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IMRE KERTÉSZ

LITERATURE

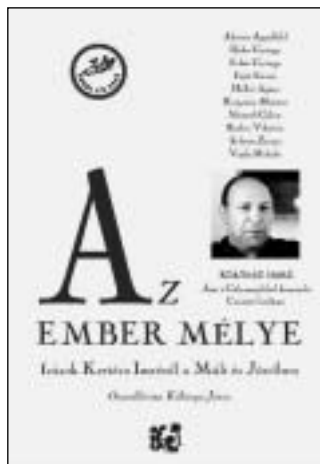
IMRE KERTÉSZ LITERATURE NOBEL PRIZE 2002



János Kőbányai

KERTÉSZ-DIARY

Like every diary, *Kertész-Diary* (*Kertésznapló*) is a journey as well. At several levels and in several spaces, in time, in fragments, and above (and below) all, it focuses on the works and personality of Imre Kertész. The author, in a previous book written in an “academic style” and manner has already examined Kertész. In that book he analysed the historical and intellectual background to Imre Kertész’s work as well as perspectives on the delayed Hungarian reception. (*Jób díja. Háttér és recepció.* [Job’s Prize. Background and Reception.]) Now János Kőbányai, freed from the shackles of an academic approach, digs deeper and attempts to answer (or rather question) what aesthetic and “professional-existential” lessons may be drawn from the behaviour of the – actually emigré – writer, so distant from the traditions and institutions of Hungarian intellectual life, and the inexorable detachment in an aesthetic sense from the circumstances of the present as well as the insistence on accuracy (and truth)? “Perhaps it is not talent that turns one into a writer, but a refusal to accept the language and the terminology” says Imre Kertész. What is the message behind this unparalleled *Jób Phenomenon*, rereading and reinterpreting Kertész works, in particular *Galley Diary*, which provides the form and starting point of this book? What content, discovery and example can Kertész’s literary and human achievements represent for everyone?



THE DEPTHS OF THE MAN

Writings on Imre Kertész in the quarterly

Múlt és Jövő (Past and Future)

(an Anthology)

The Nobel Prize awarded to Imre Kertész is a most deserved recognition, indeed a landmark event in the annals of Hungarian literature and intellectual culture. Europe has finally realised at a distance of two generations from the epicentre of Auschwitz just what modern history has been capable of producing. Finally, too, Hungarian culture has undertaken the task of mourning, confronting the terrible experience on the plane of culture. We have collected together in this anthology the writings of Imre Kertész published in the periodical *Múlt és Jövő* over a period of twelve years. Let us confront the work as a serious undertaking, to read attentively – once again or for the first time – each carefully crafted line of Imre Kertész. Let us neither glory lightheadedly in the Prize, nor as *Népszabadság* recommended in a frustrated review, “attempt to get over it quickly without more serious ado.” Rather let us struggle with Kertész, even if there is no guarantee that in the end all will “turn out well”.

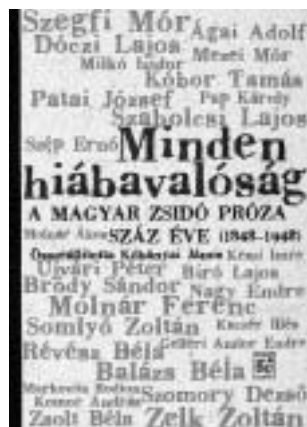


János Kőbányai

JOB'S PRIZE

Background and Reception

Job's Prize began as an epilogue to *The Depths of the Man* – an anthology of the writings of Imre Kertész published in the magazine *Múlt és Jövő*. It is both a separate work and a supplement, the two works, separate, but together as one, aim at some kind of stereo effect. The editor of the magazine and compiler of the anthology János Kőbányai sought out the general narrative behind the life-work of the Nobel Prize-winner, what material constitutes the history from which Imre Kertész raised and unfurled his own “Fatelessness”. Four consecutive eras of Hungarian Jewish history form the meta-narrative of this extraordinary achievement and its reception: the rapid but poorly founded Jewish assimilation of the Reform era and the reserved manner of acceptance; then the collapse of this process about a century later, or the Hungarian Holocaust so peculiar; followed by a period of enforced amnesia, that denied Jews any integrated form of identity; finally, contemporary times after the political change, which in the field of everyday politics tried to rewrite the Hungarian narrative, or in Kőbányai's words: “to remove the actors from the stage”. This is the background to the birth of the work of Kertész and the failure to accept it in Hungary, but also to the generous reception of the novel all over the world, unprecedented in the annals of Hungarian literature since Janus Pannonius. In the second part, the author analyses the startled reception in Hungary of Kertész's Noble Prize and the intellectual discourse as it evolved in its wake.



ALL IS VANITY

An Anthology of Short Stories:

selected Jewish prose works of the last 100 years

(Edited by János Kőbányai)

Similarly to *Aggadas of Budapest*, which is a collection of contemporary Hungarian-Jewish literature, this Anthology contains selected prose works by Hungarian-Jewish writers from the birth of Hungarian-Jewish literature to the Holocaust. We included a few speeches from the Reform Age, but the bulk of writings come from around the *fin de siècle*, when modern Hungarian literature was emerging. (Tamás Kóbor, Menyhért Lengyel, Lajos Bíró, Ferenc Molnár, Hammeiri Avigdor). Other works include the most valuable pieces of 'Jewish religious literature' (József Patai, Illés Kaczér, Péter Újvári, Miksa Szabolcs and Lajos Szabolcs), and a selection of works from the 1930s (Endre Gelléri Andor, Károly Pap, Béla Zsolt, András Komor, Ákos Molnár, Imre Keszi). The anthology ends with György G. Kardos.



AGGADAS OF BUDAPEST

Literature after the Holocaust

(Edited by János Kőbányai)

Readers like reading short stories, especially anthologies which offer various perspectives on the same world. We have compiled an anthology which presents the problems and atmosphere of post-Holocaust life. One criterion of the selection, therefore, was that the stories should deal only with the reality of life after 1945.

Most of the short stories had been published in the *Múlt és Jövő Quarterly* over the last ten years (János Pelle, János Gósztonyi, György Odze, György Kozma, Judit Fenákel, Pál Bárdos, Sándor Bacskai). We have, however, also included writings published elsewhere so that we can offer a wider panorama (György Konrad, Miklós Vámos, Imre Goldstein, Adam Biro, Giorgio and Nicola Pressburger, György Dalos, János Kőbányai). In our view, belonging to a certain literature is not only defined by language but by other identities as well. We, therefore, included short stories which were not written in Hungarian but which are rooted in Hungarian-Jewish experience.

Through this anthology we would like to encourage Jewish writers to find themes from their own environment. Our aim was to compile an anthology from which readers abroad would receive a many-faceted picture of the psychological map of Hungarian Jews in the last half-century. In our experience, interest in Hungarian-Jewish history has grown worldwide because, after the changes in East-Central Europe, ours is the only Jewish community in the region with a chance to continue its history in its homeland. Literature can give a more subtle and accurate account of current reality than the science of history which needs time to develop a perspective.

THE WAY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Essays

(Edited by János Kőbányai)

The main emphasis of the book is on assimilation, the most outstanding achievement and the greatest failure of the Hungarian Jews. It presents the thoughts of Hungarian-Jewish thinkers in the various historical situations of the last hundred years on the chances of becoming Hungarians and citizens of the world. The first essay, that of Ignác Einhorn, is still about the external and internal (since the Jewish people was divided as well) doubts of the pre-assimilation era, then the reader faces the hopes of the calmer days of the turn of the century. After the First World War the authors speak only of worries and troubles. The most honest works of self-analysis of the Hungarian-Jewish spirit were born in the shadow of the Holocaust. The book ends in a rare moment, the reactions and explanations of survivors (fifty rabbis, a hundred writers, poets and scientists – almost the whole Hungarian-Jewish intellectual community was destroyed in the Holocaust) right after the tragedy.

Beside the essays of writers there are studies by scientists and rabbis in this book as well. We present all the trends, the assimilants, the dissimilant Zionists and those who tried to find the way between identity and assimilation.

The next part of this book, *Assimilation or Integration?* will contain essays written between 1948 and 2000.

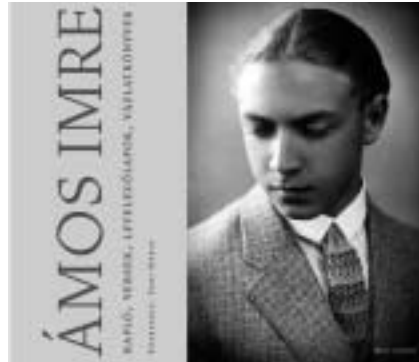


THE JEWISH SPIRIT TODAY

(Interviews by János Kőbányai)

Múlt és Jövő, in its ten years of renewed existence has run several substantial essay-style interviews with leading representatives of today's Jewish spirituality, Elie Wiesel, A. B. Jehosua, Amos Oz, David Flusser, Simon Peres, Steve Reich, Andre Hajdu, Alain Finkelkraut, Shmuel Trigano, Daniel Katz, Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, François Fejtő and others. This book sheds light on the self-image of Jews, their problems, relations with Israel and the Diaspora and its future at the threshold of the second millennium.





DIARY, CORRESPONDENCE, POEMS OF IMRE ÁMOS

(Edited by Mária Egri)

Múlt és Jövő's plans in 2003 include publishing the painter's correspondence and poems, his *Diary (Napló)* covering the period from 1934 to August 1944, and many of his previously undiscovered drawing and sketches. It will be a joint publication with the Art Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Science.

HAGGADAH OF THE APOCALYPSE

*The Holocaust Sketchbook
of the Painter Imre Ámos*



There are two invaluable original documents in Hungarian cultural history which delve with utmost profundity into the inferno of the Holocaust. One is the *Notebook from Bor* of Miklós Radnóti, which contains the stunning poems found on the body of the poet at the time of exhumation from a mass grave. The other is the last sketchbook of Imre Ámos which expresses the same experience in the form of drawings. By accident we came across the original copy which in its original state, provides an incomparably deeper and more moving experience than previous reproductions of the pages. The spiral-bound notebook with its faded checked cover, its jotted notes, marks and stains evokes another tradition in the publishing world, that of Haggadah publishing. In such editions the pages are reproduced in the closest facsimile, including the stains, marginalia and transparencies through which the uniqueness of the work and its fate are also reflected and documented in the reproduction.

Our edition follows this particular publishing practice, partly to enrich the experience and partly to follow tradition. We consider work of Ámos a great and unique art document which fully deserves the attention of the wider public. We have reproduced the 101 page spiral-bound sketchbook as perfectly as possible. We are offering it in a boxed edition along with an introductory essay by *János Kőbányai*, the *Haggadah of the Apocalypse*, providing historical background information and several photos and drawings documenting the brief life of the artist.

The essay has been translated into English, French, and German. *Múlt és Jövő* is awaiting offers from potential publishing and distributing partners. The book received the 'Fine Books of 2000' award.



THE REVELATIONS OF SAINT JOHN

Drawings by Imre Ámos

Múlt és Jövő closed the millennium with another major work by Ámos. Before setting off for his final call-up for forced-labour service in April 1944, eventually to perish in an unknown German concentration camp, he had completed work on his illustrations for *The Revelations of Saint John*. *Múlt és Jövő* realized Ámos' conception and published the last book of the *New Testament* with his drawings.

