

*Ágnes Kapitány  
and  
Gábor Kapitány*

*SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS  
OF  
EVERYDAY CULTURE*



---

*Institute of Sociology • Centre for Social Sciences • Hungarian Academy of Sciences*

*Magyar Tudományos Akadémia • Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont • Szociológiai Intézet*

ÁGNES KAPITÁNY AND GÁBOR KAPITÁNY

SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS OF EVERYDAY CULTURE

---

© Ágnes Kapitány, Gábor Kapitány

*Series editor*

Csaba Dupcsik

ISSN 2063-2258

ISBN 978-963-8302-43-4

Responsible for publishing

the Director of the Institute for Sociology, CSS HAS

Institute for Sociology, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

*Budapest 2012*

Studies in Sociology (Institute for Sociology, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

Szociológiai tanulmányok (MTA Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont Szociológiai Intézet)

2012/2

## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4
Changing World-Views in Hungary, 1945-1980 .....	7
Theses about „Kadarism” .....	18
System Change – Symbol Change in Hungary, 1989–1996 .....	33
Visual Symbols of System Change in Hungary .....	44
Cultural Patterns of Museum Guides – Portraits of a Recent Past (National Museum, House of Terror) . . .	54
Symbols and Communication of Values in the Accession to the EU (Hungary) .....	91
Symbols and Values of the EP Election Campaign (Hungary, 2009) .....	113
Symbols of Hungarian National Identity .....	125
Problems of Individualisation in Everyday Culture of Eastern Europe .....	169
Globalisation and Mode of Habitation in Hungary .....	182
To the Pragmatic of Symbols. The Interiorisation of Social Events and Facts by Means of Symbols .....	196
Did the Gods Go Crazy? Emergence and Symbols (A Few Laws in the Symbolism of Objects) .....	202
A New Approach to the Analysis of Motivation .....	221



Agnes Kapitany (DSc) and Gabor Kapitany (DSc) are Doctors of Hungarian Academy of Sciences, scientific advisers of Research Institute of Sociology (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) and full professors of Moholy Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest (MOME).

They are sociologists, cultural anthropologists and semioticians. Their main research fields are visual anthropology, social anthropology, sociology of values, cultural studies and social theory.

They published 20 books and more than 100 articles in Hungarian, English, French and German.

## **Introduction**

This book contains the authors' selected works published in English. The greater part of these articles deal with the fields of sociology of knowledge and socio-semiotics. There are five separate thematic blocks of these texts. Analyses of the (radical) political changes of the last few decades constitute the first chapter. The authors focused their attention mostly on the changes of values and symbols of everyday life, the political campaigns (or institutions of "collective memory" such as museums). In the second group of articles they analyzed different symbols of everyday life, and their changing process. In the next block the paper elaborates on national symbols of everyday life. In the fourth block there are two theoretical articles from the point of view of socio-semiotics. The appendix of this book (the fifth part) contains a longer text: the summary of a social-psychological method, developed by the authors, which was presented at the II European Congress of Psychology (1991). (This method was published in two books in Hungary, and it is part of the curriculum at doctoral schools).

## First publications

Changing World-Views in Hungary, 1945–1980	<i>Journal of Popular Culture</i> (1995) vol. 29, 2, Fall pp. 33–43.
Some Theses about „Kadarism”	<i>Eszmélet/Consciousness</i> (1997), November, Special Issue, pp. 117–138.
System change – symbol change in Hungary, 1989-1996	Pribersky, A. – Unfried, B. (Hgs.) (1998). <i>Symbole und Rituale des Politischen: Ost- und Westeuropa im Vergleich</i> (“Historisch-Antropologische Studien”). Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang Verlag, pp. 159–174.
Visual symbols of system change in Hungary	Tarasti, E. (ed.) (2009) <i>Communication: Understanding/Misunderstanding</i> . Imatra – Helsinki: International Semiotics Institute – Semiotic Society of Finland, pp. 695–706.
Museum guides – portraits of a recent past (National Museum, House of Terror)	Wahnich, S. – Lašticová, B. – Findor, A. (eds.) (2008) <i>Politics of Collective Memory (Cultural Patterns of Commemorative Practices in Post-War Europe)</i> . <i>Cultural Patterns of Politics, Volume I</i> . Wien – Berlin: LIT Verlag, pp. 123–141.
Symbols and Communication of Values in the Accession to the EU (Hungary)	<i>Semiotica</i> (2006) Vol. 159. 1:4
Symbols and values of EP-election campaign (Hungary, 2009)	Gyárfasová, O. (ed.) (2012) <i>Cultural Patterns of Commemorative Practices in Post-War Europe</i> . In print.
Symbols of Hungarian National Identity	<i>Magyarságszimbólumok</i> (1999) Budapest: Európai Folklor Központ, pp. 263–300.
Problems of Individualisation in Everyday Culture of Eastern Europe	I. European Conference of Sociology (1992)
Globalisation and mode of habitation in Hungary	Törnquist-Plewa, B. – Stala, K. (eds.) (2011) <i>Cultural Transformations after Communism (Central and Eastern Europe in Focus)</i> . Lund: Nordic Academic Press, pp. 59–81.
To the Pragmatic of Symbols. The Interiorisation of Social Events and Facts by Means of Symbols	Tarasti, E. (ed.) (2009) <i>Communication: Understanding/Misunderstanding</i> . Imatra – Helsinki: International Semiotics Institute – Semiotic Society of Finland, pp. 686–694.
Emergence and Symbols. Did the gods go crazy? Emergence and symbols (a few laws in the symbolism of objects)	Szívós, M. – Kroó, K. (eds.) (2008) „Semiotic perspective on emergence”. Special issue of <i>Semiotica</i> , 170, June, pp. 97–123.
A New Approach to the Analysis of Motivation	II. European Congress of Psychology, 1991.

For those who are interested in historical movements, and especially in the formation of social consciousness, the radical transformation taking place in Eastern and Central Europe provides an ideal subject for analysis. Hungary is an especially good subject for such an examination because many changes that are now occurring in Eastern Europe, already occurred in the last decades in Hungary. In this study, we describe the world-view of a given period by summing up the various parts of its manifestations in Hungarian popular culture. More specifically, we have done a content analysis of interviews made in the countryside, urban folklore, daily fashions, popular literature, films, popular songs, jokes and anecdotes, social science writings, debates and advertisements. Scandals deserve special attention, for these always signify the main confrontation points between the old and the new. We look for the most determining relations of a given period, the fundamental values and categories in the world-view of state socialism between 1945 and 1990. We have divided the 45 years of state socialism into three, clearly distinguishable sub-periods: the period of the „long fifties” (1945-62), the period of the „long sixties” (1953/71/72), and the crisis period of the seventies and eighties. The merging periods also indicate that the formation of the corresponding world-views is rarely bound to momentary changes, thus the features of the new world-view can show its strikingly marked characteristics already under the domination of the old era.

### WORLD-VIEW OF THE FIFTIES

*We build a new world, though our stomach is empty.*

(Hungarian text of John Brown's ballad – from the Fifties)

The world-view of the 1950s was characterized by the ideology of social system changes; the essence of this world-view was the sharp, polar contrasts of the „new world” (socialism) and of the old „order” (capitalism, the old feudalism, or, in some cases, fascism). At the beginning of the period, the contrast was made by using the categories of the revolution and, later, of the cold war.

In contrasting the „old” and the „new,” the idea of development gets a prominent role in this world-view: „progress,” „development,” „historical change,” and „change of destiny” are the key categories of the age and the concept of linear development is assumed. The other basic element of this concept is struggle or fighting. One must struggle, indeed battle for everything. Every result

is a victory; the building of a bridge is a „bridge-battle,” a meeting is a „muster of the army.” It is necessary to fight and struggle for the well-being of the people, the productiveness of industry, the results of harvest; teachers are fighting on the front of education. The base of all this is the class struggle against the class enemy, against the „regressive forces of the past” until the final victory.

An important element of this world-view is the image of the enemy. The „agents of imperialism,” the „enemies of the people,” the „wicked traitors,” the „bribeable opportunists,” the „undermining work of the reaction,” the „fat grabbing kulaks [farmers],” „bourgeois ideas”; the hand of the enemy is everywhere and in everything, down to the potato-beetle. A slogan from the fifties was, „Exterminate the Colorado beetle, the agent of American imperialism.” The world is seen as black-and-white, everything and everybody is either good or bad, progressive or reactionary, bourgeois or proletarian. Wars are of two sorts: just or unjust; dictatorships are white or red; science is progressive or reactionary pseudo-science; art is revolutionary or decadent. Class struggle reproduces this polarity. Changes happen by leaps and bounds.

Because everything is polarized, generalizations are of great importance. Individual phenomena are understood as the common denominator of some comprehensive category: they gain a „class content,” a special value „from the point of view of progress.” Individual behaviors are declared, for example, „Trotskyist,” „Buharinite,” „sectarian,” „revisionist” deviations, „fascist” provocations, or just the manifestations of „proletarian consciousness”—but always the manifestation of some general idea. As a result, principles and ideals are important qualifications of individual manifestations. „Principled” behavior, consistency of principles, and loyalty to one's principles become fundamental, even for practical decisions. The battles of principles in a polarized world are held together by the idea of revolution. The revolutionary is the ideal type of person and one seeks the revolutionary element in all relations of the world.

The revolutionary world-view is naturally future-oriented. In the happy, idyllic future all present conflicts will be resolved. The „communism in which our children will live” provides the fulfillment of human life and harmony. The children, as symbols of the future, become „our main treasure”; this „liberated youth” is the „custodian of Tomorrowland.” The future-oriented world-view is permeated by enthusiasm and optimism. Mentioning or even perceiving the shady side of life is seen as harmful decadence. This hurrah-optimism requires thinking in categories of perfection. The possibilities of

progress are delineated as limitless: „the limit is the starry sky,” „we don't know the word impossible,” „we don't stop halfway,” „we turn the whole world upside down,” „abolish finally the past,” „now away with all your superstitions,” „we'll change forthwith the old conditions,” „we are nothing, but we will be everything.” These slogans indicate the resurrection of romanticism, not only in the revolutionary resolution and in the contrasting of opposite poles, but also in the view of the Absolute. This appears not only in the ideal of perfection, but also in the requirement of exclusiveness. This society is the first just one; capitalism is the last form of class society; our people, our case, our peace, is invincible. The „ours” – according to Milton Rokeach's „closed mind” thinking – are splendid, while the enemies are infamous.

The linear principle of development and the ideal of the Absolute are united into a description of the world in which a determinist view of necessity prevails. In this view, the world is governed fundamentally by the social, economic, political, and material necessities. Consequently, the role of the individual is fundamentally the recognition and execution of „necessity.” The good executive is raised to the status of an ideal, faults of execution are scourged as the source of failures, and the main virtue is true service. Expressions of feudal relations become popular – like the „true servant,” „true son” – but the feudal lord is replaced by „the people,” „our case,” „the idea,” „the Motherland,” „the working class,” „the Party,” or „the future.” The individual executive's attention is always drawn to the possibilities of faults, and although he is „only one screw in the machine,” „a brick in the wall,” his negligence is presented as catastrophic. Unity is a very important ideal in this world-view. People are mobilized in the spirit of the battle: „proletarians of the world unite!”

However, since the given society by no means represents a united community from the representatives' view-point, the artificial creation of unity becomes a symbol for keeping a firm hand on power. If the creation of unity in the society – as in this case – is attempted from above or its establishment is set as an aim by a minority, this inevitably implies an enlightening, propagandistic, educative attitude. The masses, who are considered as children, are educated by the leaders, who are considered as parents and who lead them towards the truth. The educator blames and praises in order to strengthen the hierarchy of competence; each person's performance is supposed to be judged by somebody who stands above him. The judgments from above are indisputable, for example, as the „judgments of the people,” or the opinion of the „Party,” which are wiser than an individual.

The „heroes of work” are set as examples for society; among medals, the „orders of work” get a prominent role. Work becomes the means of raising the social state of the individual („in socialism distribution according to work prevails” and „who works will make success”) and the foundation of moral and ambition („work is a matter of honor and glory”). The emphasis on physical work often brings with it strong materialist and, what is more, so-called mechanical materialist tendencies in the preference for body over soul, existence over mind, physical work over intellectual work. This materialism, however, is emphatically asexual. The heroes of the age are robust and emphatically corporeal, but almost without any sexuality. Their physique is not for individual use but for community work efforts. In this period, quantitative views prevail which express the results of fruitfulness. Industry-oriented socialist societies with peasant roots and tormented by centuries-old peasant hungers, render their future-utopias by pictures of flourishing fields, ample fruits tumbling from trees, rich wheat fields and vine-stocks, well-laid tables, cornucopias.

