szemlélte érett költeményeiben. E tragikus látásmód pontosan a szubjektum és a tárgy, az én és a világ összeegyeztethetelenségének érzéséből fakad, és ebben az érzésben Wellek nem csupán a romantikus képzelet legnagyobb kínszenvedését, de egyben legfontosabb kihívását is látta. Nagy verseiben, így az *Előszó*ban vagy *A vén czigány*ban Vörösmarty gazdag és egyéni metaforái nem a végső soron visszaszerezhető tárgyakat helyettesítik, hanem egy új költői világ körvonalait jelölik ki. A kifejezésmód minden eredetisége ellenére Vörösmarty tragikus látásmódja nemegyszer túllépi a személyes látásmód kereteit. A *Gondolatok a könyvtárban* (1844) vagy *Az emberek* (1846) c. versekben a tragédia univerzális emberi kifejezést nyer, míg a *Csongor és Tündé*ben (1831) és az *Előszó*ban (1850) ez a tragédia már szinte emberfölötti, kozmikus kiterjesztést kap.

Vörösmarty életében nagy megbecsülésnek örvendett, de ő maga panaszkodott arról, hogy verseit többen dicsérik, mint olvassák. Az első

magyar honfoglalási eposz, a *Zalán futása* (1825) ünnepelt szerzője az 1840-es évekre már elszegényedett és képtelen volt széles olvasótábort toborozni műveinek. „Verseimmel úgy bánik a közönség, mint a vízzel; dicseri s bort iszik helyette", panaszkodott 1845-ben Vörösmarty. Ez a paradoxon gyakran megismétlődött Vörösmarty későbbi irodalomtörténeti értékelésében is. Gyulai például Vörösmarty jelentőségét abban látta, hogy bizonyos mértékig előkészítette a terepet a nép-nemzeti hagyomány valódi kiteljesítői, Arany és Petőfi előtt, ugyanakkor kikelt a „dagályosság" ellen, mely szerinte *A vén czigány*hoz hasonló romantikus mesterművek jellemzője volt.

Az emberben már-már gyanú ébred, hogy a „dagályosság" a 19. században színre lépő nép-nemzeti irányzat számára csak egyfajta minden célra használható romantika-ellenes szitokszó volt és végső soron ez sötötték rá mindenre, ami csak egy kicsit is eltér a „nép" autentikusnak tartott beszédmódjától. Azonban a nézet mögött húzódó kulturális ideológia és az irodalmi beszédmód, mellyel ez az ideológia szembeszállt ugyannak a szellemi válságnak a terméke. És pontosan ez az a szellemi válság, melyet Schiller az *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*ban leírt, mely a 18. század végén a legtöbb európai kultúrát elérte, s amelyből a modern magyar irodalom is megszületett.