The accompanying study (written by János Kőbányai) seeks answer to the questions why did the artist, drawing throughout his oeuvre upon Judaism, turn to Christian sources and symbols in his last work, and on what roots the Jews rely in their interpretation and representation of Jesus in modern Jewish art (and later in literature). Several drawings, most of them published for the first time, accompany the study. Many of them could figure as part of the Apocalypse series. Ámos' farewell message to the 20th century was, and still is, a timely one.

János Kőbányai

THE IMAGE-POET OF THE APOCALYPSE: IMRE ÁMOS



Imre Ámos, the par excellence Jewish artist, is one of the flags, apart from Károly Pap, János Kőbányai and the *Múlt és Jövő* manages to hold up.

This Jewish painter was both modern and universal because he took his basic material, his problems and spirit from the substance and tradition he mostly identified with, his very self.

The book is a scholarly monograph of the life and oeuvre of the artist. Nevertheless it is a study in not only strictly art history, but also in the history of ideas and events, for it discusses both Hungarian history and the history and tragic ending of the quaint Hungarian-Jewish symbiosis. It attempts to reveal the problems of Jewish art born at the end of the 19th century through the life and work of Imre Ámos. It also focuses on the central question of how far the art of the Holocaust differs from the universal representation of apocalypse – of which Imre Ámos is an outstanding or a unique example in world art. (Should the world not know his work, this only belongs to a pre-history, much in the way that the work and legend of the apostles became known to the world several hundreds of years after their death. It is this narratory-compilatory task Kőbányai and *Múlt és Jövő* have undertaken.)

The book, like Kőbányai's other work published this year, also grapples with the problem of why the particular narrative of the Hungarian Holocaust (the poetry of Miklós Radnóti and the prose of Imre Kertész assuming its rightful place at last) had the opportunity of representing the Holocaust as apocalypse.

The last chapter of the book considers the representations of Jesus in Jewish art, namely the hardly paradox relation that enabled this Christian icon/narrative to create an identity for rendering Jewish fate and apocalypse perceptible.



KÁROLY PAP – COLLECTED WORKS

Károly Pap is one of the greatest figures in 20th-century Hungarian prose literature. His work is simultaneously Hungarian and Jewish, and reaches the artistic level attained by Isaac Babel, I. B. Singer and Bernard Malamud, Jean-Richard Bloch, Jakob Wassermann, and others. Our series intends to demonstrate this to the world at large. We also consider Pap as one of the intellectual forerunners of new Jewish thought in Hungary – which is Hungarian, Jewish and contemporary at the same time. Since Pap's oeuvre parallels that of Imre Ámos, each volume in the series is illustrated by an Ámos drawing.



THE VOLUMES IN THE SERIES:

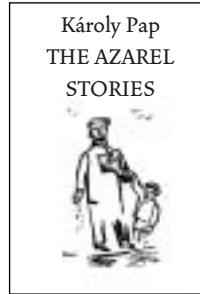
1. *You Saved Me From Death* (*Megszabadítottál a haláltól*)
2. *Azarel*
3. *The Eighth Station* (*Nyolcadik stáció*)
All three edited and with an introduction by Tamás Lichtmann
- 4–5. *Short Stories I–II*
Edited by János Kőbányai, foreword by Tamás Lichtmann
6. *Dramas – Bathsheba, Szent színpad, Mózes*
Edited and with an introduction by Tamás Lichtmann
7. *Articles (Jewish Wounds and Crimes, articles, correspondence, documents)*
Edited and introduced by Ilona Petrányi

The series is completed by a biography written by Tamás Lichtmann. It identifies Pap's place in the world of Jewish literature with special attention to the parallels with Franz Kafka.

Recently, Károly Pap acquired real worldwide fame with the English translation of his novel *Azarel*, published by Steerforth Press, South Royalton, Vermont, 2002. The book received favorable reviews in the United States in renowned journals and newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Times Literary Supplement*). Following this success, Dutch, French, Hebrew and Spanish publishing houses have already bought the foreign rights of the novel.

Károly Pap

THE AZAREL STORIES



Károly Pap's novel *Azarel* saw international success in short order after its English-language publication in the United States in 2000 (Steerforth Press). Since then it has appeared in German, Dutch, Hebrew, and French, with a Spanish edition due before long. From the New York Times to the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, it has netted considerable critical acclaim as well. Reviewers promptly situated Pap in the ranks of those Hungarian writers the world has become familiar with in recent years, including Sándor Márai, Béla Zsolt, and Antal Szerb, and American critics also drew comparisons with Franz Kafka, Bruno Schultz, I. B. Singer, and the young Vladimir Nabokov.

In his short lifetime Pap, who perished in the Holocaust, produced two other novels, numerous short stories, and four plays that have understandably stirred the curiosity of his readers—readers who, after reading *Azarel*, have grown fond of Pap's unique style and thematic concerns rooted in the deepest questions of the Jewish fate and Jewish identity. And they have likewise come to love the hero and title character of *Azarel*: Gyuri (or Gyurka) *Azarel*, that dreamy, pitiless, stubborn, tenacious, rebellious child. And this is why *Múlt és Jövő* – which has published all of Károly Pap's works in Hungary and holds the rights—believes that the next work that will transport his readers into this extraordinary world can only be a novel whose every line was written by Pap. And yet never in the writer's lifetime did such a novel appear in print.

In fact, it is a choice and coherent selection of Pap's stories that amounts to a new "*Azarel novel*." During his lifetime the author expressed a desire to further elaborate on this theme; and indeed he did pen numerous stories to this end. These short works represent the pieces, the "chapters" that in effect constitute the novel he never did actually write. Some of these stories allude to this relationship by way of their titles and the name of the protagonist. Others were written in the first person singular and depict the same (rabbi's) household in a provincial town and the same characters in this household as does *Azarel* the novel. Yet other stories introduce the ten-year-old Gyuri *Azarel* – in the village atmosphere where *Azarel*'s mythical hero, Papa Jeremiah was from. The final stories of this "novel" trace the protagonist's journey to World War I and beyond, to his vagabond days. The last story in the cycle, *Azarel Arrives in Budapest*, portrays a young, alienated revolutionary who has broken with his father's home even as an adult and has arrived in the Hungarian capital to embark on his literary career.

Almost all the stories are even more autobiographical than *Azarel* the novel, and a couple (e.g., *Azarel's Evening in the Village*) offer richly detailed portraits of the era's socio-cultural milieu in addition to the always penetrating psychological depiction of the characters. At the same time, the stories are at times even more pitiless in depicting the child's psyche and reach toward even greater depths than the novel. On this note we might quote Zsigmond Móricz, of the greatest Hungarian writers of the early twentieth century and a great admirer of Pap: Three of Pap's stories are perhaps his most beautiful: *Mercy*, *Children*, and *Blood*. Each concerns the child's psyche, indeed each represents the most sincere confession imaginable of a child's heart not yet adulterated by the human culture he inhabits. These stories can even form the basis of psychoanalytic research, so astounding is the piercing clarity with which Pap remembers the experiences of childhood; this is a clarity beyond the distancing filter of the impressions one subsequently acquires in the course of schooling and of being raised. Even the greatest writers perceive childhood through a veil; not even Goethe could remember his original instincts. One subconsciously creates a fake copy of his first act of sedition, fashioning it in a form he'd wish upon his own child. Here Károly Pap explores depths hardly traversed by anyone before him.

This book has been compiled by János Kőbányai as the "*Bildungroman*" of Károly Pap's hero, *Azarel*. It contains an afterword titled Károly Pap and *Azarel*, in which Kőbányai compares the life and background of the writer – including Pap's hometown of Sopron, that small historic city in western Hungary, in the first years of the twentieth century; and the writer's father, Miksa Pollák, who was not only a leading rabbi of the era but a writer himself—with that of the fictional hero Gyuri *Azarel*. Kőbányai examines Pap's literary reception and literary relationships during his lifetime, the long period of post-Holocaust silence that descended on him and his works, and the factors behind the sudden international success that began with *Azarel*'s U.S. publication. He further addresses the linguistic and philosophical aspects of *Azarel* the novel, the character, and the theme—in particular, the conflict between (Jewish) minority identity and a universalist perspective, and its unparalleled realization in the oeuvre of Károly Pap.

Károly Pap: *The Azarel Stories*
(Compiled, and with an afterword, by János Kőbányai)

Contents:

1. *Mercy*. 2. *On the Trail of the Story*. 3. *Schrei*. 4. *Games*. 5. *Nighttime in the Child's Room*. 6. *Dance*. 7. *Children*. 8. *Blood*. 9. *The Moon*. 10. *Solitude*. 11. *Geese*. 12. *Stairs*. 13. *The Last Game*. 14. *Memory*. 15. *Summertime Memory*. 16. *Azarel's Evening in the Village*. 17. *Song*. 18. *Tomorrow, Then*. 19. *Ahasver's Story*. 20. *Transformation*. 21. *Azarel Arrives in Budapest*

Listing of the original publications in which the stories appeared
János Kőbányai: *Károly Pap and Azarel*

ÁKOS MOLNÁR

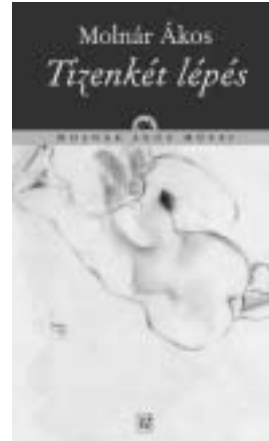
One of the major directions the magazine and publisher *Múlt és Jövő* pursues is to discover the works of writers who lived before or perished in the Holocaust, and to place them in both the Hungarian and international canon which they had failed to find their way into not purely because of the Holocaust.

This activity of the publisher has met with considerable success for, three years after the publication of the oeuvre of Károly Pap, his novel *Azarel* has been translated into all the major world languages. (Other members of his generation, such as Béla Zsolt, Ernő Szép and Antal Szerb, are only beginning to catch the attention of the wider world.)

Our intentions with the novelist Ákos Molnár (1895–1945) are similar. He started out as a violinist but lost an arm in the First World War, and so he transposed his musical sensibilities into writing. Having published five novels and three volumes of short stories to the acclaim of the best critics of the day, he belongs to the generation of novelists around the magazine *Nyugat*. A week before the liberation of a fully blockaded Budapest, Hungarian Arrow-Cross men murdered him (in spite of his high military honours).

The two novels in the oeuvre series are characteristic of his artistic concerns.

A hitehagyott (*The Apostate*) is a historical novel, its protagonist, Imre Fortunatus, being the financial councillor to the last two kings of independent, mediaeval Hungary, a Jew-turned Hungarian aristocrat who reverts to his faith on his deathbed. (The plot is somewhat simi-



lar to that of Feuchtwanger's *Jud Süß* but much more complex.) It is one of the significant pieces of modern Hungarian historical fiction, drawing on the virtues of literary modernism and psychology. The book includes an essay by the historian György Haraszti entitled "*The Real Imre Fortunatus*".

Tizenkét lépés (*A Dozen Steps*) is a so-called bourgeois novel. The plot takes place in the Berlin of the 1930s, and its subject matter is sexuality itself: unsurmountable desire breaking down the social and cultural barriers between the characters. The protagonist is a maid whose desire and the reciprocal desire erupting through unseen currents drives the plot, as well as the description and analysis of the nature of writhing desire in the anguish of the man.