The sources of the world-view of the 1950s were various. One part of this world-view entered Hungarian society as a mechanical adaptation of the Soviet model. Another part was the expression of the communist politics of power. A third part followed from the peculiarities of Hungarian society, because this yet semi-feudal society, independently from communist messianism, already contained elements of the black and white view, the cult of charismatic leaders, the principle of unity, and the prevalence of an enlightened intellectual attitude. Almost from the beginning, a contradiction and an inner split occurred in the principles of the world-view of the fifties: the same ideological contents were animating ideas for some people and ideological monstrosities for others. The contradictions became stronger as the classical Stalinist model of communism in Hungary led to a general socioeconomic crisis, because: 1) the accumulated reserves in the country, weakened from the war, quickly were exhausted; 2) its weaknesses were especially catastrophic in a primarily agricultural economy; 3) the energies of self-sacrifice could be abused in a society with a culture of relatively little individualism; and 4) the model was unable to adapt itself to the paradigm-change that happened in the leading industrial countries after the Second World War. This created a crisis in all socialist countries. The death of Stalin, however, made possible the revision of the structure symbolized by one-man power. The political reform led to a dramatic transformation of the world-view.

## WORLD-VIEW OF THE SIXTIES

*„Those who are not against us are with us”* (Gospel of Mark, 9:40)  
*instead of „Those who aren't with me, are against me”* (Gospel of Matthew, 12:30)  
(Slogan of Kádárism as a new idea after the old Stalinist slogan)

Important elements were inherited from the 1950s in the world-view of the 1960s, but on many points, they were formulated as an antithesis. The struggle, the polar opposition, remains, but this is no longer the organizing principle. The core of the new world-view becomes ensuring the viability of the system and the country that was identified with that system. The principle of unbroken linear progress is replaced by the ideal of organic evolution. This is also a principle of development, but one of slow, balanced progress with bends, in which the consideration of circumstances plays a role. Traditions and the preservation of values give a legitimacy of a sort to conservative behavior, as opposed to inorganic, violent interventions. The role of the human factor increases as ideas such as „socialism with a human face” and socialist humanism replace revolutionary restlessness. The importance of moral weighing increases; socialist morality becomes a favored theme of ideology and the Marxian alienation theory is „discovered.”

The black-and-white polarization dissolves. The search for an enemy decreases; the new formula is that the man who deviates from our own principles is not necessarily on the other side. The sharp front lines of the class-struggle are replaced by the representation of society as a coexistence of different strata in which attitudes differ, but which can be won over, on an individual basis to socialism. Concepts such as trust, social coexistence, and cooperation (instead of general will) are proclaimed. Instead of polarities, the principle of the middle is the ideal and this realistic policy finds its expression in the „struggle on two fronts,” where individuals should develop the ability to manoeuvre cautiously.

The relentlessness of totalizing laws is increasingly replaced by rules, the reverence for principles and ideas is replaced by reverence for facts, and, by the end of the period, a sort of positivism takes a major role in the sciences. The favored categories of the age are: knowledge of facts, a demand for historical authenticity, an emphasis on „real data.” On the one hand, this is an attempt to preserve the trustworthiness of the system despite the lies that become obvious. A slogan of the period is that there must be a return from Stalinism to the Leninist roots. On the

other hand, increased attention directed to facts is also a move by the government from the more ideological branches of science (philosophy of dialectical materialism, mythology of the working-class-movement, political economy) toward science built primarily on facts (sociology, statistics, descriptive historical science, applied economics) as well as in the arts, where works that „reveal reality” gain ground against propagandistic art.

As a consequence of all these changes, revolutionarism is almost completely ousted by the ideal of reformism. While reform means a reform of earlier ideas, it also means a limited opening towards non-socialist traditions and western bourgeois society. The policy of the Kádár regime attempts to realize the „positive” aims of the groups that had stood on both sides of the barricade in 1956.

Although the hurrah-optimism loses its credibility, the program of purifying still has moral reserves. Now the official culture admits the importance of the *hubris* of communist policy, and admits that the history of socialism itself was one of tragic collisions, disharmonies, and a struggle of contradictions. In all forms of art and history the importance of tragedies and catharsis is discovered. The common man becomes the hero of the age, in literature, in movie art, in the forms of documents, and attention shifts gradually from sudden changes of historical fortune towards daily life, the everyday. Philosophers turn from the species-being to the particularity of Man. When the mobilizing of the masses is given up, small communities gain a prominent role, instead of the great social unit, classes. As activities are relatively decentralized, social criticism increases and increasingly widening groups of intelligentsia are spiritually liberated, making a transition from the „agitator” role to the critical intellectual role. Many determining elements of the world-view are no longer born in the center, but are spread by the works of the critical intellectuals. While these are sometimes intended to be oppositional-critical, they occasionally become accepted officially.

The role and value of private life also increases as respect for the common man increases. The political character that dominated the previous world-view is retiring, and private life, individual success, and the family appear in art. This change in world-view is accompanied by a spectacular ideological debate about the habits of the petty bourgeoisie. In a compromise characteristic of the age, the reasons for petty bourgeois existence gain confirmation, although it should not be regarded as an ideal. This implies many important consequences. In the economy it means the legalizing of the private sector in agriculture, and, in a more limited sense, in small-scale industry,

in retail trade, and in the emerging of the second economy in almost all areas of services. The relation of production and distribution also turns as more emphasis is placed on distribution. The concepts of income, wages, and well-being enter the world-view of the period; scientific works examining peculiarities of redistribution become conspicuous. The sciences devote themselves to questions of life and the quality of life, entertainment, leisure, and feasts as the cultured spending of free time becomes an important topic.

The world-view becomes grossly materialistic as the determining role of material factors truly permeates general thinking. Against the previous denial of the role of consciousness, the moral elements of the human soul, of the psyche, is now increasingly recognized. Together with the increased role of the individual, the discovery of love and sexuality in art, rock 'n roll, and the beat generations' way of life enter the world previously characterized by an asexual prudishness. The ideal of quantity is unambiguously replaced by the ideal of quality – which is inseparable, both from the rehabilitation of the individual and from the central role of life standards. Increasingly, money and wealth become the measure of values; moreover, the object-world of consumer societies become the symbol of productiveness. The model of productiveness is no longer the fruitful field, but the shop window. The world-view of Kádárism is permeated by increasing recognition of the market economy. Many performances of Hungarian society, also known abroad, are significant expressions of this age: the hybrid model of economic coordination, created by the reform-minded economists as well as the films of Miklós Jancsó, Ferenc Kósa, István Szabó, or the later works of György Lukács and his school, all belonged to this period.

The world-view of the 1960s, of course, carried on many elements from the world-view of the fifties. In a modified form the principle of development remained, as did the polar contrast between socialism and capitalism; beside the ideal of quality, the ideal of quantitative growth lived on; the declared adherence to the communist ideal, although increasingly emptied, still played a role, as the idealized picture of the future. There was also the peculiarity of Kádárism that it sought to balance, inside the bastion of power itself, the defenders of the old world-view with the representatives of reform.

## THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES: THE SYSTEM DECAYS

*The rubbish heap is growing and growing and spreading and spreading.*

(Text of a popular song from the seventies)

By the time the post-war-born generation had grown up, the unsolved inner contradictions became so obvious that, in the 1970s and 1980s, only cynical people could propagate a world-view that did not acknowledge these contradictions. At that time, those in power were increasingly such pragmatic-cynical people. The believers were only a small fragment of society and were marginalized.

The world-view of the 1960s in Hungary and other Eastern and Central European systems got into a crisis as soon as the development of these societies came to a standstill; the promise of catching up with the West had lost its reality and mobilizing force. The people living in these societies, and especially the intelligentsia, had given up hope of further reform. The year 1968 played an important role in that, but what was more determining, the failure of „socialism with a human face” coincided with the growing up of the first generation born in socialism and socialized by the post-war promise of unlimited possibilities. Now these promises were in sharp contradiction with social realities. The previous enthusiastic generations were consumed by Stalinism – either as victims or in a moral sense. The reform generation faced the alternative that either it resign itself to the Asian stagnation of the Brezhnevite restoration or, following the imperative of economic rationality, it undertake the organizing of a market economy and, then, by pursuing its logic, ultimately the organizing of a capitalist bourgeois society.

The stagnation began by 1971/72 in Hungary and put an end to what until that time had been regarded as a success of the system: the increase of the standard of living and career opportunities. It also put an end to the trustworthiness of the world-view that had dominated until then; it became a direct experience for everybody that there were insoluble contradictions in the world-view. From this time onward the officials in power are not able to exert considerable influence on the formation of the world-view of the age. The crisis world-view of the seventies-eighties is dominated on the one hand by the bitterness of the absence of prospects and on the other hand by the activity of reformers who gradually turned towards a bourgeois society and capitalism.

Among the conditions of stagnation, the concept of progress is no longer credible, not even in its evolutionary variant. In the world-view, ideal development is replaced by both a cyclical view of history, which is sometimes understood as decline, and, by a turning towards traditions that are felt to be better, nobler than the present. Knowledge of the past becomes important; traditional communities, traditional methods, religious and popular traditions are enhanced. Turning to the past resurrects an interest in historical documents, memoirs, and genealogy. Fashions of nostalgia spread and overrun the arts and mass media. Interest grows especially in the spirit of the turn of the century and the thirties; critical interest grows toward the fifties and it increasingly approaches the last historical turning point previously swept under the carpet, 1956.

The other main tendency is that the humanistic ideal of the 1960s that offered a greater scope for individual viewpoints, now changes further. The person, the individual – against the discredited collective – begins to become an emphasized value. Personality, individual differences and abilities, individual rights and liberties and, – last but not least – individual enterprise, become the key words of the period. The ideal of the obedient executive and the independent executive is replaced by the ideals of sovereignty, freedom, liberty, and independence. The age of the ideal of specialization appears. Instead of system-building scientists, the experts of specialized fields, the discoverers of some partial questions become the scientific authorities. Even in the arts the best gain appreciation by particular ideas of style or topic or by the introduction of particular special fields of human experience.

Doubt spreads about whether it is possible at all to find valid general laws. The cult of facts is also attacked by the recognition that facts themselves are relative; relativism becomes general. „Things,” „values,” „propositions” are put in quotation marks; the grotesque, irony, and the absurd spread. Optimism and enthusiasm become totally anachronistic. The typical and the individual in art are replaced by the extreme, the bizarre, meaning only itself. The cult of spontaneity begins to emerge, along with the general recognition that Man is left on his own.

Disappointment in the improvability of the system carries with it not only the loss of prospects, but the appearance of new ideals for organization. After the fifties, when everything was permeated by politics, and the sixties, when the individual was exiled from politics into his private existence, the myth of civil society emerges gradually, organizing itself from the interests of the individual as the counterbalance to official political society. Publicity becomes a key concept. Organization from below rises to the rank of an ideal, as local societies, the locality and generally the civil sphere get special attention. An important category appears:

legitimacy. On the one hand, in accordance with the idea of civil society, the ideal of a constitutional state spreads; on the other hand, the acceptance of the system as a whole becomes questionable, for it cannot be regarded as a necessity from or for eternity.

The attempt of the monolithic system to recognize aspirations different from its own and to make a compromise with them, proved from the point of view of the system, to be letting the genie out of the bottle. The retiring of the system is indicated by the spreading of the principle of tolerance. This, then, gradually grows into the acceptance of the principle of pluralism, first in the economy, in the recognition of the equality of the public, private, and cooperative sectors; then in the increasingly positive assessment of the second economy; then in the cultural field of value systems; and finally in politics, from the gradual acknowledgment of the opposition to the demand for a multiparty system. By the end of the period the dissident engaged in politics will be the hero of public opinion. But the fundamental characteristic of the period as a whole is not the changing of the system, but the crisis of the system, the disintegrating stagnation which determines the general disposition of society.

The hero of the 1950s was the great man; the hero of the 1960s was the common man; the hero of the 1970s-1980s was the marginal man who stood on the periphery of society, since the fundamental experience of society was the general subjective feeling of being ousted from historical progress. With the recognition of social inequalities, it becomes clear in the seventies and eighties that these are not individual cases, but regular tendencies and their causes are rooted in the system. The political opposition makes this a central public topic as well as supporting groups that are sliding to the peripheries of society. Those in power also perceive the importance of deviations, so research into the problems of social adaptation becomes one of the main tendencies of social research. Awareness of crisis gradually creeps into the general thinking. Officially the statement is often repeated: „there isn't a crisis; only difficulties.” However, in public the moral crisis, the crisis of values, the crisis of family, the structural crisis, and – at the end of the age – a general economic, social, and cultural crisis are more and more mentioned.

In the 1950s the historical movements that turn the world upside down were prominent themes; in the 1960s, it was the forces of daily life; then, in the 1970s and 1980s the topic of death, of destroying begins to play a determining role. The arts increasingly deal with this theme, but also in everyday thinking the fear of death from war, then from illness, take root. People

whose energies are exhausted by the long stagnation feel themselves more attacked, more surrendered, while mechanisms of self-destruction increase: alcoholism, suicide, ways of living which end up in heart diseases and the public and private destruction of the environment.