"It discovers novel, truly modern psychological connections, justifications of human deeds independent of former literary convention, putting to good use the psychological awareness science is currently in the process of developing," wrote Aladár Schöpflin, the senior critic of the *Nyugat*. This statement holds for all the works of Ákos Molnár.

Already in the year of its publication, 1933, *Tizenkét lépés* was translated into Italian (*I dodici passi*, S. A. Editrice Genio, Milan), a copy of which the publisher is happy to provide.



ÁGNES HELLER

ÁGNES HELLER

Ágnes Heller belongs among those rare contemporary Hungarian authors who are also known internationally. *Múlt és Jövő* has had a long-standing working relationship with her; she regularly contributes articles to the Quarterly and she is also consulted about our publishing policy. The first book we published by her was *The Stranger (Az idegen)*, a collection of articles with Jewish themes first published in the Journal, and of lectures given on the topic of multiculturalism. (With this book we have also ventured beyond Jewish topics – although we have never considered “Jewish interest” to be restricted to the narrow sense but have chosen to interpret it as widely as possible.)

Heller’s collection of essays, *Thoughts and Literature* includes her new writings on the overlaps between the philosophical and literary spheres. It also contains new viewpoints for interpreting the works of Leibniz, Hannah Arendt and Hans Jonas, and manifests an interest in Jewish history and philosophy (such as a long essay on Maimonides and a brilliant analysis of Randolph L. Brahm’s monograph on the Holocaust in Hungary).



Ágnes Heller

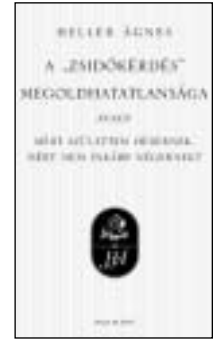
RESURRECTION OF THE JEWISH JESUS

The rediscovery of the Jewish origin of Jesus and of the Jewish religion gave Ágnes Heller the opportunity to think over the causes of the forgetting, and the suffering of the 2000 year old Jesus and its consequences. The philosopher takes hope from the fact and truth of this rediscovery: she anticipates rapprochement, reconciliation and the coming of a truer world. The 100 page long philosophical essay starts from the scientific research of the last twenty years and arrives at the challenges of today's globalized world through the analysis of the Judeo-Christian civilisation. In her essay appears the historical Jesus as well as the Christ moulded by Pauline reform and the Greek thinking or the new paganism of Hitler. The de- and rejudaisation related to the figure of Jesus can at least lead to a truer self-knowledge if not yet to the redemption of the Christian and Jewish world .

The book was published in Germany by Philo Verlag in 2002.

Agnes Heller

THE IRRESOLVABLE NATURE OF THE JEWISH QUESTION



Ágnes Heller on her new book:

The first two essays for this volume were written quite recently. The pamphlet-like confession or confession-like pamphlet entitled A zsidókérdés megoldhatatlansága [The irresolvable nature of the Jewish question] was written for Múlt és Jövő. I consider the issues raised in the essay to be important. However, what I had to say was not sufficiently supported with texts and the conceptual underpinning was also deficient. Therefore I have added a postscript in order to fill in the gaps. Perhaps predictably, this postscript turned out to be longer than the original pamphlet. Both pieces are about the same thing, but the approach is different. Both tackle the so-called "Jewish question" from a distance of two thousand years and attempt to place current issues in a long-term or "long durée" perspective.

Of course, all analyses are written from the perspective of the present, and thus any attempt to make them long term will be in vain. It is the "pace-maker" of the here and now that regulates the heartbeat. Accordingly, it seemed better to supplement the previous two essays with two further essays that deal with the "here and now" bluntly and openly.

The first piece concerns the time of the parvenus. This was assimilation at the time of class societies, nationalism and Zionism. I tell of this period retrospectively, since we are now at the end of it – at least in the countries of liberal democracy. Class society has been replaced by mass society, nationalism by the world of the republican empires, Zionism by the State of Israel; meanwhile assimilation has failed. But the era of the parvenus, the era of assimilation is still the past; it is the past of the present and it constantly accompanies us.

The second essay was written in 2002, shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11th. It has lost none of its relevance. The main point is that the "war on terrorism" cannot be won, but it can be lost. The book is also about the fact that there will always be people who choose to be Jews, that is, to be Jews also.

Ágnes Heller & János Kósbányai

THE MONKEY ON A BICYCLE

(Bicikliző Majom)

The Monkey on a Bicycle (Bicikliző Majom), subtitled *Interview novel* is a unique genre. Interviewed and written by János Kósbányai, it constitutes nearly 600 pages, interrupted by questions. It is not only a thoughtful portrait of Heller's lively and dramatic career, but also an account of Hungarian intellectual life featuring, among others, the Budapest School formed around György Lukács. There are few comparable narratives of such depth on the dramatic evolution of a generation traversing from the the Holocaust through Zionism to Communism, then on to the Marxist renaissance between 1956 and 1968, and then from disillusionment with Marx to the post-modern resignation of the present day and assuming the role of cosmopolitan intellectuals.

The Monkey on a Bicycle was published by Philo Verlag in 1999 in German. The book was highly acclaimed by German press reviews. The hope that with this edition, this "work for four hands" will be ready to be translated into those languages in which Heller is well known and loved seems to become a reality: the Dutch editor, Uitgeverij Boom published the book in 2002.



Here are some quotations taken from the jacket of the second Hungarian edition:

A rich and faithful (auto)biography of the past seventy years. Although I know the author very well, I learned quite a lot. I can verify the book's authenticity, and its gripping content is demonstrated by the fact that it is impossible to put the book down.

György Konrád

Bicycle with her! Historical perspectives, insignificant and great contexts! Are you bored with mom's, dad's and grannie's stories of 'once upon a time'? Read it as a novel! It is better than Crocodile Dundee! Or almost as good. For posterity.

Miklós Jancsó

Insignificant witness of insignificant times, great witness of insignificant times, insignificant witness of great times, significant witness of great times: all this can be interesting. But what is really interesting is when one can be a witness of one's own life. This is when the reading public can celebrate. One of the reading public, by the name of

Péter Esterházy

It would be Ágnes Heller's autobiography, except that this biographical novel was written by János Kósbányai. Difficult as it may be to classify Kósbányai's new book, through one of the most astute thinkers of our time, Ágnes Heller, it provides an exciting introduction to the apocalyptic issues of the twenty-first century. This exceptionally important book should be recommended reading for the intellectually aspiring youth.

Ferenc Fejtő



Ágnes Heller

AUSCHWITZ AND THE GULAG

We have been planning for some time to publish this collection of essays – as the first volume of studies by Ágnes Heller that appeared in *Múlt és Jövő*. Imre Kertész's Nobel Prize in 2002, Ágnes Heller's brilliant analysis of him, and our fresh joy at the recognition, required that we should become involved as soon as possible, not just in the acceptance of success, but also in the “discourse” surrounding Imre Kertész's experiences and his extraordinary life-story.



Ágnes Heller

PICARESQUE IN THE SHADOW OF AUSCHWITZ



The publisher has begun a series of Ágnes Heller's writings on Jewish themes. The initial volume was published under the title *Auschwitz és Gulág* [*Auschwitz and the Gulag*]. In this second volume we have collected the essays of the philosopher on Jewish literature. The four pieces examine the philosophical problems of aesthetics and Jewish history and of the possibilities of portraying such. At the same time, the author also explores the writers whose life-works serve to reveal these issues of fate. Not just the literary portrayal, but also the great issues of Jewish identity and fate – with universal validity and application. Heller's (exemplary) heroes are I. B. Singer, Stefan Zweig and Imre Kertész. Their lives and works – and all the historical and sociology-related material that their life-works represent – span the destiny of European Jewry in the twentieth century. The various aspects of that destiny – of its hopes, illusions, and their realisation, as well as the process of disillusionment, and then the “development” into “fatelessness”. The chimneys of Auschwitz cast their shadow on all of the writings and the writers. It is this “narrative” and state of the world that determines everything that comes both before and after. Between the first and last essay in the volume (on *The Suppression of Jewish Identity in Hungarian Jewish literature* and on *Fatelessness* – after twenty years) it is Imre Kertész's Nobel Prize – this event in Hungarian intellectual life illuminating and re-evaluating centuries [of history] – that establishes the clarifying connection. This streak of lightning reveals why, in a system of such false expectations, great Hungarian Jewish literature failed to emerge in the twentieth century. And where, even despite this, it did emerge – as it clearly did – then why it was inevitably only in internal emigration and outside the traditions and discourse of Hungarian literature.

JÁNOS KŐBÁNYAI



Kőbányai is responsible for resurrecting and editing *Múlt és Jövő* Journal and Publishing House. He is also a writer, sociographer and photographer. After books on Beat culture and other marginal groups Kőbányai's interest turned towards the identity problems and life strategies of Hungarian Jews living in Hungary and in Israel (*Magyar Sírátófal / Hungarian Wailing Wall; Jeruzsálemi Évtized / The Jerusalem Decade*).

In 1993 Kőbányai spent several months in Sarajevo, during the most violent periods of the siege before the “outbreak” of the Dayton peace accords. His *Sarajevo Report (Szarajevói Jelentés)*, which follows the history of the Balkan conflict until the end of the war, received the Best Non-Fiction Award for 1996. *Sarajevo Report* focuses on the daily life of the city, especially on its cultural aspects. The history of the Jewish community there (one of Europe's oldest) is an unique moment in universal Jewish history. Several in-depth interviews present various portraits of life in the mirror of 20th-century Bosnian history. The book is introduced by a thirty-page chapter depicting the other (geographic) side of the conflict: Macedonia, Serbia and Vojvodina in the spring of 1993 – in the summer of 1998, Macedonia became relevant once more. Sarajevo is not only a war-stricken city but also a testing-ground for European civilization. The book was conceived from this viewpoint, and it looks at the present history of the city as seen in the mirror of the entirety of Central Europe.

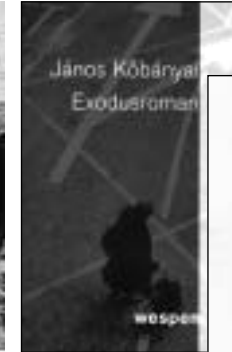
Kőbányai continued his journeys in Bosnia at the start of the normalization and witnessed as writer, reporter and photographer the first elections, the Pope's visit, the local elections in Serbia and the refugee camps throughout 1996 and 1997. He published a book for the '98 Budapest Book Week, *A Balkan Chronicle – Sarajevo Report through War and Peace*.

The war in Kosovo both softened and sharpened the contemporary edge of the book at the same time: with hindsight, the recurrence of the same motifs and interests exposed the universal nature of conflict and underlined the controversial nature of human society as such.

János Kőbányai

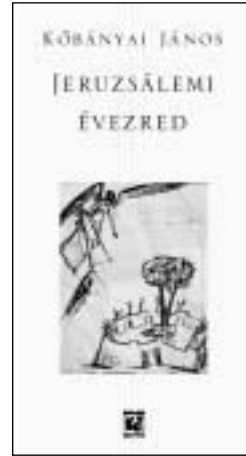
REPORT

(Riport)



Kőbányai's *Report (Riport)*, published jointly with Balassi Publishers, summarizes twenty-five years of sociographic work. Those with an interest in Eastern Europe will find this work appealing not only because of its uniquely Hungarian genre of sociography (being a blend of sociology and literature) but also because it shows Hungarian history of the last twenty-five years from Communism to the transition to a new regime, as seen from the inside. Its main topics include youth marginality, the social background of Eastern European rock music, the revival of the Jewish community, Israel as seen through East-European eyes, the two end-of-the-millennium wars in the Gulf and in the Balkans, and the professional assignments and attitudes of correspondents.