With the decentralization of society, the individual who is left alone suffers from a crisis of identity. Previously, he had been regarded as a faceless piece of the mass, and then as a part of small communities. Now, as he becomes an individual for himself, he begins to seek the possibilities of embeddedness. The problem of identity enters among the key categories of the age, both in the sense of the individual search for identity and of the renaissance of the national-ethnic consciousness.

Another new development is the category of interest in the market-centered world. We have seen that in the 1960s there was more emphasis on distribution than on production. The system of allotments by the state had condemned the individual to a passive role, which could not satisfy his interest; now opinion crystallized that the individual must take his fate into his own hands. Criticism of paternalism becomes common, and individual enterprise, flexible, and creative adaptability are extolled. Competition becomes a key category and a magic word. As the driving force of capitalism, it is expected to become the dynamizing force of a society which is sunk in stagnation. The concept of capital itself is also used in an increasingly positive context. In the 1960s there was a move from rigid materialism towards consciousness, the psyche; now this continues towards instincts. The cult of spontaneity also means that the instinctive becomes a positive value. The world of the instinct-ego, the senses, is appreciated. As the conscious, the planned, and the rational are discredited, the mystic, the irrational, the inconceivable are elevated.

Of course, some of these processes are not the peculiarities of Hungarian society, nor of socialist societies in general. They are the characteristics of changes in prevailing intellectual currents throughout the world. But these elements of the Hungarian world-view – from the conservative wave to mystical fashions, post-modern quotation marks and subjectivity, appreciation of local societies – were built into the fundamental experience of the crisis of the system and supplied their stretching energies.

As a consequence of all of this, most of the „socialist period” – from Stalinism to the development of capitalism and a bourgeois society – can be grasped as a process towards the rehabilitation of individuality. But this leads us to the world-view of the nineties.

(1995)

## 1. WHAT KIND OF SOCIALISM IS „KADÁRISM” PART OF?

In order to understand the peculiar Hungarian state socialism known as „Kádárism”, it is obviously necessary start from the common features of East European state socialist systems (which, by the way, have been treated in *Eszmélet* on several occasions).

*One of the specific features of these state socialist systems is the inclination of 20th century labour movements to excessively exaggerate the importance of (a) politics and (b) economy.* This is not typical of labour movements only but there is no doubt that these movements implanted into their theory and practice primarily the following two elements of Marxist ideology, the new paradigm of social thinking: the economic determination of social processes and the capturing, by revolution, of political power. This means, at the same time, that they *neglected, or more precisely, they distorted according to the requirements of this economic and political determinism, important elements of Marxist social theory, such as the new concept of social conditions and the relationship between the subject and object.* This lacking, the attempt to create a new society was doomed to failure. Mere capturing of power and adaptation to select economic requirements will not generate a new society if *social conditions* (for example, the basic productive condition) remain essentially unchanged and the active subject(s) of society do not follow the logic of the new social paradigm.

These shortcomings were reiterated many times over the past decades. The fight against „inherited feudal or bourgeois routines”, „ideological, moral, etc. backwardness”, the struggle to repress these phenomena will constantly on the agenda. This, however, was based upon the concept of economy (and politics) being some kind of a basis and if there are changes in the basis, social conditions and conscience will also change as the „superstructure”. This concept has nothing to do with Marx’s „Marxism”; on the contrary, it is the exact opposite thereof. Lenin raised the problem of 'teaching the teachers”, which means that in non-socialist societies people acting under the guidance of a conscience other than socialist can by no means create a socialist society. Nevertheless, they tried, and this is a tragic failure of Leninism, driven by the supposition that the new political and economic conditions were eventually create somehow the new social conditions „of a higher order” and will ultimately create a new man. Stalin topped this by the lie that the new man „had already been created”. What actually had been created was nothing more than the mirror of reality: a society which essentially remained within the universal system and economic laws of capitalism (carrying over pre-capitalist social conditions), maintaining bourgeois desires and pre-capitalist emotions. It existed not as a „basis” but accidentally, as an experiment in political power and economic control attempting to eliminate the impacts of capitalism. As social conditions and conscience are just as determining, and indeed are inseparable from economy or policy, they are mutually parts of one another. So, naturally, this political power and this economy could not be „new”. The fact that some of the members of the Bolshevik guard wound up by

Stalin were in human terms more decent or in conscience terms „more socialist” than Stalin himself is neither here nor there: these conditions are manifested by the Stalinist path. (Those who argue that history always presents a multiple choice situations are, of course, right: socialist movements were not predestined to Stalinism but a real alternative would have presupposed the revolutionization of social conditions and conscience. Those, who similarly to us, for a long time advocated for the reformability of „socialism” fostered the misconception of it being a special model of social development, which, contrary to experiences, has the innate political characteristic of taking its roots first in the political sphere and will spread from there, by means of „politics”. As opposed to these illusions, today it appears that without the evolvement of new production, social and coexistence conditions, new forms of conscience and in this relation new economic model of a new society, a (really and paradigmatically) new political system cannot take root. This has always been the case over the course of history. The „new world” ideology of state socialism in the end turned against itself, in that people either through the consequence of it giving nothing new, therefore, it is a lie; or (and this is not contradictory) they reached the opposite conclusion: whatever is new in it is worth than what we had of old. Nevertheless, the „new” could grow roots at least in certain points, a minimum level of social welfare, some increase in the democracy of education and training, limitation of the legal propagation of openly anti-human ideologies. At least some strata of the population accepted for some time that in comparison with the bourgeois regime, a new (and potentially better) world was being built. When „the present” could no longer be „sacrificed in the interest of the future” when the most inhuman mechanisms had to be eliminated which pointed out with the growing clarity the absurdity of the statement whereby „even the worst socialism is better than the best capitalism”, at that point ideology took a turn „back to Lenin” and managed at least temporarily to once again utilize the idea of „a better new world”. The results of this Khrushchev turn that manifested in „Kadarism” was built upon this idea, „If socialism is in principle better than capitalism”, the reformed (Kadarist) socialism is better than all the other socialisms than the „goulash communism” of Hungary is the best of all possible worlds. This was, of course, never thought or propagated openly in this way. Still, one of the secrets of the relative stability of Kadar's Hungary is this formula suggested by the Kadar ideology: everybody knew that our welfare lagged behind the West but as a result of the above, many could feel that they lived in a country which at least somehow was „at the vanguard” and this was enough to keep the public spirit of the country at a tolerable level. (This is why it came as a shock for the Hungarian population after the political changeover that the country is at no vanguard whatsoever, rather we are only second-liners or more likely, third liners in the capitalist world. Nationalism, by the way, did its best to exploit this shock.)

## 2. HOW IS „KADARISM” RELATED TO STALINISM

It is an important feature of „Kadarism” that theoretically speaking *it contains nothing original (from the point of view of historic philosophy)<sup>1</sup> it is merely a response to Stalinism*. It is a response to the crisis of the Stalinism model of state socialism; an attempt at stabilization, which, incapable of resolving the basic contradictions of the system, is in the final count the *process of dismantling the system*.

---

<sup>1</sup> We talk about „Kadarism” all along. While the nature of „Kadarism” was largely determined by Khrushchev’s policy, this policy was most persistently applied only in Hungary apart from the short-lived experiment of Dubcek, we can venture to say that the specificities of the Hungarian way and particularly the lessons of the 1956 uprising had a major impact on all East European reform attempts including those in Russia. These specificities went far beyond Khrushchev’s original aspirations, thus the Hungarian experiment became the “classical” model of “reform communism” even if the Kadar era represented no theoretical alternative, hence no “ism” of any kind.

Stalinism subordinated ideology to its own administrative and political nature (determined by the logic of capturing and retaining political power). Consequently, the term ideology became, in the pejorative sense of the word) „ideological” and was closely intertwined with politics. This, on the other hand, resulted in the fact that ideology determined political (including economic policy) measures to an increasing extent. The trend earmarked by Kadar, which was faced with by far the greatest systemic crisis in 1956 since the Kronstadt uprising, a crisis whose magnitude and significance, of course, far exceeded Kronstadt, attempted to provide primarily an administrative and political (power political) answer to this crisis, driven by the very nature of the system. Its primordial aim was to stabilize power, and to conserve the most important elements of politics (most important in their judgement). To this end, it sacrificed the intertwining of ideology and politics, and chose a slow reform of economic policy as the main tool. (It can be seen that this was in no way a deviation from the basic framework of administrative-economist determinism; contrariwise, it was an action in keeping with this ideology).<sup>2</sup> In some respects, the very action of gradually sacrificing ideology<sup>3</sup> is an acknowledgement of failure, a movement backwards. Final collapse, however, was inherent in the basic intent: the effort to conserve. „Kadarism” could only have been justified by carrying through whatever it was based upon: the renewal of „socialism”, which could have been nothing else but breaking with administrative-economist socialism, the revolutionization of social conditions and the development of a new way of production. However, Kadar was entrusted with a historical role by the very requirement to which his regime remained faithful: stabilization of the political power.

### 3. KADARISM IN THE UNIVERSAL SYSTEM

Some explain the emergence of Kadar’s power by Soviet interests (or rather by serving Soviet interests); others by the pact between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, yet others by the special synthesizing opportunity represented by Janos Kadar: minister of interior during the Rakosi era, near-martyr of Stalinism embodied by Rakosi, leader of the Peace Party during the Second World War, and ally of Imre Nagy in 1956. This latter aspect of Kadar's history puts him in the light of more of a turncoat, not alien in Hungarian history, and offers the interpretation of Kadar's policy as wanting to prove to be the best pursuer of the cause of both dogmatic communists and 56s, as he set out to realize their goals with an additional element of real politics. (Kadars attempt to prove himself to be the best person on top was largely successful during the initial upswing of the Kadar era, though he never managed to gain the support of hardliner Stalinists, nor hardliner 56s. At the time

---

<sup>2</sup> When in his criticism of the new Hungarian economic system (also called the New Economic Mechanism), György Lukacs noted that it will be of no use without workers' democracy, he essentially warned that if no revolutionary changes take place (revolutionary in the face of capitalism), it is illusory to think in terms of socialism. However, this was not a lack of awareness: apart from the major impact of original accumulation by depriving peasantry of land, administrative economic socialism consistently excluded any attempt at the revolutionary transformation of social conditions. The reasons will be treated below.

<sup>3</sup> This was a step not only intentional or forced by external constraints. In Hungary, for example, the “Marxist generation” after 1945 who was at the vanguard of “building the new society” was in fact only a fraction of a generation. The thinking of every generation is determined by several competing ideologies which have an impact on one another. The conscience of society is shaped under the influence of all of these trends. The young generation of the 50s (including 1956) were influenced, besides new “Marxism”, by existentialism also. When discussing the emergence of „Kadarism”, we cannot neglect the fact that the ideological impacts were the synthesis of the components. Due to the change in concept of opinion leaders of the intelligentsia post-1956 Hungary can be considered as the country of vulgarised existentialism.

of his advent, many, probably the majority of people were convinced that Kadar did indeed represent their highly differing aspirations<sup>4</sup> by showing a gifted exploitation of political maneuvering.)

After these important constituents of Kadar's power and the Kadar style, it is interesting to put the question into an even wider perspective: what made possible the emergence of „Kadarism” in universal terms (as the Soviet power interests and the opposing national resistance were only a sub-system of the universal system); and what role could Kadar's Hungary play in this universal system?<sup>5</sup>

Today, after the collapse of Eastern European state socialism, it is increasingly obvious that this collapse is the sign of the shattering of the entire world order, of Pax Americana. It is a sign of East European state socialist systems, as Wallenstein argue, for example, in No. 8 of *Eszmélet* were in fact a sub-system of the world system headed by the United States of America (and the Soviet Union was merely a sub-dominant superpower). This world order was based upon the opposition and the deadlock of the two superpowers. This was, by no means, a simulated opposition: both parties were very active in gaining position on the other one's beating grounds, while neither wanted to fully destroy the other. State socialism needed the occasional help coming from capitalist centres, while capitalist centres needed the unstable semi-peripheries on which state socialism was established to be controlled by strong hands and that the state socialist regimes should try out of their own accord (i.e., driven by their own leadership) to squeeze the maximum out of themselves.

Both systems needed the other as „a rag-and-bone man”, to maintain their status quo and to negotiate with during the periods of detente, to take the wind out of the sale of advocates of the other system with the promise of convergence. The coexistence of the two systems was the international gigantic personification of the two poles, at the same time the representation of the class compromise of 20th century capital work. The success of social democracy during the 20<sup>th</sup> century symbolises the balanced system of relationships, this class compromise, and whatever achievement was reached, it was always the consequence of the slight power shift in the static warfare between the two poles. *The balance was upset by capital (hoping for profits from the relative surplus value) launched technological revolution with the consequence of the classical relationship between capitalist and worker losing ground in the societies of the major countries, (This, by the way, was also a consequence of achievements of the so-called „socialist” world and social democracy.) This in turn started to undermine the legitimacy of a bipolar universal system...* The Stalinist „second world”, „symbolic representative of the working class”, could have responded to the challenge by moving towards a scientific revolution. However, apart from minor innovation within the framework of the military industry, it chose to maintain the former bipolar world order. (This naturally was due to the fact that the Stalinist leadership was incapable of recognizing the right direction, but also because new *social* conditions beyond capitalism should by then have been in place Nevertheless, they were not; nor were societies mobilized to

---

<sup>4</sup>It would be a mistake to see Kadar playing a mere political game: his suitability for this role probably rooted in the fact that his personality and convictions were a mixture of considerations giving rise to various emphases, the dominant element being the protection of stability of state socialism (i.e. administrative economist socialism).