In 1998 Kőbányai published an “Exodus-story”, *Be Blessed! (Légy áldott)* on the occasion of Israel's 50th anniversary. Its basic material is a series of recorded interviews with a Hungarian woman living near the Dead Sea. She had been through the Holocaust as a child, after which she made the two-year-long journey on the ship *Exodus* from Hungary to Palestine, arriving just before the establishment of the State of Israel, where she participated as a soldier in every single war. Due to injuries suffered in the Holocaust, she could not have children, she adopted four Moroccan Jewish boys. The novel depicts, with documentary-like power, the birth of Israel, relations between the Diaspora (including Hungary) and the new country, and the heroism with which the generation of the Holocaust fought for, and built the country. The German translation was published by Wespennest, Vienna.



János Kőbányai

THE JERUSALEM MILLENNIUM

The personal and the authorial “luck” of János Kőbányai led him to Jerusalem during the Gulf War and the new Intifada. He went to Jerusalem in 2000, the year of the millennium, to witness some uplifting changes. Instead, he became the chronicler of the abundance of modern apocalypse. An apocalypse not only characteristic of the Near-East, but of the whole world. And the way the world reacts influences events. The book published at the end of 2001 is completed by new tragic chapters, one relating the bomb attack at the Mount Scopus Campus, which took its victims not a hundred meters from the writer who was heading toward the doomed cafeteria.



János Kőbányai

THE HOLOCAUST

AS NARRATIVE –

THE PLACE OF MENDACITY

2004/2005 – the 60th anniversary of the Hungarian Holocaust gave an occasion to the author (the editor of the Jewish magazine *Múlt és Jövő*) to dwell upon the Hungarian chapter of the Holocaust, on the questions how far this “narrative” is singular in the history of the Holocaust, and how far this chapter has completed and universalized the Holocaust, this nadir in the history of mankind.

As in the case of Imre Kertész, or following him, Kőbányai deals with the problem of narration. Language struggling with the problems of narration is homogenized from elements of literature, history, psychology and post-transition daily politics; and through creating it the author seeks to fulfil the work of mourning, and to find trauma-releasing possibilities in recollection.

The second part of the book, *A hazugság helye* (*The Place of Mendacity*), is a sociography of sorts that evolved spontaneously. As a member of the Board of Trustees of the Hungarian Holocaust Museum, János Kőbányai has had the opportunity to put what he had elaborated in “theory” to the test of practice. And it is a history of a decade of Holocaust remembrance that unfolded from the studies, memoranda and letters written as a trustee: a (not quite cheerful) view of current Hungarian history filtered through the impact of the Holocaust in a land of East Central Europe (the “*Land of the Holocaust*”), the only one where Jews survived in significant numbers.



Mária Ember

WILL WE STILL BE ALIVE IN 2000?

Mária Ember wrote one of the first most authentic document prose about the Holocaust (*Hairpin Bend*). She felt her duty to grasp the opportunity provided by the change of regime and to describe her inexpressible and unspeakable experiments, and to dissolve the Hungarian and Jewish tragedy in the collective memory. After her essays, reports, pragmatic journalism, historical research, this book sums up the endured and investigated history. The enlarged knowledge and genres appearing in this work – consequences of the process of identification - lend wings to the author's life experience. Through the screen of childhood and from the perspective of the whole century, this lyric sociography analyses the failure of Christians and Jews living together. The micro-world of the Great Hungarian Plain, a document on the coexistence of Jews and Christians in a village painted with rare sharpness and preciseness, extends to a picture of the whole world. The knowledge transmitted this way is much more genuine, deeper and truer than any other told by scientific texts since it narrates the cataclysm of the undigested past through excellently represented characters, situations and stories.



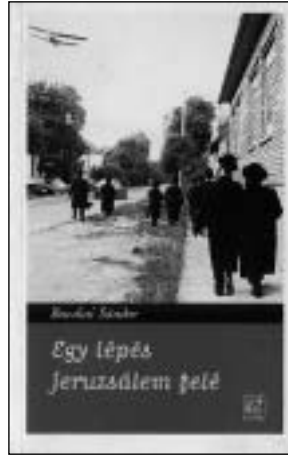
Mária Ember

AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE

This is a kind of *Buildungsroman*, even though the texts are extremely short. The author wrote it during the last moments of her life to express succinctly an experience: the worst was not the deportation and then the concentration camp, but the survival after the Liberation when she had to begin a new life with the memory of the camp. The scene is a Jewish shelter for young ladies in Budapest where girls surviving the Holocaust are trying to understand and digest the undigestable and begin a new life.

Sándor Bacskai

ONE STEP TOWARDS JERUSALEM



Múlt és Jövő was especially pleased to publish Bacskai's sociographic work *One Step towards Jerusalem (Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé)* because the author is the publisher's own discovery. All of these writings first appeared in the Journal. Bacskai continues the tradition of sociographic literature that flourished in the 1930s and the 1970s.

Bacskai's writings offer glimpses of a little-known world, that of Hungarian Orthodox Jewry. He conducts literary interviews with old people who are the last witnesses of a disappearing world. Apart from being a writer, his strength lies in communicating and building contacts. He interviews mainly Jews returning home in search of their memories, casting light in the process on the fate of many generations. Nobody has yet written about those Jews who remained faithful to tradition even in the 1950s, despite the pressure and persecution, and who preserved their religion and lifestyle. Bacskai is an excellent photographer and this visual approach also characterizes his writing.

One Step towards Jerusalem has been so well received that we have gone into a second printing. An excerpt from the book was published by Suhrkamp for the Frankfurt Book Fair in the volume entitled *Jüdisches Stadtbild Budapest*. The English translation is also available.

The author visits his own characters at the Orthodox Jewish quarters of New York, and to Bné Brak, the Orthodox quarter near Tel Aviv. Bacskai's new book now in preparation is a report of this journey.

Sándor Bacskai

THE FIRST DAY

Remembrances from the Hungarian Orthodox Jewry



Sándor Bacskai was discovered first by the periodical *Múlt és Jövő* and then by the book publisher *Múlt és Jövő*. His book *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé [A step towards Jerusalem]* soon sold out and extracts have been published in several other languages. The author is a unique writer in terms of genre and subject matter. Almost on his own, he continues to develop the so-called "sociographic" genre, the great discovery of Hungarian literature in the 1930s and 1970s. Nobody has given a more profound and illuminating account of contemporary Orthodox Jews in Hungary. This Jewish group – and unique world – was barely mentioned in Hungarian literature and culture, foreshadowing perhaps the apathy and rejection suffered by the group during the Holocaust. Those who survived – a diaspora in a diaspora – dispersed throughout Europe, America and Israel. Bacskai followed them with his empathetic microphone. The interviews found here commemorate a way of life and a philosophy that was typical of many Hungarian Jews but which never found a spiritual home in Hungarian culture, thereby contributing to the momentum of the great uprooting.

Based on the order of historical narrative, the volume begins with the golden age of Jewish Orthodoxy and the return from labour service and the extermination camps: it concludes with the shocking realisation of the impossibility of a return to normal life. The author and publisher have agreed to continue the journey in search of a new home in a second volume to be published in a year's time.



Géza Röhrig

THE RABBI'S BALD PARROT

This thirty-year-old poet has been closely associated with *Múlt és Jövő*. His first volume, *Cremation Book* (*Hamvasztókönyv*), was published by *Múlt és Jövő*. We published his second volume in the summer of '99, which is his first prose work, *The Rabbi's Bald Parrot*, with illustrations by Emil Für.

Röhrig has had one of the most eventful careers in Hungarian literature. He grew up in a state care institutions and obtained his degree at the Art and Film College. He studied for a few years at the Polish Department of the University of Budapest. He has been a punk musician, a successful film-maker, and an actor in a television series, he has worked in a kibbutz in Israel, studied in yeshivas in Jerusalem and New York, and worked as a guide at the Budapest Jewish Museum. At the moment he is a full-time father – according to Hasidic custom his wife earns their living – and works on his texts in retreat from the world.

Cremation Book is a remarkable undertaking: a young man in his twenties describes in the 1990s the experiences of the Holocaust in shocking images. His prose work is also a deeply felt work of fiction. It imagines the tales of a Hasidic rabbi (in the footsteps of Martin Buber) from the concentration camps to arrival in the USA.

A few poems of *Cremation Book* were published in German in the Hungarian issue of the *Wespennest* in Vienna. The whole book was published in German by Fiebig Verlag for the 1999 Fair, and some of his prose is also available in English.



Imre Goldstein

NOVEMBER SPRING

The way in which Imre Goldstein is linked to *Múlt és Jövő* reveals an important function of the publishing company: to gather authors who have left Hungary but who carry on their Hungarian experience and identity in other cultures and languages. Goldstein was born and raised in an Orthodox Jewish family and subculture, and left the country in '56. He studied drama in New York and has directed theatrical productions. In order to pay for his studies he served in the US army for five years. He wrote his dissertation on Hungarian avant-garde drama. He has translated into English plays by Tibor Déry, István Örkény, Milán Füst and Imre Sarkadi. He also translated *The Book of Memories* (*Emlékiratok könyve*) by Péter Nádas.

He writes poetry in Hungarian. *Múlt és Jövő* has frequently published his Hungarian poems over the last five years and in 1998 we also published an anthology of his work.

Nonetheless, he writes his novels in English. We publish his first English novel, *November Spring*. In the novel, the author lives through the events of '56 from the viewpoint of a Jewish student in Budapest. This biographical novel provides double insight into previously uncharted territory both for literature and historiography. An in-depth description of life in an Orthodox family could never before make its way into literature due to the particular historical heritage and assimilation strategy of Hungarian Jews. What was it like to openly admit one's Jewish identity in the 1950s? It might seem like a paradox, but religion was alive and well in Hungary during the years of Stalinism: there were Hassidic Jews and Yeshivas until 1956, but then they disappeared for good. Goldstein's novel is about their world, and their experience of 1956.



JEWISH HISTORY

The following important works were published in Jewish studies:

- Vilmos Bacher: *The Bible and Jewish Science* (*Szentírás és zsidó tudomány*),
- István Hahn: *The Revolution of Prophets – Essays in Judaic Studies* (*Proféták forradalma*),
- Lajos Blau: *The Jews and World Civilization* (*Zsidók és a világkultúra*),
- Ignác Goldziher: *The Development and Essence of Jewishness* (*A zsidóság lényege és fejlődése*)

What is more, there is growing international interest in Hungarian Jewish history, primarily because at the close of the second millennium the key questions our civilization is facing include the co-existence of peoples, and their assimilation or integration. The fate of Hungarian Jews can serve as an example in terms of success and tragedy alike.



Aladár Komlós

HUNGARIAN JEWISH INTELLECTUAL HISTORY FROM THE REFORM AGE TO THE HOLOCAUST

The two-volume *Hungarian-Jewish Intellectual History from the Reform Age to the Holocaust* by Komlós was one of the most successful books in Hungary in the past few years. The first volume, a monograph in itself, will definitely attract international attention, all the more so because similar works already exist on the international market and have attracted great interest (Raphael Patai in English and Ferenc Fejtő in French). Komlós was one of the most significant Hungarian intellectual and literary historians. He wrote his book under the threat of the Holocaust, at a time when the failure of Hungarian-Jewish assimilation became clear. The monograph in the first volume examines how Jews in Hungary became Hungarian Jews in the 19th century and how they came to be the driving force in modern civic society, especially in human sciences and literature. The second, unfinished volume continues the monograph in the form of essays up to the mid-20th century, to the time of the Holocaust. We collected and edited these analyses which deal with Hungarian and Jewish coexistence and do not argue for assimilation but integration that preserves differences. Since Komlós wrote his work in the context of Hungarian intellectual life and used sources which later perished, *Hungarian-Jewish Intellectual History* presents this chapter of Hungarian and Jewish history with unrivalled completeness.



György Haraszti

ON THE BORDER OF TWO WORLDS

György Haraszti is an outstanding member of the middle-aged generation of historians. The articles in this book investigate the milestones along the symbiotic process of co-existence of Jews and Hungarians during the 1000 years of Hungarian history. This collection contains his writings of the last ten years on the shared Jewish-Hungarian history. He draws on the latest findings of Hungarian and international historical research, and he also takes a new approach to 18th-century Jewish migration into Hungary, the social structure of Hungarian Jewry in 1848, and the question of the much-debated migration from Galicia. The closing essay surveys the problems of Hungarian-Jewish history writing.

English, German and Italian reference material is available for some of his studies.



Walter Pietsch

REFORM AND ORTHODOXY

(Hungarian Jewry Entering the Modern Era)

Walter Pietsch is a German historian specializing in the history of Hungarian Jews. He wrote few but all the more thoroughly researched articles, which are among the most frequently cited by historians. He focuses on how German models influenced the assimilation of Hungarian Jewry in the 19th century and how it differed from the German developments. The chapter titles are informative: 1. Jewish migration from Galicia; 2. Reform and orthodoxy (the 1868 Hungarian-Jewish congress in the contemporary German press); 3. Hatam Szofer and Theodore Herzl (Orthodoxy and early Zionism in the 19th-century Kingdom of Hungary); 4. The roots of Jewish ultra-orthodoxy in Hungarian Jewry; 5. Oszkár Jászi and the Jewish question; 6. Trianon and Hungarian Jews.

The book was published both by *Múlt és Jövő* and Philo Press.

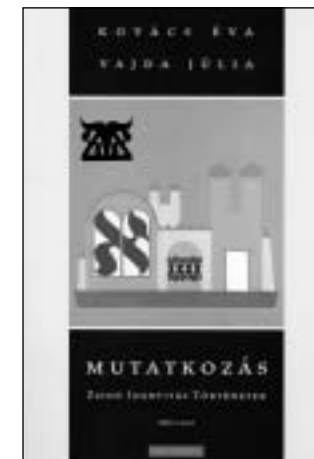


Viktor Karády

SURVIVORS AND RESTARTERS

Chapters from the sociology of Hungarian Jewry after 1945

The reader holds in his hands an old/new book, the first version of which was published in 1984 in the now legendary Parisian workshop of liberal political émigrés, the *Magyar Füzetek [Hungarian papers]*, under the editorship of Péter Kende. The present text, which has been re-edited, in part re-written, and supplemented and expanded with the findings of recent research, is the first part of a larger work about the sociology of Hungarian-Jewish survivors. The second part is to be published in a separate volume. The author has forged together statistical indicators, contemporary press articles, autobiographical reports, historical accounts, as well as his own entrance examination results and his experiences as a youth in a sociological system of indicators, in order to portray the collective image of Hungarian Jewish survivors of the Nazi genocide, as well as the trials of their fitting back into society. In separate subchapters, the book discusses the social reception, demography, class relations and (“upward” and “downward”) mobility of the “restarters”, the waves of antisemitism after 1945, the mobilising force of Zionism, the extent of emigration, forced assimilation under the Communists, and the possibilities and traps of integration.



Éva Kovács – Júlia Vajda

PRESENCE

Jews in Search for Identity in Hungary after the Transition

The individual and collective identity of the Jews is a well-established subject of research in sociology, social psychology and social history. This book differs from other studies in exploring Jewish identity through the coexistence of Jews with non-Jews in Hungary. It presents the “Jewishness” of such individuals and families who live in mixed marriages, in which the Jewish origin of one party (be it public or secret) becomes a source of peculiar identities. Through coexistence, Jewishness acquires new meanings ranging from a more intense identity, through abandoning or changing Jewish identity, to self-hatred and latent anti-Semitism. The book examines the changing use of various Jewish symbols, rituals and objects (e.g., Star of David, circumcision, Menorah). It is the first study in Hungary, which deals with the “Jewish identity” of non-Jews, philo-Semitism and pseudo-Jewish identity in mixed marriages. Also, it strives to bring the traumas of the Shoah in public debate by analysing it from the perspective of coexistence. Thereby, the book presents the guilty conscience of the children and grandchildren of the perpetrators, which has not been analysed in Hungary yet. Finally, the rediscovery of Jewish identity, a process that also includes some distancing from that identity is examined in a biographical context – a novelty in Jewish Studies in Hungary as well.

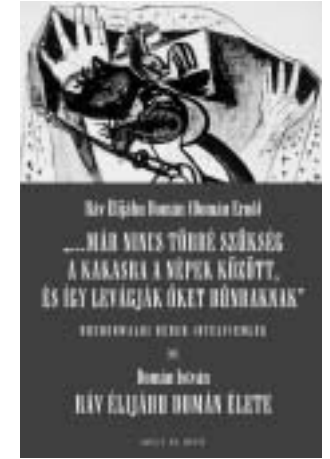
JEW IN CONTEMPORARY HUNGARY

An analysis of the findings of the 1999 sociological survey

Edited by András Kovács



The studies in the volume give a multi-layered sociological portrayal of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust who stayed in Hungary despite their experiences. The portrayal is based on concrete research and the “hard data” of a comprehensive survey. Such a thorough survey has never been undertaken before in Hungarian-Jewish history. The studies comprising the volume arose as the result of sociological research organised in 1999 by the Minority Research Institute of the Sociological Institute of ELTE University in Budapest. The various studies discuss, to a lesser or greater degree of emphasis, the Jewish populace or people of Jewish descent as a special group within the population. Through the dynamics of identity and difference, the authors (Róbert Angelusz, András Kovács, János Ladányi, Tamás Stark, Róbert Tardos) also examine the historical processes influencing the whole of society and determining the past half-century. Their inquiries cover the social and economic roles of Jews in contemporary Hungary, the factors establishing identity, and the broad range of its demographic and historical changes. The main question is, after all, the choice of identity; the possibility that arose after the change of political system has materialised, thus enabling social scientists to address openly the task of measuring Jewish identity and of interpreting the data received. We also publish all the associated statistical data, as well as the complete research material of the survey. In doing so, we offer to the academic and “interested” public a fundamental and standard work of social science and historiography.



István Domán and Ernő Domán

NO HARBINGER IS NEEDED AMONGST PEOPLES

Those hitherto deeply asleep awake and speak thus: ‘From this day onward there is no need for a harbinger [a rooster] among the nations,’ and thus they slay him and offer him as a human sacrifice. In our times all six million of them,” wrote Ernő Domán, that is Reb Elijahu Domán, in his recollections of Buchenwald. Written in Hebrew, this document is a unique reminder of the lost world of the Orthodox community, which constituted half of the one million strong Hungarian Jewry. In his memoirs Reb Domán paints a vivid picture of the apocalypse which he witnessed. His prose is steeped in the language of the *Old Testament* and the *Talmud*. The elder Domán’s memoirs are followed by the son’s biography of his father. István, also an orthodox rabbi, wrote an informative description of the world of the Yeshiva in eastern Hungary, the Neo-Orthodox Yeshiva of Frankfurt, and, in general, the history of Hungary between World War I and the 1970s from the point of view of an Orthodox Jew. In this volume the lives and works of two generations of Orthodox rabbis complement each other. The son, a Talmudic scholar, translated his father’s Hebrew text into Hungarian and appended it with explanatory notes.

AT THE EDGE OF THE ROAD

(The lives of people in the Holocaust)

(Edited by János Kőbányai)



The book contains three Holocaust narratives. They are the recollections of ordinary people whose experiences comprise their sole writing, story and message. The three pieces are not just the narratives of three different fates, but also present three different sociological backgrounds, all characteristic of Hungarian Jewry. And emphasis is placed on three different stages in the Holocaust narrative.

Pál Kádár's story (*A körgyógyónapszámos [The seasonal healer]*) presents the life of a village doctor and his family – until their deportation to Auschwitz. The narrative featured in the collection's title (Kornélia Terner: *Az út szélén [At the edge of the road]*) describes all three stages: the uprooting of a Jewish rural household, the events at Auschwitz, and the emotional difficulties of readjusting to ordinary life under the communist system, as well as the wounds that would not heal and finally the outburst after the last political upturn in 1989.

Júlia Fodor-Wieg's piece *Ezekből az emlékekből fogok élni [I am going to live on these memories]* describes the Holocaust as it was experienced by upper-middle-class Jews. The other great Hungarian narrative on the Holocaust is the hunt for men in the jungle of Budapest. The focus of her story continues until her departure from Hungary in 1957. She tells of the demise of a plundered Jewish middle-class, a great and credible document of the will and capacity for life. All three pieces bring us closer to ordinary people who are also heroes.

Visual records of the destroyed world illustrate the book.

In the epilogue *The Holocaust as Narrative*, János Kőbányai, who collected the memoirs, analyses and typifies the Hungarian Holocaust as a historical and cultural phenomenon on the lines of Imre Kertész's "great narrative".



THE AUSCHWITZ PROTOCOL

The *Auschwitz Protocol* is a fundamental text of the last century. Two Auschwitz concentration camp inmates who escaped on April 1944 from the largest Nazi death factory desperately wanted to inform the world of the horrible atrocities in order to save the lives of hundreds of thousands. They presented the supreme anatomy of evil that they personally witnessed in full bloom.

Our publication is a collection of all the documents that reached the world from Auschwitz from 1942 to May 1944. The historian György Haraszti edited the documents and wrote the introductory essay. *The Burning Secret* is as exciting reading as any a mystery novel. With the help of the testimony of Auschwitz inmates the reader learns much about the family of Miklós Horthy, the inner workings of Zionist organizations as well as the politics of Roosevelt, Churchill and the Pope.

János Kőbányai's essay *The Auschwitz Gospel* asks the question of how the Auschwitz Memorandum could save only the Jews of Budapest? His investigating essay, which concludes the volume, is a dramatic presentation in a world historical setting. The secret was out and as a result many escaped death but since the news was not fully aired many more met their end in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Múlt es Jövő Publishing attempts to neutralize the „burning secret” that at times still haunts our lives. The truth will not resurrect our martyrs but it might aid those who survived and still live “without fate”.



Aladár Komlós – Béla Vihar

TALES ABOUT ELIAHU

Jewish Tales

We have compiled a volume of folktales from two collections published in 1941 and 1943, the first by Komlós, the second by Vihar. Both literary men were engaged in comprehensive research and prepared numerous translations in compiling the texts which include Talmudic tales as well as East-European folktales and legends.