<sup>5</sup>The secret of a successful concentration of personal power is not so much holding the reign of power organisations (although this is certainly not a negligible tool in the hands of a ruler). It is the tactical skill which the individual aspiring at rulership possesses and which makes the various ideological groups believed that he and only he is capable of efficiently fulfilling their goals. In the case of Kadar even this picture can be further refined: while similarly to all professional politicians, he considered power to be a determining aspect, analysts generally agree that for Kadar this did not mean a power mania. His personal ambitions were always merged with a puritanistic service of the „cause” or the „party”. This of course further increased the stability of personal power (the „good king” effect).

create them. Such mobilization would have undermined the administrative-economist form of power in these societies. This is what happened in 1956 and in 1968 and perhaps *in* Tienanmen Square in China: the protective logic of the system left no room for such „heresy“.) As the East European state socialist systems stuck to the „old“ frontlines, progress overtook them, and they *lost the opportunity of modifying their symbolic anti-capitalist function by integrating the antagonism between capital and intellectual work into the antagonism of capital and work (which they represented), thus the new forces of intellectual work appearing at a worldwide level could not be integrated into the forces of anti-capitalism even in their own societies.*

The capitalist development following the Second World War, at the same time, not only shifted towards intellectual production but through it, was characterized by an increasing subordination of the so-called Third World. As a result, an opportunity opened of transforming the antagonism between capital and labour into an antagonism between centre and peripheries. Mao Tse-dong's China started representing this very stage. On the other hand, it was clear for Khrushchev's Soviet Union that this logic of sharpening antagonism may lead to a confrontation which could not be won amidst uneven economic conditions. In this deadlock supported also in military terms (with the social democratic compromise in the centre) they decided in favour of maintaining the situation (as expressed by the first period of detente in the late 50s and early 60s, stretched by minor confrontations).

*Kadar's Hungary, model of solving confrontation, became a symbol of what this compromise could mean for the „socialist“ half of the world.* The „socialist half of the world“ symbolizes not only the „labour“ side of the opposition of labour-capital. From the very beginning, the Soviet model offers a solution which attempts tackling the imbalance, particularly dangerous in the peripheries of capitalism, through increasing state intervention, in a „bureaucratic“ way. (This is essentially in unison with the principle of Keynes' model which makes stabilizing corrections in the centres. It is not an accident that Keynes and the Soviet Union take an interest in each other.) The Soviet model emerges by the intelligentsia dissatisfied with the social organization of capital and supported by some strata of the working class making themselves *bureaucrats* in order to reset the balance of society through administrative means. This, however, makes the „workers' state“, whose symbolic function is indeed the opposition of capital-labour and specifically, the representation of the „labour side“<sup>6</sup>, a truly *bureaucratic state*. Very soon, it will transform into an entirely different kind of bureaucratic state, as recognized by Orwell, and as indeed proved by the ease of the political changeover in 1989-1990.

In 1956, the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union buried more than just Stalin. The polarized world system was shattered but *neither of the parties had an interest in upsetting it*: the United States tried to assure the Soviet Union that while major social decisions had commenced which would eventually do away with the bipolar world order, the United States did not feel strong enough to achieve this. The Soviet Union, in turn, assured the United States that while they felt unable to win in the old fashion, they would not make a foolhardy attempt to destroy the world. (Obviously, no secure guarantees were provided by either sides, at that time, nor at any point in the future. Elements of

---

<sup>6</sup> The fact that Soviet power was never a true representative of the entire labour side in the universal system is indicated by Arrighi's excellent analysis published in issue 17 of *Eszmelet*.

uncertainty remained, but essentially both parties granted and recognized the deadlock.) Paradoxically, the *ideological* offensive Krushchev initiated to overtake the great opponent in terms of development set the same goal: although the Soviet leaders did not necessarily recognize it, the goal was not really the unrealistic 'overtaking' but the fact that the Soviet Union, *took up the challenge in an area and with the conditions offered by the United States* (i.e. in the very area of scientific and technological revolution). The Soviet Union could never win this race. It was neither prepared for, nor capable of carrying through the social changes necessary for the race, therefore, the „peaceful competition” was in fact the beginning of capitulation. (This was not „betrayal of the socialist elite” but necessity brought by the transformation of the world order.) This slow capitulation (and not expedited by the centre), or rather the slow dissolution of the separation of bureaucratic systems which represented the „labour” side in the world order gave way to the „increase of living standards” in the focus of interests. (Although the consequence processes were slowed down by restructuring, they were nevertheless irreversible.) The living standards were so much higher in the capitalist centres that putting this idea in focus meant that the Soviet part of the world de facto recognized the hegemony of the capitalist centre. In this respect, the story is roughly the same as that of the emergence of the welfare state. The significance of the classical opposition of capital-labour decreased by the advent of intellectual production, which pushed a part of the classical working class towards middle class development. A complicated dialected development took place in the 20th century: *the sharpening opposition of capital-labour in the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought close the opportunity of overturning the capitalist society In response, capital stabilized the frontlines as a first step, then as a second step, it repressed the classical relationship between capital and labour shifting increasingly towards relative surplus value. Consequently, the boundaries of classes became volatile and the partial disappearance of the opponent again reinforced capital.* This process took place first within the centres, by the emergence of the welfare state, then from the mid-1950s, it took place in the „Second World” distorting the old capital-labour opposition into a relationship between centre and peripheries.<sup>7</sup>

Hungary became the model country of the Krushchev turn. Each of the opposing forces felt these changes in 1956, even without clearly seeing them (as indeed no one could consciously see them at the time, not even those who took the necessary political steps). Those who considered there was a possibility for bourgeois restoration were working towards this goal, reformed communists grouped around Imre Nagy considered that the end of the Stalinist model was an opportunity for democratization within socialism (i.e. steps could be taken to transform the society towards intellectual

---

<sup>7</sup> The relationship between the centre and the peripheries cannot be described as an equivalent of the classical capital-labour relationship, although its international reflection increases the role of centre and peripheries. This is why Mao's expectation for the Soviet system, the incorporation of the labour side within the opposition of capital-labour, to become the leading order of the Third World was an illusion. The Third World at least in the course of its history so far is a symbol and embodiment of impoverishment and proletarian development which is marked by the emergence of opposition between centre and peripheries in the central countries as well (and take the shape of impoverishment and proletarian development in the old sense: involving unemployment and devaluation). This trend, however, holds a new danger for capital: *the impoverished external and internal Third World can wash away the avid capitalism of the centres not in the framework of classical sense class fight but as an influx of barbarians breaking down the borders of Roman Empire.*

production and modern development). This path, however, (as it was also proved by the Prague Spring which represented the same goal even more unequivocally), was unacceptable for the power system of administrative-economist socialism, as was for the capitalist centres (which were perfectly satisfied with the old type of Soviet system based on large scale production and consequently becoming increasingly outdated and ultimately needing to be eradicated. A socialism taking a turn towards intellectual production would have involved incalculable consequences: perhaps a real alternative of capitalism could be emerging, an attractive and functional social model could be found,<sup>8</sup> etc.)<sup>9</sup> In this respect, Kadar supported the 1956 uprising as a representative of the administrative economist socialism represented by Khrushchev. On the other hand, he pointed out the impossibility of continuing with the old model but questioned the limitations of the administrative-economist „Soviet” socialism, thereby winning the willy-nilly support of the „old guard”. After 1956, the Kadar regime laid emphasis on the policy of living standards, in unison with the solution proposed by Khrushchev but also driven by its own recognition. *It recognized that the main cause for the 1956 upheaval was dissatisfaction with the living standards besides the uncertainty of existence triggered by a terroristic exercise of power and the revolt against national oppression.* This, therefore, is what should be amended. However, this also meant the recognition of the supremacy of the developed West and the necessity to tune the society to follow this centre. The subconscious strategy of capitulation of „Kadarism”, of the bureaucratic state was to follow the pattern of the welfare model incorporated by the *compromise of social democracy; it was based on the premise of „converting the working class into middle classes” in such a way that it retained the power positions it had captured along the road, in the same way as social democracy had become a part of the power system.* Slogans of „market socialism”, „socialist democracy”, etc. earmark these ideas.<sup>10</sup> Kadar's Hungary was at the same time a playfield for capitalist centres as well as for the Soviet Union at the frontline of the two world systems: the Soviet Union, itself unable to change at the same taste as Hungary, looked upon the Hungarian example as a source of incalculable dangers. At the same time, Hungary with its rising living standards *played the role of the „subconscious” of the system.* Capitalism, on the other hand, used the changes of Hungary, the country which had the privilege of flexibility by virtue of the progress made in 1956, for conveying Eastern Europe the message of a possible schedule. (Obviously, all this was not automatic. It is an undoubted positive fact of „Kadarism” that it made use of

---

<sup>8</sup> The orientation of the 1968 Western intelligentsia towards the Prague of '68 is an evident indication.

<sup>9</sup> The response of capital was the following: the „Prague Spring” should be supported in that it weakened the Soviet Union. However, it should not be protected from the Soviet Union. If, by miracle, the efforts of Dubcek and his followers prevailed over a longer term, an immediate attempt should be made to be integrated into the capitalist world lest should develop viable alternative, a „third road”. It was obvious for the superpowers that „brotherly help” was extended precisely at the time when the newspapers reported on the negotiations between Czechoslovakia and the World Bank. The scenario of the East European transformations of 1989-1990 had been written long ago.

<sup>10</sup> Similarly to the „second world” it openly represented, „Kadarism” tried to play the same role in the balance of the world system as social democracy in the developed countries. (Obviously, this was served by increasingly good connections with social democracies.) At the same time, it always differed from social democracy particularly in terms of some dictatorial elements but these differences were primarily situational and were rooted in the nature and antecedents of the bureaucratic state it controlled.

the scope of movement, even if not always entirely. The superpowers used Hungary, similarly to other East European and Third World countries for gaining ground in a game which had never *entirely* been determined.)

#### 4. THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF “KADARISM”

Analysts of “Kadarism” agree that the system involved a certain degree of „Eastern” middle class development (a lopsided bourgeois development, limited modernization and „negative individualization”, etc.). Strata in the middle of the social hierarchy, always support a „realistic” power: „real” politics avoids extreme solutions and supports the groups which are placed in the centre rather than on the peripheries of the social hierarchy. „Realism” is, of course, a highly relative notion: it means the balance between extremes often by creating extremes just to be able to move towards the centre. This policy is indeed always real compared to the policy of extreme forces as the society relying on the balance and the impact of various social forces is incapable of operating according to the likings or needs of any extreme sides (nor is it willing to do so). The dynamic basis of realist politics is constituted by groups for whom getting in the middle means accession in the hierarchy<sup>11</sup> or for whom „realistic” policy means that because of their central situation, they are the determining elements of society. In the case of Kadar, several conditions supported this convergence towards the middle. His person was a guarantee for *the working class elite* that he would pay attention to the interests of working classes as a „true working class” leader. (Realistic politics justified this expectation in that any workers' protest was immediately followed by smoothing measures.)<sup>12</sup> For the *peasantry* the myth of the „good king” was created at the time of the forced cooperative formation, a good king who can be sought out to protect from „excessive measures”. This myth could never have gained ground without what „realistic politics” really involved in rural areas: former leaders belonging to the poorest peasant strata were replaced by middle peasant (sometimes even rich peasant) leaders; in other words, the micro hierarchy of the society was „realistically” observed without simultaneously observing the realities of microeconomy, i.e. without legalizing household farming. For *the intelligentsia*, “Kadarism” was an opportunity to play a role, in a differentiated form. Besides the tyrannical aspect of limitation inherent in prohibition, the intelligentsia was given a choice of which role to assume in the available scope of movement: roles could be chosen from an active supporter of the regime to a critical advocate, a non-aligned apolitical expert write down to various degrees of dissident. Even („heroic”) opposition was a role to be chosen; and only its extremes were rejected by the power in particularly sensitive periods.<sup>13</sup> (Such times gave rise to „the intolerable” besides „the prohibited”.) Obviously, transforming groups of bureaucrats were also at the basis of the system. These groups were transformed in a dual sense: on the one hand, the old „Rakosist” cadres were

---

<sup>11</sup> These upstarts could feel their situation was improved by the system and specifically by Kadar who was the symbol of not only the „worker” but also of the „man in the street”. Even when they turned away from Kadar at the time of the downfall of the system, it was because they wanted to continue their ascent. This is what they expected of the political changeover (of the replacement of a stagnating system), and this is why it was so frustrating for them to see a temporary decline.