The fairy-tale genre is absent these days from the broadening spectrum of Jewish literature. Childhood reading has enormous influence on spiritual development and can provide a kind of immunity against the passing on of prejudices.



István Nemes – Katalin Bódi

NÁDI, PACA, KÓC

The title of the book is in effect the names of the three main characters. A girl and a boy, Nádi and Paca, are children of the same age, who live in the same house and even go to school together.

Kóc is a dog, which one day just appears from nowhere and from that moment on accompanies the children everywhere. The ten cheerful stories are about the three of them, illustrated by Katalin Bódi with full-page color, and smaller black and white, drawings.

István Nemes – Anna Komjáthy

THE WARDROBE

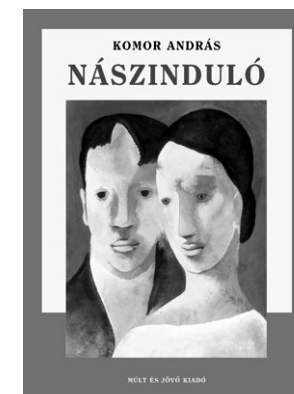
This special folding book is in the shape of a beautiful old wardrobe and we can turn the pages as if we were opening its doors. The pages take us backwards in time, and one after another the previous owners of the wardrobe reappear with the possessions that they used to store on the shelves and hangers and in the drawers. The book is the adventure story of an object.

István Nemes was born in Budapest in 1953. He taught philosophy until 1993 when he became a freelance literary writer. He writes essays, radio dramas, film scripts, novels, thrillers, children's books and lyrics.



ANDRÁS KOMOR

KOMOR, ANDRAS (Budapest, 1898–1944, Budapest). Writer, poet, reader and literary adviser. Counted among the third Nyugat [West] generation, a writer of refined style and French learning. He lived from and for literature as a professional reader (a post he held at the Franklin Társulat [Franklin Company]), as a critic (Nyugat; Esti Kurír [Evening Messenger]; Magyar Írás, [Hungarian Writing]), as a poet and author of prose works. He came from a family of famous architects (Marcell Komor) in whose house in Keleti Károly Street he lived and committed suicide in 1944 (with a favorite book in his hand as he drank his glass of poison) after having received his fifth call-up for forced labor service. His most important work is the novel, *Fischmann S. utódai*, [*Scions of S. Fischmann*] a panorama of Hungarian Jewish capitalism and assimilation viewed from a Jewish standpoint. Not since then has anything been written with such artistic integrity and unsparing self-reflection. (In its theme and approach, the novel is very similar to Jean Richard Bloch's novel, ...and Co.) The book has not only inner values; it is associated with a significant debate in literary history with focus on the state and nature of Jewish literature, prompted by Zsigmond Móricz's opening article, "Zsidó lélek az irodalomban," [*Jewish Soul in Literature*], (Nyugat, 1930), that was followed by several responses. (Aladár Schöpflin, "Válasz Móricz Zsigmond cikkére," [*Response to Zsigmond Moricz's Article*], Nyugat, 1930; József Patai, "Móricz Zsigmond és a zsidó lélek," [*Zsigmond Móricz and the Jewish Soul*], Múlt és Jövő, 1930; Gyula Illyés, "Fischmann S. utódai, Komor András regénye," [*Scions of S. Fischmann, Andras Komor's novel*], Iránytűvel, [With a Compass], 1975; Pál Vidor, "Zsidó lélek az irodalomban," [*Jewish Soul in Literature*], Magyar Zsidó Szemle, [Hungarian Jewish Review], 1931. Such an exchange of views about the essence of Jewish literature-no doubt because of a lack of qualified participants-has not taken place since then.

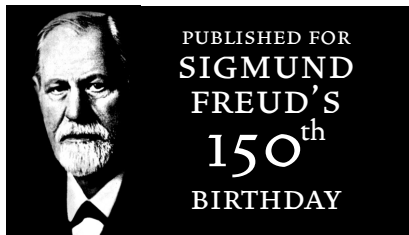


Komor was active not only as a writer but also as a theoretician. In 1935 he conducted a three-part lecture series at the Budapest Jewish Community's Free University, under the title *Zsidó problémák a modern magyar irodalomban* [*Jewish Problems in Modern Hungarian Literature*]; the text of the lectures appeared in the appendix of the second edition of Komor's novel, with notes by Petra Török, (Múlt és Jövő, 1998).

Andras Komor's *Wedding March* is a sequel to the author's very successful novel, *Scions of Fischmann S.* that, in its time, was a cause célèbre; it is a sociologically authentic depiction of the dynamics of Jewish family life both in Budapest and in the countryside in the 1920s and 1930s. This time, against the background of the sharply delineated larger family tableau, Komor chose to highlight the story of a couple's relationship. Beyond the richly detailed sociological descriptions, the novel is also the minutely observed and finely analyzed drama of non-dramatic everyday life; the exposure and examination of a bond that, in the absence of love, is based on interdependence. The relationship is driven neither by pure personal interests nor by great human ideals or the need for self-realization.

Society is built on its tension-filled but reliable immobility and on unalterable economic and sexual compromises. This solid base gives birth to continuity as well: the child, the patterns of behavior, and tradition. With a keen critical sense, irony, and psychological insight, Komor manages to unfold the banal drama whose typical calmness is most peculiar, precisely because this commonplace relationship, portrayed but not elevated to the level of art, retains its value across the ages.

Other works by András Komor: *Imádság tavaszi napsütésben*, [*Prayer in Spring Sunshine*], 1922 (poems); *Állomás*, [*Station*], 1925 (poems); *Jane and Johnny*, 1928 (novel); *R.T.* 1934 (novel); *A varázsló*, [*The Magician*], 1937 (novel). Several more novels are still in the archives of OSZK.



Ágnes Heller

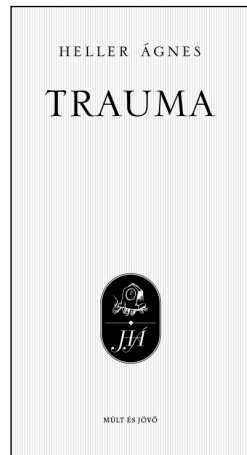
TRAUMA

It is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Freud that provided an opportunity to present in a single volume these essays that were written over a 15 year period. Of the Freudian legacy the great philosopher of our time is interested in the problem of trauma, although naturally not as an appraiser of Freud's work, which is not her profession. The concept of trauma discovered by psychology is incorporated by Ágnes Heller into her thinking in order to describe and transform into philosophical problems the characterization of the stages of human development. The concept of trauma is connected in many dimensions with the tragic chosen status and fate of the Jewish people. The basic character of the Jewish people is formed by such an ancient trauma and its resolution, as Freud described in his last major work, Moses and Monotheism. Her work, the first analysis of the collection addresses this matter. The holocaust trauma of the 20th century – the apocalyptic end-game of the trauma phenomenon that remains achingly relevant on account of its irresolute nature – made this burning wound to become the problem of the whole of human civilization. (It is for this reason that the genre closest to psychology – the analysis of approaching literature – is included here in which Ágnes Heller examines the self-reflective autobiography of Imre Kertész.

Circumscribing trauma is the first step toward addressing or incorporating it into culture. In addition to cultural historical analysis of trauma, Ágnes Heller also creates the philosophical definition of the seemingly ordinary concept of shame and evil and by these concepts and her though forming work she facilitates the prospects for healing. In order that one may defeat the evil residing within, to conquer the shame of the trauma suffered, and thereby emerge victorious and make life livable for oneself and the world.

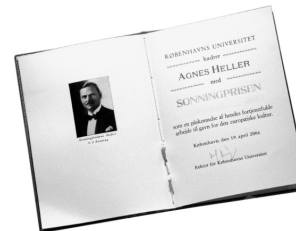
CONTENTS

The Shame of Trauma, the Trauma of Shame
 The book of K (on the autobiography of Imre Kertész)
 On the Freud exhibition in The Jewish Museum of Berlin
 Freud's Moses – reflections on a debate
 On the evil, radical evil, historical evil



Ágnes Heller

PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS



Following numerous articles and essays, Ágnes Heller has written what is arguably (or without doubt, according to her close circle of colleagues and friends) her best book. What is for certain, however, that this book of hers will appeal to the largest audience yet given that the stories of the Bible are the basic texts of Judaism and Christianity, from a religious and cultural perspective as well. This is so given that the Book of Genesis sets the stage, not just for the whole of the Bible but also for the foundation of our civilization, its values and directions, and also determines its eventual course.

This fortuitous or rather intended choice of universal theme is also a grand summation of a philosophical oeuvre. The style and structure of the book elegantly harmonizes the university professor ("Philosophy is a discursive genre" Ágnes Heller states) and the richly entertaining, indeed humorous essayist, the historian of philosophy, the debater engaged in discussions on equal terms with famed predecessors and her contemporaries, the ethical and aesthetic thinker of two thousand years.

The book commences with an analysis of the various interpretive possibilities of the Bible (religious, literary, mystical philosophical) and then proceeds in a journey that examines Genesis interpretations of such fellow travelers as Saint Augustine, Maimonides, Master Eckhart, Kant, Kierkegaard, Buber, Walter Benjamin and Paul Ricoeur before arriving at her own interpretation. Meanwhile naturally, as the leitmotif of a symphony, we experience this intellectual adventure spanning two millennia sharing Ágnes Heller thoughts.

"Why did I choose the topic of the philosophical interpretation of Genesis?" Ágnes Heller poses the question. "Perhaps because I enjoy holding the Bible in my hand and reading it always fills me with joy. And perhaps also because I admire the ability of great interpreters to combine courage and humility in an enjoyable manner. Finally, also because thinking about these texts provides a way out of the "just now" infatuation of our age since everything that is discussed here points beyond temporality. The very ancient is very present and the very current is very ancient.

CONTENTS

- Chapter 1. The various possibilities to read the Bible
- Chapter 2. Augustin on Time and the hereditary sin
- Chapter 3. Maimonides on „zelem”, the faculty of discrimination and the possible versions of creation
- Chapter 4. Master Eckhart on macrocosmos and microcosmos, on the name and the face
- Chapter 5. The two Adam of Kant. Adam phenomenon, Adam nuomenon
- Chapter 6. Kierkegaard on the teleological suspension of the ethical and on anxiety
- Chapter 7. Martin Buber's reading of the Bible after Nietzsche
- Chapter 8. Walter Benjamin on the word and on the name
- Chapter 9. Paul Ricoeur on the strategy and the spirit of the Biblical narrative
- Chapter 10. Here I am
Postscript



Agnes Heller

SAMSON

Eros and Thanatos in the Book of Judges

Agnes Heller has directed her attention to the Bible. In her previous book (*Here I am: A Philosophical Interpretation of the Genesis*) she grappled with the major questions of the Book of Genesis, that is, the beginnings of existence. After providing an overview of the various readings of some of the most significant authors in philosophical history, by way of conclusion she presented the readers with her own interpretation.

In this book on Samson, she focuses on the hero's peculiar dramatic figure and love story. Even though Agnes Heller's approach is that of the philosopher, in this instance she chooses to unfold the various interpretations of the hero's complex character and network of relationships through an analysis of artistic renditions. As she proceeds among the representations of Samson in the respective art forms, we learn a lot about the genres themselves, although from a philosophical perspective. In fine arts, while pinpointing Rembrandt's series of paintings, she does not fail to mention other outstanding pieces of sculpture and artwork. Among literary interpretations, Milton's drama takes the leading role but Felix Salten's, and even David Grossmann's, Samson renditions also feature in Heller's analysis. In music, she is most impressed by Handel's oratorio, but also does justice to Saint Sæens's opera *Samson and Delilah*.

Heller's book is yet another playful intellectual adventure by one of the major thinkers of our age. It is not academic philosophy, nor is it theology (except its methods) but rather a personal contemplation of conflicts of love and God. There is hardly any thinking human being who would not feel personally touched by these questions.



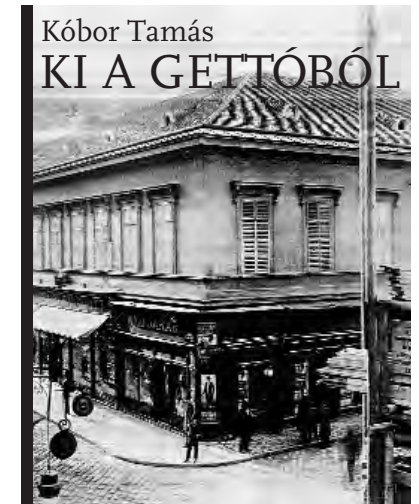
Tamás Kóbor

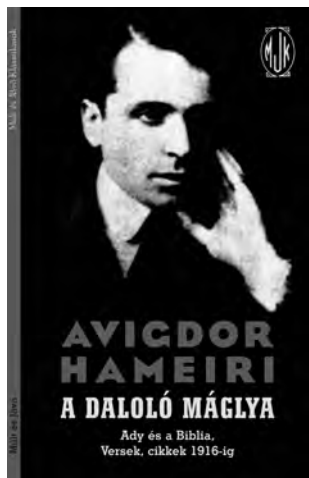
OUT OF THE GHETTO

The great series of novels of Tamás Kóbor *Out of the Ghetto* (and its sequel *Cinderella, her Ladyship*) are the first social representations of the Hungarian Jewry written with high literary standards. (1902–1911) Kóbor himself belongs to the first generation of Hungarian Jewish writers, thus can be considered an originator of the so-called urban or city literature. The titles of his novels *Asphalt*, *Work*, *Budapest* mark this aspiration.

The exceptional value of *Out of the Ghetto* is its being a city novel besides being a family saga. Budapest becoming a metropolitan and the fate of the Jewry freshly finding a home there is one and the same course, presuming each other. In this work an astute sociologist, and a critic of early capitalism as he was, Tamás Kóbor becomes a universal, great artist who describes sociological processes with deep-sighted knowledge of human character and compassionate lyricism.

The book is a first volume of Múlt és Jövő's new series *Hungarian Jewish Narrative*.





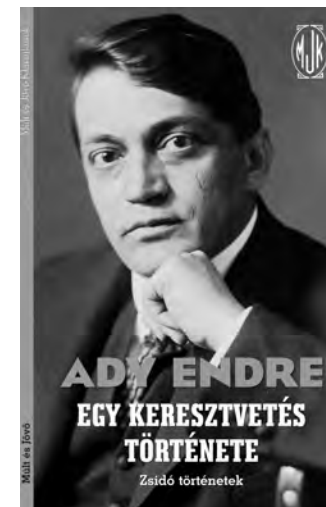
Avigdor Hameiri

THE CHANTING PYRE

It is quite uncommon for a Hungarian poet to become a classic of another country, language or culture; but not so for Avigdor Meiri who, next to Bialik and Chernikovsky, is one of the classics of modern Hebrew literature. *The Chanting Pyre*, his autobiography written in Hungarian, describes the Hungarian stage of Hameiri's journey from a small sub-Carpathian village through yeshivas and the Rabbinical Seminary to the Zionist movement and the Hebrew culture of Budapest. The other main thread in his biography is the friendship with, and influence of, Ady and a Zionist perspective on his works and person. Numerous anecdotes and documents relating to Ady are revealed to the Hungarian public for the first time here.

The appendix to the book contains the author's essay entitled 'Ady and the Bible' (1912), which Ady himself valued highly, and Zionist articles written by Hameiri in Hungarian before 1916 as well as his poems dating from the same period which he himself translated into Hungarian.

The figure and Hungarian patriotism of Hameiri are analysed by Tel-Aviv University researcher Alon Rachamimov within the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In his afterword, János Kőbányai places the beginnings of Hameiri's literary career in the context of a unique Hungarian Hebrew culture and the emerging Zionist movement and its press.

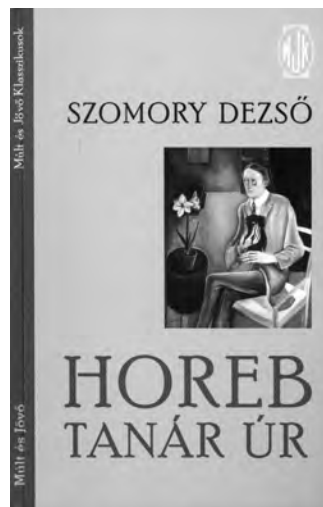


Endre Ady

A STORY OF CROSSING ONESELF Jewish Stories

Endre Ady (1877–1919) is the greatest poet of modern Hungarian literature. *The poet*. Since modernisation in Hungary went hand in hand with the *magyarization* of Jewry and their assimilation into Hungarian society, Endre Ady's fruitful relations with the Jews and his love-hate emotions had a major impact on both his literary and private life. This relationship is more than the story of a great personality: it is, in fact, the collective narrative of the pre-World War I progressive generation, vibrating with all its tensions, intimacies and controversies. The vivid depiction of this network of relationships constituted a significant part of Ady's poetic prose. This compilation is like an unwritten novel, supplemented by the poet's brilliant piece on the relationship between Hungarians and Jews. The essays of the appendix further refine Ady's multicoloured Jewish story – that unwritten narrative recorded by intellectual history.

Whoever is interested in the birth of Hungarian modernity and the roots of its tragedy culminating in the Holocaust and inseparable from that modernity, will be presented by the Ady legendry with a decisive portrayal of this fruitful but at the same time hopeless 'love marriage'.



Dezső Szomory

PROFESSOR HOREB

Professor Horeb (Horeb tanárúr) is the last of Dezső Szomory's major prose works. It consists of a novella and a wreath of short stories. The novella about a colleague who compensates for his lack of talent by gainsaying his Jewishness and trying to steal Horeb's wife is connected to the short stories by the main character. Kneaded together from people the author knew and respected, namely, Ignác Goldziher, Ármin Vámbéry and Ernst Renan, peppered with a dose of the author's own imagination, Professor Horeb is an Orientalist and ardent researcher of the ancient history of South-Arabia, specifically, the story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. (Szomory wrote a drama on the subject that appeared only after his death, and as his diary-like note at the end of the book indicates, he himself was fascinated by the legendary love story.)

Professor Horeb, whose name embodies universal Jewishness (Moses received the Tablets of the Commandments on top of Mt. Horeb) and who is denied tenure at his university because of his Jewish origin, speaks for the author, and what he says contains all the hard-earned, mature wisdom, philosophy, and admirable erudition to help us understand his situation. The book was published in 1937 and has not been reprinted since, and yet it is in this work that the art nouveau quality of the author's prose is most closely wedded in theme and sensuous quality to the Orientalism that had inspired it.



"Not everyone born is born into the world," Szomory says in his book, *Professor Horeb* (Horeb tanár úr).

Imre Kertész, 2006

His method? He thrusts himself at a memory, forces his way in, then fervently, avidly, sucks out all the honey. It's very like Proust. His need to express himself verges on the manic. Proust is more intellectual, a refined soul; Szomory is visceral, more like a poet.

And what impressive familiarity with the secret of writing! These confessions are his most touching and spectacular. They are honest because their author admits that his worldview is centered on art. I am also moved by the fact that at every turn he adulates and idolizes himself. I couldn't agree with him more. Were he to say more of the same, I'd still underwrite it.

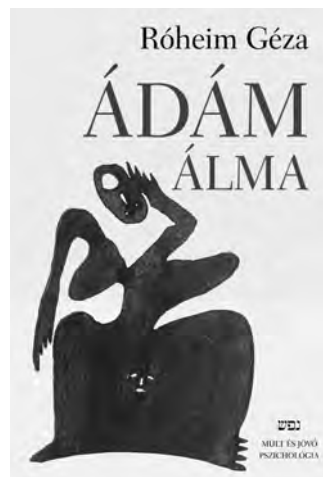
Dezső Kosztolányi, 1927

A Szomory sentence is not logical. From beginning to end (which is often at a great remove), it promises a thousand surprises. He does not wish to communicate ideas but some archetypal complex that – along with all its visceral attributes and original rhythm – is contained in his consciousness before the sentence is born. He does not communicate the substance within with recourse to shared conceptual symbols; rather, he wants the thing striving for expression to materialize through the music, the tonality, the affective shade of the adjectives, the vibration of the succession of words in the sentence. Concrete writing over the abstract, the not-speaking about something, the trans-substantiation of something through the material of language.

Antal Szerb, 1929

This extravagant cornucopia of his expressive faculties holds the reader in thrall. At every turn I am geared for another surprise. I greet images, adjectives, huge bulks of images, with a shout of admiration as they crowd in on each other in profusion, pushing each other out of the way, as if their creator were afraid he might not be able to present his boundless choices, anxious, lest he leave something out.

Sándor Márai, 1929



Géza Róheim

ADAM'S DREAM

SELECTION FROM THE WRITINGS OF GÉZA RÓHEIM

About the author: Géza Róheim (Budapest, 12. 09. 1891–New York, 7. 06. 1953): ethnologist, psychoanalyst. He got acquainted with psychoanalysis at the universities in Lipcse and Berlin, in 1914 he won doctorate degree in geography in Budapest. He worked at the Ethnological Department of the Hungarian Ethnological Museum. In 1921 he won the Sigmund Freud Prize. In 1928–31 he travelled to French-Somalia, Mid-Australia, Melanesia and to the Juma Indians of Arizona for collecting ethnographic material. In 1938–39 he worked at the State Hospital of Worcester, in 1939 he began private praxis in New York. In 1947 he did his research between the Nawajo Indians. His searching work starting out from the topic of the believes and customs of Hungarian people (*Magyar néphit és népszokások*, Bp., 1925) was widened to the universal ethnological examination of these very questions. He strived for revealing the historical stratas of the folk-culture. In his writings he interpreted the authentic folk material with psychoanalytical approach. He was the founder of ethnopschoanalysis and psychoanalytical anthropology.

About the book: Róheim is the second most read and to most languages translated Hungarian scientist. However, after 1945 besides the

reprint of his popular ethnographic work (*A csurunga népe*) there were only three volumes published in Hungarian language. The planned new book is a selection from his studies written in English and German, which have never been published in Hungarian; first of all from the writings on the origin and function of culture, on animism, on magic and on the divine king. The studies on Jewish religion and mythology get special emphasis in the volume. (The title of the book is from one of the studies of Róheim: *The Panic of the Gods*.)

Contents:

Psychoanalysis and Anthropology
 The Panic of the Gods (a selection)
 The Tragedy of Man
 Ethnologie und Völkerpsychologie
 The Garden of Eden
 Animism, Magic and the Divine King (a selection)
 Mondmythologie und Mondreligion. Eine Psychoanalytische Studie

Target audience, hoped use: The planned Róheim book may rely on the interest not only of the intellectuals in general, but of the students and lecturers in the field of psychology, psychoanalysis, anthropology, ethnology, philosophy, teology and literature. Moreover, it is also a redemption of an old dept for the history of the Hungarian science.