<sup>12</sup> The other side of the coin is that “middle class development” reached the working class in the least. If after the political changeover Hungary was the country in the former “socialist” bloc where middle class development had the strongest positions, if it is true that no such wide masses could be started on the road to (petit) bourgeois development over the course of Hungarian history, this is true only for certain elite groups of the working classes, while the majority is threatened by rapid downslope.

<sup>13</sup> This is when only arrest followed or more increasingly forcing to immigration. Other retaliations, such as sacking, silencing, etc. had the effect of reinforcing the individuals in their assumed roles.

replaces by a new medium stratum of bureaucrats equipped with only formal requirements of ideological faith (which became increasingly secondary compared to the basic requirement of smooth execution).<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, the individual people were transformed: the obedient cadres shaped by the party discipline of the labour movement after 1945 became part and parcel of an administrative structure in power. Under the Kadar regime, militant elements in the apparatus diminished, and the main task of bureaucrats was to „administer away” the everyday of peace times. Moving towards the centre, politics strengthened and increased centre strata and simply ignored extremes (thereby supporting the self-consciousness of the middle strata: „we are the real people”).

All this relied on a peculiar structure of ownership which is best described by the symbiosis of cooperative farm-household farm prevalent in Hungarian agriculture. The basis of the economy was public or public type property. But this public property is „rented out”, or if not rented out, at least used to a large extent for personal benefits. In its declining stage, the much-denounced atheist paternalism allowed individual entrepreneurship in many areas from sub-leasing low rent apartments through tourist trade exploiting the difference in price levels and using state-owned machines for private work to gaining wealth through various manipulations by managers of state-owned companies.<sup>15</sup> The common feature in all these dealings was that while the legal system could reign these „black” endeavours never entirely legalized relatively large groups of society could gain economic strength by these opportunities. State property was a safe guarantee protecting the „enterprising” individual from total bankruptcy (free enterprise never actually provides such guarantees); on the other hand, it limited the scope of growth. This created a dual conscience in middle strata: on the one hand they were dissatisfied with the system (which does not let them get really rich: demanding a political transformation was primarily based on this public feeling). On the other hand, this dissatisfaction was compensated by a relative sense of security (which in turn gave rise to subsequent nostalgia for the old regime).

This middle class development had another characteristic feature. It was determined by its „bureaucratic” nature not only in that it heavily relied on a large administrative apparatus but also in the sense that it presupposed a „bureaucratic” attitude of all the social agents. (Also, it contributed to shaping such attitudes). *There are three major mobilities in modern societies: capitalist, intellectual and administrative.* Capitalist mobility was curbed by the system; intellectual mobility was allowed within very strict boundaries whereas administrative upward mobility was open in virtually all areas

---

<sup>14</sup> The author was told by a high-ranking party official in the early 1970s that the major revelation of „Kadarism” was that socialism could not be built with “clean people”: they were few and far between and they were not accepted by society. The functionary emphasised that he found it difficult to come to terms with the necessity of relying on corruptible „nonbeliever” but efficient cadres (which at the same time meant the reconciliation with the middle classes, middle peasantry and petit bourgeois). He finally admitted that „Kadar was right”.

<sup>15</sup> In fact, unemployment inside the factory also belongs here as work undone is paid from state property: in this way non-working workers actually received income on the basis of state property. (This income obviously differs from other forms of income mentioned above in that it results in the expansion of capital in a very peculiar way: on the basis of state capital but at the hands of private individuals. This, however, is not a major difference as workers also had the much analysed opportunity of deploying his labour force, saved during his proper working hours „in his free time”. Therefore, workers also had an opportunity to cumulate capital through paid idling.) It is of course a different matter whether the much denounced in-company unemployment was more of a drain on the state than unemployment benefits payment, the latter certainly being disadvantageous and less humane from the point of view of the employee.

of society. Not only was it possible to move upwards into administrative positions from all strata of society, this mobility was also a privilege. Also an administrative career was rejected by many, it undoubtedly offered real power positions, which contributed to the enhancement of intellectual (and sometimes economic) careers.

Middle class development determined in the spirit of the supremacy of bureaucratic mentality was closely related to the ideology of “realism”. “Reality” (i.e. avoiding extremes, focus on the present emphasis on facts instead of processes) is the ideal primarily of an administration which “appropriately governs” the world. However, “realistic” politics if not necessarily rational reckoning with opportunities may result in reasonable steps but do not necessarily lead to such steps. Rationality sometimes calls for radical changes. A “realist” however, is basically conservative. This is why *the political system earmarked by Kadar could not really handle a very large social stratum: youth.*

Politics focused increasingly on the present after 1956. Besides reiterating slogans that gradually lost their meaning, it essentially gave up its ideological future-centredness, while at the same time it could not make peace with the past either. Seemingly it took pleasure in having recourse to historical eras which justified its existence (the 1867 Compromise, Gründerzeit, The New Economic Policy of the Soviet Union after 1921, etc.) But it was incapable of embedding itself in universal history, just as it was incapable of undertaking its direct antecedents. Politics continued the tradition of „careful” progress and the concurrent turncoat attitude of old. This tradition, however, was not „the” tradition of the nation; rather it was the tradition of a bureaucratic middle stratum whose reinforcement always goes hand-in-hand with curbing future development and the solidification of old social structures. Turning towards the past may give a society additional energies if it rekindles latent resources. But the Kadar era never actually turned towards the past: its present centredness meant ultimately the simultaneous repression of both future and past. This is why it could not handle youth: a society with no motivation of the future, or rather the *power* which adopts this attitude does not really need youth symbolizing the future. This was the sad hands on experience ail several generations. Youth was always the most suspicious and unreliable social stratum which the power constantly sought to divide and disarm offering a low level of career stating, such as lack of housing, etc. Youth was to be divested of political inclinations and was generally considered to be potential adversaries. (This applied to the rockers, existentialists, and teddy-boys of the 1950s, the beatniks, hippies and hooligans of the 60s, the disco consumer generation of the 70s and the punks, squatters and Young Democrats of the 80s.) The ruling system was afraid that the future oriented attitude of youth will bring capitalism (faster than needed and without giving a chance to the current power elite, in which youth has no vested interest, to haul over some of its positions and convert to the new system); or that he avant-garde leftwing affiliation of youth, which excessively identified with the ideology would push society towards a maelstrom of voluntaristic avant-garde solutions and by losing its ideological pedestal, the power will lose ground.

A special technique was implemented for handling dissidents in general and youth in particular, a technique which legalized opposition opinions as „antics”, thereby turning criticism into a reinforcement (except if the criticism was aimed at the very basis or taboos of the system. Otherwise it justifiably supposed that extreme radical opposition would be undertaken by precious few people. As

several reports revealed, a declared expanded scope of movement in fact increased self-censorship: we are allowed to say whatever we want, if only in a limited way and in main terms, so we do not need to undertake open confrontation.)

Even a disarmed adversary will remain a foe. Moreover, by simultaneously oppressing both past and present, the regime proliferated in adversaries: some challenged it on account of the withering past, others, on account of the present.

The era of „national unity” of Kadar was limited by two quasi division (in fact if we look beyond the narrow sense boundaries of the period, it separates two quasi national unities). The two lines of quasi division are Kadar's ascent to power at the end of 1956, and his funeral. Public opinion differs on both counts. We can recall the war of billboard slogans in late 1956 („Long Live Kadar”, „Long Fear Kadar”, „Don't Fear Kadar”, „Why shouldn't Kadar Fear?” „Kadar Shouldn't Fear for Anything” . In Hungarian: “Éljen Kádár – Féljen Kádár – **Ne** féljen Kádár – **Miért** ne féljen Kádár – **Semmiért** ne féljen Kádár. = The text was becoming longer every day). The funeral of Janos Kadar was a response to the memorial funeral of Imre Nagy. Apparently, both events gave rise to a similar division of the population as a civil war: Kadar's supporters on this side, adversaries on the other. This, however, is only a quasi-division: in the first case Kadar was not yet an alternative, while at the time of his burial he was obviously no longer one. In 1956, Kadar relying on realist middle classes and thereby creating „national unity” was the standard of an extreme stratum whereas at the time of the political changeover he was a mere memory of stability. (Obviously, the overall accord prior to 1956 and in 1989 wishing for a political change with unanimous will was also an indication of a quasi-unity. In both 1956 and 1989, the unanimous wish for a change in fact denotes a multitude of aspirations, sometimes opposite in nature.) In this respect, Kadar managed to create a relative social peace at the end of the first third of the interim period because his „realistic” conservatism disregarded the new momentum of co-operative organisation and the consequent racing urbanisation, it leaves the components of „the social structure” essentially intact. (His „realistic” alignment towards the centre is also marked by his ability to make future-oriented strata accept the idea that he progresses and at the same time he could convince past-oriented groups of his intent to use viable elements of the past, while his real aspirations in fact aimed at neither direction.)

The policy of „realism” had a major drawback. Once it loses power, it loses the very essence of legitimacy; a realist who is no longer able to exercise power is not a realist any more.

A much analysed tactic of the Kadar era was the fragmentation of society, locking individuals in micro worlds. This individualisation obviously helped society to turn towards capitalism, as the existing capitalism was more advanced in terms of living standards as well as the development of individuality and the scope of individual movement compared to the sophisticated (administrative economist) socialism. In the battle in the individual's soul it is capitalism that wins. Kadar himself and his closest followers obviously never thought of the restoration of capitalism. Still it is not an accident that the economist and sociologist elite supporting Kadar and in their wake, the apparatus becoming more and more „enlightened” in fact made decisions which pointed in that direction essentially almost from the very beginning.

Ultimately, the politics whose major goal was the stabilisation of the regime grew the basis of its own destabilisation: Hungary saw the evolution and ultimate conclusion of processes which in

other countries of the Eastern bloc took place as a consequence of the overall change of the world order. „Kadarism” to a great extent created its own contestants and destroyers.

##### 5. „KADARISM” AND ITS HEIRS

Its present orientedness turned representatives of national conservatism as well as advocates for dynamic progress and essentially the whole youth against it. Its excessive „realism”<sup>16</sup> was disliked by the romantic, the numerous irrational elements of its operation were opposed by the majority desiring sane rationality. When this „realism” was suitable only for maintaining stagnation then slowing down decline as much as possible (as a result of the crisis which swallowed the entire „second world”), it lost legitimacy by losing its efficiency. Consequently, it also lost support. Middle strata needed new „realists” whom they hoped to reinstate the stability of slow growth exempt from extremes.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the political changeover took place. Forces at the vanguard of the change did not come from nothing: as it is often stated with a negative overtone, (almost) all of them are the children and creation of Kadarism, or at least were shaped by Kadarism.<sup>18</sup> Not only did they follow well-established patterns of the „realistic” Kadar era (as has been said many times); they also show traces of forty years of administrative economist socialism at the depth of their policies and values. Liberals, therefore, are often „social liberals”, some of the nationalists are „national socialists” (but only to this extent). As one of the major characteristics of administrative economist socialism was its very state-bureaucratic nature, its heirs tend to use the state and its offices and authorities with a much greater weight and pay a much greater attention to the state and its agencies than their Western counterparts. At the same time, leaders of the political change follow not only Kadarism but the entire system of administrative economist socialism in that they exaggerate the importance of politics and partly of economics as a goal as well as a means of politics without taking into consideration social conditions. They ignore the *hic et nunc* of social conditions which were shaped by decades of „Kadarism” in a very specific way. (Stratification, values and aspiration of social groups, etc.)

Though, in a different way, individuals carrying on with the declared values of „Kadarism” are also heirs of that system. Reform communists dismantling administrative economist socialism had no ideology of their own even to the extent that „Kadarism” did propagating the policy of living standards as a negation of

---

<sup>16</sup> The Kadar era undoubtedly corrupted a large strata of society. On the other hand, looking through the eyes of its opposition, any social power is corruptive in that it offers advantages to various groups in order to preserve itself. This is not a justification of corruption; rather it is the questioning of the moral justification of any social power; on the other hand, the acceptance of the relativity of values in any system. Societies themselves tend to accept a power as much as it succeeded in opening the boundaries of this „corruption”.

<sup>17</sup> It is not surprising that the Hungarian developments led in many respects to the same situation as evolvments in Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia or Romania. In Romania, for example, a country stuck at the level of Hungary in the 1950s, the Khrushchev-Kadar prescription of “renewing socialism” had not been tried, nor did Russia reach the level of Kadar’s Hungary. On the other hand, the strength of universal movements overarching individual national development is conspicuous. The fall of the Prague Spring buried not only the Czech reform communists but aligned potential Romanian, Russian and Polish reformers with those who demanded a complete radical change of the political system. The history of initiatives is an experience for those who are not directly involved. The logic with which Hungarian „Kadarism” approached capitalist restoration contributed to the intelligentsia of Eastern Europe to commence a political change. On the other hand, Hungary, for a long time would not have turned into „pure capitalism” without Gorbachev’s capitulation, which was the turn in the balance of the universal system.

<sup>18</sup> Even if advocates of the political change belonging to the older generations started their social involvement during the Horthy and/or the Rakosi era.

Stalinism. Anti-Kadarist reform communists were left with negation: whatever we had so far cannot be continued. But they could not promise anything in replacement. The process of dismantling liberated as well as marginalised advocates of „socialism”: liberated them from the unpleasant service of a bureaucratic order and marginalised them by dragging away their „own” social order. At the same time, advocates of socialism were a mixed lot comprised of believers in „ideal” socialism, the rank-and-file of Stalinist „class fighting” socialism and faithful activists of paternalistic „welfare” Kadarism. A more liberal exercise of power during „Kadarism” resulted in Hungary being the country within the socialist bloc where the ideological bases of socialism were the least impaired. After the terrors of the 1950s, (and after the years of Kadarist retorsions 1957-63) there was a smaller number of atrocities compared to other countries which would have caused people to hate the much repeated ideals compared to the respective regimes of Brezhnev, Ceausescu or even Husak, Honecker and Zhivkov. (In „Kadarism”, these ideals became boring and lost credit.)

## 6. ...AND THE FUTURE

What future can „Kadarism” possibly have? In the direct sense, it obviously has no future. The social system denoted by this term was definitely terminated, and not only by the death of Janos Kadar. Nevertheless, it may be revived in two senses: on the one hand, nostalgia may rekindle it. On the other hand, if socialism returns in a different form at any time in the future, it will 'reassess” history with the significance of the Kadar era. What does this mean?

Nostalgia reaches every past period. Alternatives are appraised if negative features of a political and social formation are piling up; consequently, past solutions will gain new value. Elderly people tend to pick out pleasant memories from their youth and the youngest, who have no personal recollection of a previous era also tend to accept the past, however, denounced by the present, as a more attractive alternative compared to present drawbacks.<sup>19</sup> All this, nevertheless, is not enough to convert the nostalgia towards an era into an efficient trend. Not all past eras are suitable for this purpose. Some strata of the working classes have fostered a certain amount of nostalgia towards the Rakosi era, driven by the workers mythology of the age. Total negation of the current era may present the return to the symbols of „Kadarism” as a form of protest. *But the Kadar era stands a greater chance to evoke nostalgic feelings because it was based upon the middle strata, because the era was, apart from its beginning and end, essentially a consolidated period, „a period of peace”, and because its current negation can annul its positive elements and impacts only by falsifying history (by a new breach of organic historical construction) which will eventually have backlashes on its unilateral critics.* (The same regularities prevailed in the reassessment of the Horthy era over the past few years.) The burdens of capitalism can easily strengthen the nostalgia towards „socialism”, the era of state socialism.

However, nostalgia is reactive: it acts backwards. Not only because of the direction of time; historical nostalgia is similar to regression into childhood. It is always an escape from the present, the burdens of the

---

<sup>19</sup> This conservatism damped all grassroots intent to change society. Its greatest damage was to cause the ability of self-defence to whither away, to hamper the development of the ability to grasp the consequences involved by a decision. In this way, after the political changeover large masses were passive or slow in responding to changes which were extremely detrimental for them; or if they responded, the means they used were not necessarily appropriate.

present. Since it does not attempt to find solutions starting from present realities, it makes people passive, neglecting to mobilise energies to seeking new solutions. If this nostalgia revalues the leftwing, this is not *something that responsible critics of capitalism should take advantage of*. We cannot lose sight of the fact that „Kadarism” left not only achievements in history: its constructive elements are inseparably intermingled with force, etatism and conservatism stemming from the political and economic reduction of socialism, etc. (Not to mention the fact that a lot of people feel nostalgia who are longing for their lost power. Champions of social justice can certainly not share aspirations with such individuals.)

Every successive period of social development will draw the balance of „Kadarism”. Evaluations will differ. The basic conservatism of this period, however, is undeniable, together with the relevant demoralising consequences.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, a certain ascent of relatively large strata of population in the prosperous stage is unquestionable. *On the other hand, its role in history also involves responsibility for an era which inherently carried the promise of a new form of society<sup>21</sup> and preached it increasingly unconvincingly; a promise which it could and would never fulfill.*

Budapest, 1996

---

<sup>20</sup> Not to mention negative aspects, such as retaliation and the regular oppression of dissidents, unreasonable wastefulness in the economy and contra-selection in cadre policy along with the numerous examples of abuse of power, etc.

<sup>21</sup> Paradoxically, the promise was also preserved. This is due primarily to its self-definition as a part of *process of development* as opposed to the over-prevailing total self-lauding of the Stalinist Rakosi era. It stated to be stage which surpassed its predecessor and is consequently also surpassable: a transition towards a better world which is exempt from its deficiencies. This relativistic self-image drove away believers of fanatic convictions. On the other hand, and for the same reason, those who did not give up seeking “tercium” as opposed to capitalism and state socialism firmly believed in a “socialist” future beyond Kadarism almost until the last moment of the system.

## REFERENCES

- Amin, S. Arrighi – G. Gunder-Frank, A. – Wallerstein, I. (1990) *Transforming the Revolution, Social Movements and the World System*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Arendt, H. (1958) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Cleveland: World Pub. Co.
- Aron, R. (1990) *Democracy and Totalitarianism*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Arrighi, G. (1994) *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of Our Time*. London: Verso.
- Bell, D. (1976) *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. London: Heinemann.
- Brzezinski, Z. (1976) *Between Two Ages. America's Role in the Technetronic Era*. Middlesex: Harmondsworth.
- Davidson, B. (1957) *What Really Happened in Hungary*. London: Union of Democratic Control.
- Gouldner, A.W. (1979) *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*. London – Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.
- György P. – Turai H. (eds) (1992) *A művészet katonái. Sztálinizmus és kultúra*. Budapest: Corvina.
- Hankiss, E. (1982, 1986) *Diagnózisok 1–2*, Budapest: Magvető.
- Haraszti, M. (1991) *A cenzúra esztétikája*. Budapest: Magvető.
- Háber J. – H. Sas J. (1980) *Tankönyvszagú világ*. Budapest: Akadémiai.
- Kapitány Á. – Kapitány G. (1983) “Metamorphoses, A szocializmus alakulásának szakaszai”. *Mozgó Világ*, 1, 107–120. pp.
- Kapitány Á. – Kapitány G. (1991) *Quo Vadis Europe de l'Est*. Paris: Actuel Marx, 178–194 pp.
- Kapitány Á. – Kapitány G. (1996) “Changes in the World-views (Hungary 1945-1980)”. *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 29.2 Fall 1995 pp. 33–34.
- Kolosi T. (1987) *Tagolt társadalom. Struktúra, rétegződés, egyenlőtlenség Magyarországon*. Budapest: Gondolat.
- Kornai J. (1982) *A hiány*. Budapest: KJK.
- Lomax, B. (1976) *Hungary 1956*. London: Allison and Busby.
- Losonczi Á. (1977) *Az életmód az időben, a tárgyakban és az értékekben*. Budapest: Gondolat.
- Makdisi, S. Casarino, C. – Karl, R.E. (eds.) (1996) *Marxism Beyond Marxism*. New York – London: Routledge
- Mallet, S. (1975) *Essays on the New Working Class*. Saint Louis: Telos.
- Richta, R. et al (1976) *Civilization at the Crossroads*. Prague.
- Szelényi, I. – Konrád, Gy. (1989) *Az értelmiség útja az osztályhatalomhoz*. Budapest: Gondolat.
- Vitányi I. (1985) *Egyharmadország*. Budapest: Magvető.
- Wallerstein, I. (1983) *A modern világrendszer*. Budapest: Gondolat.

Radical social transformations are accompanied not only by political movements but by the struggle of symbols, too. The first measure taken by the conquistadors was to put a crucifix in place of idols. In Hungary, during the wars between Islam and Christianity the Cross alternated with the Crescent on top of the churches. The end of the Second World War was marked by boots trampling on the swastika. Broken red stars, and Stalinist arms cut out from flags signalled the beginning of the revolution in 1956. And so on.

But the circle of symbols with political meaning is much wider than the circle of ideological-political emblems.

We can distinguish three kinds of political symbols:

1. Political symbols in a narrow sense: symbols chosen consciously by political movements.
2. Unintentional (at least not always intentional) signs, acts, facts, events, behaviour of political actors: things which acquire political meaning by association.
3. Non-political events, facts, etc. which have an influence on the way people see the world of politics, and become in this sense political symbols.

Below we use all three meanings.

First: political symbols in a narrow sense. We have mentioned *emblems of political movements*. But, of course, there are living symbols, too: the actors of political life themselves, and all their circumstances may acquire a kind of symbolical meaning. *Personalities* might become political symbols themselves; every detail can acquire similar importance in the world of symbols. One is *hair-style*: an example is the opposition of the long-haired "Cavaliers" and the short-haired "Roundhead" Puritans at the time of the English revolution of the seventeenth century. *Dressing* can have similar importance (as it was the case of the "sans-culottes" way of dressing, or the Phrygian cap in the French Revolution; or the Garibaldi shirt and the hat and cloak of the Carbonari in Italian history; the leather coat of commissars, and the Dzerzhinsky rubashka in Russian history; the Mao jacket in China, etc.). The different *modes for saluting* also have a symbolic function (for example the Nazi arm-raising, the raised fist of communists, the victory sign of Churchill).

The symbolic meaning of *colours* is also well-known (it certainly depends on culture, political connotation, and so on). Reds and Whites fought in the Russian civil war (even Greens and Blacks, too); fascism symbolized itself with black, brown and – in Hungary green – shirts. Even the number of colours became symbolic in the French Revolution (being connected with the threefold slogan: liberty, equality, fraternity), and from that time revolutionaries, rising up against the Habsburg Empire, used always tricolours (as did Austrian revolutions, too) against the imperial black and yellow colours.

Every manifestation of human behaviour, every objectivation of the human being can acquire a symbolic meaning, either because it is connected to the old regime, or because it symbolizes something new in contrast to the old one. It is probably this opposition which made *artistic representations and their destruction* become a political-ideological symbol itself. (We know many examples from history – e.g. the Byzantine iconoclastic

movements, the iconoclasm of Protestantism, the destruction of churches during the French Revolution, or the case of Hungary, where the borders of the Turkish occupation were marked with decapitated sculptures.)

#### SYMBOLIC MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SYSTEM CHANGE (POLITICAL SYMBOLIZATION)

Are there similar symbolic changes in the Hungarian and East-European social and political transformations of 1989-1990? Certainly there are. For example, if we refer to the symbolic meaning of *colours*: conservative parties started to use the colour green among the colours of the Hungarian tricolour as a main, official colour (instead of the former dominant red), while the Free Democrats – who were referred to as cosmopolites – preferred dark blue (the main colour of United Europe and also an important colour of the United States flag). By the way this “duel of colours” was closely connected with the traditional “tribal war” of two Hungarian football teams (and their fans): the opposition of the green-white FTC (Ferencváros), referred to as “the genuine national team”, and the blue-white MTK, called a “Jewish” team. FIDESZ (the party of Young Democrats), who declared themselves to be a new and impartial party, chose the colour orange, which had no previous political symbolic meaning at all.

Changes in *dressing* were particularly important in the army. The Russian-type uniform had already been changed (given a slightly national appearance) after 1956. After the system change, elements of the pre-war uniforms are used again. This is most obvious in uniforms of the Guards of the Hungarian Parliament. But the civilian fashion of the politicians has changed, too: in the case of women politicians the former costume of the nomenclature women became a more feminine (ruffled, lacy, low-necked) dressing mode; in the case of men, for example the bow-tie symbolized the revival of the bourgeois mentality and life-style.

Symbolic changes occur on different levels. The change of power has resulted in certain changes in the role of symbols at the level of *law*. Use of former official emblems (red star, hammer and sickle) has been restricted, but the fascist emblems (swastika, the sign of the SS, the arrow-cross – the Hungarian Nazi emblem) were restricted as well (to show that, although we can speak about the revival of the pre-communist world, it does not mean the rebirth of fascism). (The neo-Nazis have, of course, new emblems, which are very similar to the old ones but not the same.) At the level of law the debate on the official arms was also very typical. It was unquestionable that the official arms of the Kadar period had to be changed, though the Russian-type arms of the Rákosi regime had already been changed after 1956. (Kadar had new arms to show the difference between his regime and the earlier Stalinist system.) In 1989 the question was: whether the Kossuth arms (used by Hungarian revolutions) or the St. Stephen arms (with the Holy Crown) should be restored. The majority decided for the crowned St. Stephen arms – and this decision (together with other signs) could be understood (as it became clear later: partly misunderstood) as a preference for the traditional, pre-war society and state (instead of grass-root, revolutionary-type changes).