Size: 20 sheets

Editor: Hárs György Péter

Translators: Friedrich Melinda, Friedrich Tímea, György Péter Hárs



THE SPIRIT OF ISRAEL TODAY

Interviews by János Kőbányai

This volume, both in its title and in its several common protagonists, recalls another earlier interview collection of mine – *The Jewish Spirit Today* –, published in 1999.

And the volume could also recall two of my earlier works – *The Jerusalem Decade* and *The Jerusalem Millennium*, because the interviews are attached precisely to the same decade of events in Israel as that of the narrative of the present work.

The history begins in 2000 with the second anniversary of the peace and the resultant expectation of miracles, but with the intifada breaking out instead and its consequences can be felt even today. Throughout the dialogues it is Israeli-Arab relations as well as the contemplation of global perspectives from such a unique place that became the leitmotiv of the work.

The interviews were prepared between 2001 and 2010 on behalf of the journal *Múlt és Jövő* – apart from those with Hungarians, all were conducted in Hebrew, which in comparison with the previous volume, provided the opportunity for more in-depth discussions.

The interview questions are built up on the framework of a historical decade in Israeli and Jewish culture (one ancient and the other barely half a century old, now in ferment), a decade which began with dreams but ended up in bloody waves of terror escalating into wars; with our interviewees we examined the problems, searched for solutions, and sought to establish some sort of synthesis.

We pointedly investigated what the Hungarian experience might have brought or infused into this old-new highly pulsating culture unfolding before our eyes.

And in addition, we also got acquainted with interesting portraits of artists and scientists, learned how their careers developed, and from what background their talents emerged that has made them representative of this ancient-new culture.

The interviewees are Slomo Avineri, social scientist, Aharon Appelfeld, writer (his theme is the Holocaust; the interview took place in 2002, on the occasion of his friend Imre Kertész receiving the Nobel Prize), Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, one of the first scholars to deal with the subject of Holocaust literature, A. B. Jehosua, writer, André Hajdu, musician, Itamar Jaoz-Keszt, poet and the only first rate translator from Hungarian into Hebrew, Mira Zakai, world-famous singer and professor of ethnomusicology (and granddaughter of József Patai), Menashe Kadishmann, world-renowned sculptor and painter.

In today's historical situation in Hungary – and this hardly needs to be described – it is of paramount importance that we should get a credible first-hand account of Israeli intellectual life from its high ranking representatives, to illustrate with what sorts of questions of destiny the local intellectual life must do battle. What answers have they formulated for problems that are of concern to the whole world?



Ágnes Heller

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL TODAY

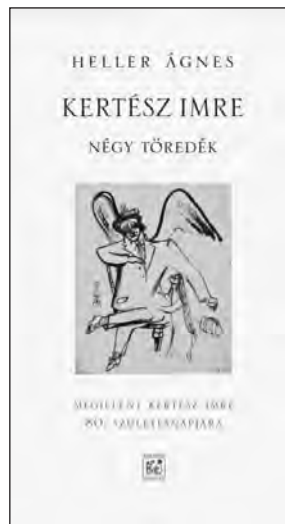
In her latest book Ágnes Heller picks up at a point where, one of the most celebrated (and most translated) works of her master, Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel* of 1937 (English translation 1962), left off. How are historical novels written nowadays in the wake of the experiences of the Holocaust and the Gulag? What sort of structural damage and changes in Weltanschauung have taken place since?—that is the question Heller asks. The material from which this timely study for drawing conclusions and set up a new system is the huge body of novels which came into existence in the wake of, and in many respects on the model of, Umberto Eco's 1980 first novel, *Il nome della rosa*, appeared in many other languages (The Name of the Rose, 1983). Reflections of the epoch-making changes in human history—the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, the brief splendor of the Renaissance, the birth of capitalism— and analyses of in new historical (detective) novels a particular world: the world of a historical present of which we are contemporaries and (if we have time to spare) observers.

The Historical Novel Today is an integral part along several strands with Ágnes Heller's previous oeuvre and can be read as a broad-ranging essay, a monograph, and a personal testament.

The book should be seen as compulsory reading for students of literature and philosophy, a work that leads over into the 21st century, but it is also addressed to anyone who read historical novels, at the end of the Gutenberg galaxy, not just for amusement but those who pose questions to themselves while reading; that is to say, they enter into a dialogue with the writer and the characters in order to unravel from the tissue of the novel (and recognise) themselves.

WORKS DISCUSSED BY ÁGNES HELLER IN THE *HISTORICAL NOVEL TODAY*

- Blake, Richard: *Conspiracies of Rome* (2008)
 Cannon, James: *Apostle Paul* (2005)
 Dunant, Sara: *The Birth of Venus* (2004)
 Dübell, Richard: *Eine Messe für die Medici* ('A Mass for the Medicis', 2002)
 Harris Robert: *Pompeii* (2003); *Imperium* (2008)
 Kalogridis, Jeanne: *I, Mona Lisa* (2006)
 Liss, David: *A Conspiracy of Paper* (2000); *The Coffee Trader* (2003); *A Spectacle of Corruption* (2004)
 Lohner, Alexander: *Die Jüdin von Trient* ('The Jewess of Trient', 2004)
 Monaldi, Rita –Sorti, Francesco: *Imprimatura* (2002); English translation: *Imprimatur*, (2009)
 Pearl, Matthew: *The Dante Club* (2003); *The Poe Shadow* (2007)
 Pears, Iain: *An Instance of the Fingerpost* (1997); *The Dream of Scipio* (2002)
 Prange, Peter: *Die Philosophin* (2003; English translation: *The Philosopher's Kiss*, 2011)
 Rey, Pascale: *Le Maître des boussoles* ('The Master of the Compasses', 2004)
 Saylor, Steven: *Roma Sub Rosa*-cycle: *Roman Blood* (1991); *Catiline's Riddle* (1993)
 The Venus Throw (1995) [not short-story collection *The House of the Vestals* (1997)];
 A Murder on the Appian Way (1996)
 Rubicon (1999); and *The Triumph of Caesar* (2008) out of the succeeding four titles
 [*Last Seen in Massilia* (2000); *A Mist of Prophecies* (2002); *The Judgment of Caesar*
 (2004); *The Triumph of Caesar* (2008)].
 Sierra, Javier: *The Secret Supper* (2004)
 Spiró, György: *Fogság* ['Captivity'] (2005)
 Zimler, Richard: *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon* (2000)



Ágnes Heller

IMRE KERTÉSZ – FOUR FRAGMENTS

When Ágnes Heller, the renowned philosopher, was first asked, in 1994, to write for *Múlt és Jövő* about Imre Kertész, then still a little known Hungarian writer, and his essay on ‘The Holocaust as Culture’, and she agreed the thought did run through the editor’s head, somewhat facetiously, that a reception of that quality in itself was worth a Nobel Prize. Many stranger stray thoughts come true, though! Since October 2002, however, a simple metaphor of being priceless does not adequately express Ágnes Heller’s admiration and love.

She herself is a survivor of the holocaust—in real-life, existential terms as well as mentally. Indeed, she is part of the very same sociological stratum: the Hungarian Jewish intelligentsia who had to construct their personality, their whole life’s work, from their experience of the holocaust and find their way in the culture of Hungary and, through that, the wider world. That is why Heller’s efforts throughout her career have been dominated by the central question of how could the holocaust have happened? How did men, and European culture, reach the impasse of Auschwitz? As she has admitted more than once before: that is why she chose ethics as her speciality in the field of philosophy.

That may well also explain why she was so ready and productive a partner in spreading the acceptance and appreciation of Imre Kertész, and reflecting on his art and thoughts.

The immediate pretext for this special issue was given by the very first excerpt from Imre Kertész’s latest novel, *A végső kocma – The Last Inn*, so to say—that he has graciously permitted *Múlt és Jövő* to publish. Ágnes Heller has tacked on to this a sensitive of her own response to it, in which she ruminates on Kertész’s eternal themes of life and death as he nears his 80th birthday, and she finally sees an ideal opportunity to write about a figure whom she first thought a lot about back in 1948: Lot, the true man, and arguably the first intellectual on Earth.

With that essay, and her response to a shared age and set of problems, Ágnes Heller, who incidentally also celebrated her 80th birthday a few months ago, also encapsulates what she has said and written about Imre Kertész over what is now two decades.

In this issue, apart from a disquisition of hers boy the holocaust as culture, space is also given to her major aesthetic and philosophic (ethical) analysis of Kertész’s first novel *Sorstalanság* (published in English as *Fatelessness*). In her reflections on Kertész’s autobiographical “fiction” *K. dosszié* (*The File on K*)—published in Hungarian and German three years ago, in 2006. But not yet in English translation—she summarises his life in the light of the trauma that the holocaust represents. In doing so, she lists and examines the possible modes of behaviour that are open to anyone who seeks to deal with that trauma in life—in the ordinary daily life as well as in art.

Published in honour of Imre Kertész’s 80th birthday



Ágnes Heller

THE HISTORY OF MY PHILOSOPHY

Ágnes Heller does not leave anything up to chance, nor to other people. In this book, published on occasion of her 80th birthday, she expounds, as an explorer and a historian of philosophy, the immense work product of a life – a life that happens to be her own. Who would dare to question the exceptional authenticity of someone whose viewpoint and reflections stand closest to the work discussed? It speaks volumes of Ágnes Heller’s boldness as a thinker that she managed to re-read and re-live her own work from a distance, and with critical attitude. This state of detachment allowed her to appraise the current value of her own work with unyielding rigor. (And many of her articles and books proved not stand the test of such scrutiny; although in a way even the wrong paths turned out to lead forward.) The book is also a story of the great figures of philosophy, like Hannah Arendt, Foucault, Derrida, Habermas, Rorty, and many others, who influenced her through their work or person.

In other words, this is a philosophical novel; a novel that is devoid of any biographical facts and revolves solely around the evolution of thought.

This “Novel of Education” comprises of four chapters – or pillars –; each relating the story of a 15-year period. First, the years of “maturation”, during which the protagonist discovers and first puts to test her natural skills – in the workshop of the great maestro, George Lukács. Then the “Years of Dialogue” spent with joint work in the collective of the Budapesti (Lukács) school. This is followed by the “Years of Construction and Intervention”, the period during which her philosophical regime took shape, a time when she was cursed – or blessed – to work in complete solitude in her attempt to “deconstruct” all that had happened to her until that stage, including her readings and the evolution of thinking. In the meantime, based on their first hand experience of Socialism, she – and her husband, Ferenc Fehér – gave a powerful critique of all leftist regimes. Their active intervention into the course of events by the publication of a series of books making use of the methods of political science, sociology and philosophy contributed to the success of the “velvet revolutions” sweeping through Central-Eastern Europe. The last chapter, “Years of Wandering”, covering the period following the era of great philosophical and (ethical) construction and leading up to our very present, takes stock of Ms. Heller’s manifold intellectual excursions into the field of literary theory and “biblical philosophy”. Liberated from the burden of the great construction, now she was free to rejoice in her brilliant talents. Already present here is a gleam of the themes and directions of the forthcoming stage of her life. We wish her good luck and health for this – and that she live for 120 years!