However, every party signalled also by symbols, that the system change is understood as a *total change*: either a return to the point where the communist system declared its power (and continuation of the earlier traditions), or the beginning of something totally new. (Only the offspring parties of the former communist power were exceptions in this question, but sometimes even they declared the need for a total change.) During the campaign of the first free parliamentary election most of the parties used symbols to express this total change: the picture of “spring cleaning” which sweeps away the dust (the symbolic objects of the old regime);

St. Stephen arms (or emblem of one of the new parties) which smashes the Kadar arms; a poster, showing a Russian soldier from behind, with the slogan: "Tovarishi, koniets" (Comrades, it's over!); or another poster (the poster of FIDESZ) compared the Past and Future, showing two pictures: a young couple kissing, and Brezhnev with Honecker, doing the same. (The title was: "Which one do you prefer?" or "Which side are you on?").

All these suggested that the system change meant a total, radical break with the former period, and it is enough to sweep away the rotten symbols and elements of the old regime to bring in a new, free, wealthy, healthy world. (Some parties illustrated this emergence of the new world with sensitive pictures, too.) In the interpretation of conservative parties this new free world was the same as the world of the pre-communist period (that had been suppressed by the artificial structures of communism, but survived underground). There were two problems with this interpretation. First: except for the former middle classes, few people remembered the pre-communist model as an idyllic one. (The fall of conservative parties in 1994 was, according to some political scientists, partly due to this problem: this kind of picture of an idyllic past could not convince the majority of the society.) The other problem caused much more disillusion and a boomerang-effect; namely it was the experience of everyday life that the promised total changes (and as their result: the entry into the Land of Promise) – promised not only by the conservative parties, but by the liberals and socialists, too – did not happen.

Total changes were not achieved but the system change itself was expressed in many different changes. The fact of *party-pluralism* became a symbolic phenomenon, too. It symbolized the end of the monopoly of the political sphere. People learned that the tulip and the ear of wheat are the symbols of two big conservative parties, birds are the symbols of Free Democrats, orange symbolizes Young Democrats, the social-democratized wing of the former Communist Party changed the five-pointed star to pink. At the first election these party symbols did battle with each other, parties reacted to the symbols of the others, too. The message of conservative posters of conservative parties for the "liberal birds" was: "*We do not fly, we have our feet on the ground*". (It meant: "we are the ones who know the realities of our country".) The street-fight of slogans began at that time, too. It generally took the form of overwriting the posters of other parties. Liberal or socialist candidates were sometimes called Jews, communists, murderers, etc., but there were more sophisticated graffiti, too. (For example: to the slogan of liberals: "*we can, we dare, and we will*", the "man-in-the-street" added: "*ruin the country*", or: "*if we let you!*". At the first elections it was mainly the supporters of the conservative parties who were very active in this "slogan-fight", but at the elections in 1994, when these parties were still in government, their posters attracted similar mocking graffiti. But the whole slogan-fight had a symbolic message, too: it expressed that after the previous state control and censorship people have the right to declare anything about anybody, and even amidst the rough and tumble of this low standard of political culture the signal of freedom of speech was and is very important, too.

#### THE SYMBOLIC PREPARATION OF THE SYSTEM CHANGE

Open pluralism manifested itself again in Hungary in 1989/90, and this change was very acute. But the whole process of the system change did not happen with similar sharp borderlines. The slow process (the small steps of the progress of market economy, the softening of the dictatorship, the spread of bourgeois-citizen culture) took years, the erosion of state socialism had become quite strong in the eighties. This erosion had many symbolic signs. The *re-evaluation of certain notions* happened continuously. The absolutely negative meaning

of “*entrepreneurship*”, “*capital*”, “*career*” in the fifties was converted step by step into positive ideas from the sixties on. (Earlier the notion “*career*” was connected with a “*careerist*, an individualistic person”, but meanwhile this term acquired new associations: there are career-advisers, career-diplomats [politically independent persons and not just political commissars, not careerists]). On the contrary the notion of world career has a positive meaning here.

Similarly, political pluralism has been gradually granted civic rights. As a first step the category of “*enemy*” changed into the notion of “*opposition*”. (In Hungary the international term “*dissident*” did not come into general use, because it meant “*political migrant*”.) Then the notion “*different way of thinking*” appeared (admitting the right to think differently from the official manner), followed later by the notion of pluralism – first accepting the pluralism of ideas, and finally real political pluralism, the party-pluralism, too.

*The name of the events of 1956* has also been reevaluated in the official terminology. This reevaluation shifted from the notion “*counter-revolution*” through the neutral “*tragic/sad events of October*” to the category “*people's revolt*” (the first official use of this third category was regarded as a great act of the pro-reform communist Imre Pozsgay, just before the system change) and was of great importance from the point of view of the system change. The change of notions made by Pozsgay – “*people's revolt*” used as a notion instead of “*counter-revolution*” – at the time of perestroika did not require such great political courage as was often thought – rather, it meant the symbolic anticipation of the system change. (Because the official legitimation of the Kadar regime was based on the thesis that it prevented a counter-revolution.)

The resistance against state socialism was expressed mostly in the symbolic sphere, and around the symbols of revolution as a questioning of the basis of the political system; that is why the celebration of the 15th of March (the day of the great 19th century Hungarian civic revolution and war of independence) was such an important symbol for both the power and its opposition. (This symbolic importance was expressed in repeated non-official, alternative celebrations, commemorations and their police reprisals.) The 19th century revolution and war of independence already had a symbolic meaning in 1956: it was a very suitable metaphor to express the revolt against tyranny and the rejection of the Russian invasion and occupation.

Thinking in symbols and metaphors developed the ability to “*read between the lines*”. In the eighties a big scandal was caused by a poem, because it stressed the initials of the name of Imre Nagy, the executed prime minister of 1956 (N I). In Hungarian these two letters are the sign of the grammatical infinitive, and so they are frequently used at the end of words. This poem was full of words ending in N+I, the author wrote these letters with larger characters, and this “*forbidden*” name symbolized that the opposition wanted a reevaluation of 1956 and of the whole system. It meant the demand for system change. (In the eighties many other symbolic messages referred to the repudiation of consensus – it would be enough to analyze outstanding films, works of literature, debates in the media of that period, but sadly we have no space to do it in this paper.)

The erosion of the system was announced not only by symbols of the radicalization of the opposition, but also by the representatives of the official power. In the second half of the eighties some independent candidates were allowed to take part in the one-party elections (these nominations were a formality, all means were used to obstruct the chances of the independents). Some symbolic gestures were meant to express the intention to reduce the alienation between the official power and the people. For example: just before the system change a young party activist was given big publicity because he used to drive a Trabant car to the Party Centre. (The

message of the Trabant among the big, black limousines of the party leaders was obvious, but did not have much credibility. This exceptional case laid rather more stress on the privilege of party leaders.)

After the system change the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and its more viable successor, the HSP, continued the efforts to change their image, to reduce the alienation of the party. In their campaign they made symbolic gestures directed towards social groups which earlier did not fit into their image. One of their campaign films presented them as the party of entrepreneurs and religious believers. They tried to use a familiar style in contrast to the rigid old protocol and bureaucratic jargon. This tendency reached a peak at the time of the election, 1994, when one of the leaders of the socialist party turned a somersault in the street (the media greeted this action with great enthusiasm and publicity, of course), and very soon he became one of the members of the top party leadership, but media popularity and the "close contact with people" must be evaluated.

The gestures of the opposition against the taboos of state socialism on the one hand, and the popularity-seeking trials of the state-party on the other hand are only secondary manifestations of those tendencies which characterized the system change. The most important changes occurred in the *institutional sphere*. Oppositional party-initiatives started at the end of the eighties and led to negotiations with the representatives of the power about the division and hand-over of power. *The most outstanding symbolic message of this process was the presence of new political forms of self-expression and co-operation.* The unipolar political field came to an end and the self-organization of different political tendencies was given a chance. That is why the names of meeting places, where the first alternative political movements declared their aims and existence, became symbolic, and "historical" (Monor, Lakitelek). We must add that after the system change spectacular features of pluralism occurred on different, not directly political institutional spheres, which were earlier monopolized by the party-state. For example charity organizations, schools, security services, etc. These non-political institutions helped the symbolic confirmation of pluralism as well as the direct pluralization of the political sphere.

The other important shift in the institutional sphere was the change that occurred in the role, tone and style of the *media*. Since the eighties the media, which was earlier – in an obligatory manner – servile, became increasingly critical of the official political leaders: some of the media personalities acquired the image of a "brave folk hero". As the legalization of different movements symbolically suggested the democratic idea of the right of assembly and the right of organization, the new tone of the media expressed the model of free press, the right of freedom of opinion, freedom of speech: thus the basic ideas of democracy were obviously symbolized by the stylistic changes occurring in public life and the media.

The changed relation of media to politics meant at the same time that the media became, instead of a transmitter of politics as it was earlier, the creator of policy and politicians, it became an independent section of power. That is why the struggle of different political and economic forces for possession of the media began immediately after the system change. This rather rough fighting, which sometimes evoked international reactions and scandals, became an important part of the symbolic field of the system change. This intransigent fighting (between the national conservatives and liberals) expressed that there is not only a political rivalry between these two big political forces but also a competition and struggle of different cultures, different value-systems, and social models. They represent not only different political tendencies, but different political and

social systems as well. This conflict marked the end of the former formula: that of the opposition between the old (“communist”) and the new (“democratic”) system; first a tripolar formula emerged which confronted three kinds of political-social models, then along the borderline of modernization the liberals and the socialists formed an alliance (opposing the conservatives). This was an important symbolic message and result of the media war. The rearrangement of symbols resulted in a new political combination. On the other hand the upgrading of the media meant that in contrast to the political practice of state socialism, the role of *publicity* became very important in the everyday exercise of power. However at the same time it upgraded the possibility of publicity manipulation and brought new forms of manipulation. People understood by these symbolic struggles that although the system change did not bring “power to the people” (as many people had hoped), the nature of power had changed and, after all, the representatives of power should not behave as commanders of a military system, but as merchants who have (to be able) to sell their (political) goods on the market.

The upgrading of the symbolic role of publicity was expressed in a great number of signs. One of them was that repeated proposals to stop the presence of TV at the parliamentary sessions were opposed not only by different parties, but by a great part of public opinion, too. (Though these parliamentary sessions are not always interesting for the public and the style of parliamentary discussions often discredits parliamentary politics, itself.)

#### CHANGES IN THE SYMBOLIC SPHERE (1989-1996)

Public opinion considers the existence of different political parties to be the main symbol of the system change. But the symbolism of political parties itself is changeable. The HSP has tried to transform its image, as we have seen earlier. Although it is rather conspicuous that after winning the election in 1994 former bureaucratic elements appeared, for example in the language style of many representatives of this party. But the other parties have also changed. The most striking changes occurred in the image of the party of young democrats (FIDESZ). They went on the stage as a party of dynamic young people in revolt (this was expressed in many direct symbolic signs, some of their actions designed to “épater le bourgeois”, their appearance with long hair, wearing jeans and pullover in Parliament, and so on), but later – trying to occupy the empty place of the conservative middle force – they changed their image strikingly: they began to wear suits, cut their hair, and modified their style from an ambiguous hippie-yuppie form to an unambiguous yuppie one. (They abandoned the conciliating role between the conservatives and liberals they had played at the beginning as the representatives of a new generation without prejudice – this effort was symbolized by distributing oranges to the members of Parliament; they also adopted the role of modern, qualified experts and to symbolize this role, they were the first to bring laptops to sessions of Parliament to connect the role of “experts” with their new conservative image, suggesting that they are the up-to-date conservatives.)

The Free Democrats too tried to change their image. In their case it was forced upon them by the pressure of right-wing political forces, which called the leaders of the liberals a lobby for Jewish interests, an exclusive organization of elite-intellectuals of the capital, the sons of the former nomenclature elite who began their careers as Marxists, and so on. Perhaps under the influence of these attacks – and considering a conservative majority of voters – the Free Democrats had a new leading candidate in the 1994 elections who, according to

the stereotypes, had a “typical Hungarian appearance” and behaved like a typical, jovial provincial leader. They tried to change a symbolic association in this way.

The other parties also changed their images to varying degrees, but for an analysis of the symbols of the system change the *general tendencies* that occurred in the differences between the first and second elections are more interesting. (Our next observations are based on the (computer) analysis of symbolic messages and value-trends of campaign films of these two elections.) Some of the main changes:

1. Parties placed individuals in the limelight of their campaign in 1994 (more than in 1990).
2. The role of women diminished in 1994.
3. A new role for women appeared – that of the First Lady
4. Children were no longer presented as symbols of the future, of innocence and purity (as they were in the previous campaign), but as symbols of the consolidated (middle-class) family.
5. The pathetic, didactic tone (that originated in the 19th century literary style) became less frequent than it was in 1990 (when some of the so-called modernist parties used this kind of style, too).
6. At the same time the ironic, humorous style also became very rare.
7. The use of “Christian”, as an explicit value, decreased.
8. The importance of “education”, “culture”, “creativity”, “talent” decreased, as well.
9. Many economic and technical intellectuals appeared in campaign films.
10. The role of young people in their first jobs decreased.
11. There were more speakers representing wage-earners.
12. There were more references to poverty, existential problems.
13. There were more pictures of landscapes, small villages, and unspoiled nature.
14. Sport, as the symbol of health, success (and sometimes: co-operation) was emphasized more than earlier.
15. A lot of shops, supermarkets, markets were shown, as the symbols of everyday life and a consolidated (middle-class) living standard.
16. One could see more symbols of modernity, for example: high speed (cars, planes, highways, etc.); symbols of the information society (computers, automation, objects of telecommunication, etc.).
17. There were many pictures showing the Parliament building as a symbol of professional politics.
18. At the same time the values of democratization (especially grass-root democracy), common decisions, consensus occurred less frequently.

All these tendencies show that politics – concerning its symbolic manifestations – became on the one hand more static, more conservative (in its aims) and on the other hand (in its style) became more professional, more pragmatic and commercial-like. This combination (of aims and style) shows the alienation of the politicians and of the whole political sphere from the voters, which was a basic experience of the voters, too. (As if politicians were to say: “leave the problems to us and we will guarantee a middle-class living standard for you – as it is the only important thing in your life, isn't it?”)

## THE NON-POLITICAL (POLITICAL) SYMBOLS OF THE SYSTEM CHANGE

Politics gradually became alienated from people's everyday lives and turned into parliamentary activity. Except for campaign periods, politics withdrew from the streets, only the political-ideological posters of two or three very small anarchist and neo-fascist groups offer a certain political entertainment between two campaigns.

Today the political interest of public opinion concentrates mainly on *economic* affairs. This is understandable, because the middle-class living standard promised by the politicians has not been achieved. But which types of events and phenomena become symbols, representing our time? For example, the montage effects consisting of the following parallel facts (for public opinion): a Minister of Finance announced his program package of shock therapy (very strict financial restrictions in education, culture, the health services and the whole social sphere) and at the same time he received 16 million forints (at that time around 1.5 million ATS) as severance pay (by way of compensation because he had temporarily given up his bank job), and moreover his former bank was given a 12 billion forints capital injection by the state. The Minister of Public Welfare announced the elimination of 10,000 hospital beds and at the same time the same Ministry invited tenders for a new official car for 15 million forints.

Naturally in every regime there are cases of corruption registered among the representatives of power or legal, financial advantages of their power, which public opinion finds rather distasteful, but these events become symbolic when they are typical. In this case the symbolic meaning is the following: the power is alienated from the people again, its representatives make their policies for their own benefit, and we, the people, cannot understand what and why certain things happen but one point is sure: we are the losers. (During the Kadar regime the case of the Minister of War was similarly symbolic, he had a luxurious private villa built by his soldiers; but while at that time the form of the alienated symbolic power showed the signs of an autocratic, militarist power, nowadays the forms of power are typical forms of a dictatorship of banks, and generally financial power. In other words, a power which is incomprehensible for the man-in-the-street, but which can totally control his life.)

We could cite a great number of anecdotes expressing the alienation of power, which are circulating widely. These are not only the symbols of the system change, but rather the symbols of disappointment. Thus the question is: which phenomena really symbolize the (social-political) changes from the point of view of public opinion?

These kinds of changes can be found mainly in *the way of everyday life*. The dynamic, rushing entrepreneurs with their mobile phones, and the unemployed homeless became symbolic figures and their experience of life became a symbolic way of life of the new age. (These figures were present in state socialism, but they were not typical, they were only on the margin of society.) As another tendency of these times, self-confident, aggressive mafia-crime and prostitution are spreading in the streets. The many West Europeans and Americans working or studying in Hungary is also a new phenomenon, like the poor, coloured workers and vendors from the Third World, and the immigrants who dream about entering the rich countries.

People find these new phenomena mostly oppressive but there are symbols of positive change, too: the increasing variety of goods and services, the possibility of satisfying a great variety of needs (certainly for those who are favoured by these possibilities). The privatization of thousands of flats is resulting in slow but very

important changes in the way of life. During state socialism private life locked itself up within the walls of flats; houses and gardens were neglected, balconies were used to store junk. The weak signs and symbol of rebuilding civil society might be a new tendency of recent years that while the elite build “castle walls” around their houses to hide and close their life, the members of the middle class are beginning to beautify their houses and gardens, they are using their balconies again, they have created gardens facing the street. Are these political symbols at all? We think they are.

If we want to summarize the essence of the changes that have occurred as visual symbols of the most important social changes, the result will be the common message of television and of the general visual impression of the streets (as they are the most effective channels for sending visual messages): the essence of the changes is that *the economy, and economic-financial power became dominant* in contrast to the former dominance of politics. Advertisements can be seen everywhere. The constant emphasis laid on the power of multinational companies, which seems to be much stronger than that of the politicians. The strong suggestion is that money and the well-being it brings are the most important values of the whole world. And these are political symbols, too. The posters of different banks, and firms, Opel, Daewoo, McDonalds, L’Oréal, Nokia, Whirlpool, Gillette, Douwe-Egberts, these giant posters are political posters at the same time. They show that as a result of the system change in Central Eastern Europe international capitalism has come to power in the former Second World, too, and this power is propagated every minute. This is the strongest, the most unambiguous and perhaps the most essential symbolic message of the East European system changes.

Budapest, 1996

TABLE

INTENTIONAL SYMBOLS	UNINTENTIONAL POLITICAL SYMBOLS (These are intentional as actions or changes, but not as symbols)	POLITICAL SYMBOLS OF NON-POLITICAL LIFE
A/ POLITICAL SYMBOLS IN A NARROW SENSE		
EMBLEMS COLOURS SLOGANS	BEHAVIOUR OF POLITICIANS	DOMINANT WAY OF LIFE
	CONNECTIONS OF DIFFERENT POLITICAL FORCES	CHARACTERISTIC GROUPS OF SOCIETY
	CHARACTER OF INSTITUTIONS	DOMINANT VALUES OF PUBLIC LIFE
B/ HALF-CONSCIOUS POLITICAL SYMBOLS		
CLOTHES /HAIRSTYLES/ TYPICAL OBJECTS SPEAKING STYLES		

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aceves, J. B. (1974) *Identity, Survival and Change: Exploring Social/Cultural Anthropology*. Morristown – New Jersey: General Learning Press.

Aijmer, G. (ed) (1987) *Symbolic Textures. Studies in Cultural Meaning*. Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gotheburgensis.

Basso, K. H. and Shelby, H. A. (eds) (1976) *Meaning in Anthropology*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Benedict, R. (1934) *Patterns of Culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Berger, P. and Luckman, T. (1967) *The Social Construction of Reality*. London: Penguin.

Cohen, A. (1976) *Two-Dimensional Man: An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Society*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

De Vos, G. A. (ed) (1976) *Responses to Change*. New York – Cincinnati: D. Van Nostrand.

Dolgin, J. – Kemnitzer, D. S. – Schneider, D. M. (eds) (1977) *Symbolic Anthropology: A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Douglas, J.D. (ed) (1970) *Understanding Everyday Life. Toward the Reconstruction of Sociological Knowledge*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

- Douglas, M. (1975) *Implicit Meanings. Essays in Anthropology*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Elias, N. (1994) *The Civilizing Process*. Oxford: Blackwell Publication.
- Firth, R. (1973) *Symbols Public and Private*. Ithaca – New York: Cornell University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Culture*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lasch, C. (1991) *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*. London-New York: Norton.
- Leach, E. R. (1976) *Culture and Communication. The Logic by which Symbols Are Connected*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Packard, V. (1964) *The Hidden Persuaders*. New York: David McKay Co.
- Riesman, D (1953). *The Lonely Crowd*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Rokeach, M. (ed) (1960) *The Opened and Closed Mind. Investigations into the Nature of Belief-Systems and Personality Systems*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schwimmer, E. (ed) (1978) *Yearbook of Symbolic Anthropology*. London: Hurst.
- Shweder, R. and Le Vine, R. (eds) (1986) *Culture Theory, Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, A. G. (ed) (1966) *Communication and Culture*. New York – Chicago: Holt/Rinehart/Winston.
- Turner, V. (1987) *The Forest of Symbols*. Ithaca – New York: Cornell University Press – Prospect Heights.
- Turner V. (1974) *Dramas, Fields, Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca – New York: Cornell University Press.
- Weber, M. (1930) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London – Boston: Unwin/Hyman.

# VISUAL SYMBOLS OF SYSTEM CHANGE IN HUNGARY

## A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

---

*In this presentation we would like to show the results of our longitudinal research.*

The first step of our research was taken in 1985.<sup>1</sup> The research was about visual messages (mainly symbolic ones) of cultural institutions. We used the term „cultural institution” in a broad sense, which means that we analyzed not only schools, nurseries, houses of culture, cinemas, libraries (cultural institutions in the traditional, narrow sense): but also institutions of power (party headquarters, local government buildings, council offices); as well as institutions of religion (churches, parishes), and institutions of consumption (restaurants, cafés, pubs, clubs, etc.). Thirty thousand photos were taken in 1985; and we analyzed the symbolic visual messages conveyed by three thousand institutions. The main aspects of the analysis were the following:

- symbolic signs of *hierarchy*
- “Potemkin-syndrome” (the difference between the front side and back side of the same institutions)
- *aspects* concerning the degree of civilization in the institutions (the hygiene, condition of lavatories, etc.)
- the *gardens*, natural surroundings of the institutions
- *design*, visual culture of the institutions
- *proxemic* analysis of the institutions
- symbolic signs of *identities*
- key *values*, transmitted by the institutions
- signs of dominant *ideologies*
- *cultural patterns* transmitted by the institutions
- *social patterns* transmitted by the institutions
- *centre –periphery* distinction
- signs of *creativity* in the institutions
- signs of *intimacy*

In 2005 we repeated the research<sup>2</sup>; at which time approximately five hundred institutions were analyzed, and twenty thousand photos taken. By comparing the two states, we can register similarities and differences. Between the two phases of the research there was a change of political system in Hungary, which caused a lot of essential changes even of the general visual impression of the institutions.

For reasons of space, we next present only some results of the analysis.

---

<sup>1</sup> The results of this research were published in 1989 (Kapitány and Kapitány 1989).

<sup>2</sup> Kapitány and Kapitány 2006.

## CHANGES IN SYMBOLIC (VISUAL) SIGNS OF HIERARCHY.

### Hierarchy of different types of institutions

In 1985 we were able to rate the institutions based on differences in their condition. These differences generally reflected the formal and informal status of the institutions. The ones in the best condition were council houses in bigger cities and county towns; churches, restaurants and nurseries; the ones in the worst condition were village halls, rural primary schools, and cinemas. Council offices are symbolic institutions of political power; restaurants can be symbolic places of financial prestige; the good condition of churches was a manifestation of the compromise between the communist state and the churches in “late socialism”. The good condition of nurseries was a result of reigning attitude in the eighties, as the expression “investment in the future” shows. The very bad condition of village halls, small schools and cinemas expressed the submissive role of culture and education.

In 2005 the hierarchy of different kinds of institutions was less definite; the differences were expressed more among different items of the same type of institution. While earlier the centralized power determined the possibilities of the institutions, after the system changes several factors of differentiation appeared, and the variability of the condition of institutions has increased.

### Internal hierarchy of institutions

Another form of hierarchy is internal to institutions. We can recognize the symbolic signs of this hierarchy, if we register the dissimilarity between the level of comfort and the visual state of rooms used by managers, directors, bosses on the one hand, and on the other the rooms provided for white collar and other workers at the same institutions.

a) A very important element of the symbolism of power is the wall behind the boss’s chair. The symbolic suggestion of this part of the space: *who* or *what* is behind, at the back of the manager (who or what is his/her supporter?)

In 1985 this symbolism was determined by the one party system, by communist ideology. There were the portraits of the “Fathers”, the Marxist “Holy Trinity”: Marx, Engels and Lenin, or Lenin alone. Lenin as the embodiment of Soviet supremacy was indispensable. His portraits were rather varied. We could draw up a Lenin-iconography: the more bureaucratic bosses were drawn towards the stern official portraits of Lenin, the more liberal bosses used pictures of Lenin in a less official mode. (For example, crouching on a staircase). These portraits and the national coat of arms behind the boss suggested that his supporter was the political power, the dominant ideology itself. But there were also other signs of power behind the boss, with many symbolic signs of victory; the signs of successes of the institution (medals, cups, honorary diplomas). This “meant”: the power of this boss was also based on his successes; i.e., the authorities recognize his achievements. The bosses used some other symbols on this wall: mostly military symbols and symbols of cultural authority.

After the system change, so did these signs of power. In 2005 we saw no relics of communist ideology. Instead there are pictures that symbolize cultural-historical traditions. No more symbols of only one ideology: the monolithic party-power was followed by a multi-party system, the one ideology: the monolithic political party-power was followed by a multi-party system; the one-sided political power was followed by a society governed by different (economic, financial... and political) interests. The power of a chief isn't based on his or her unilateral loyalty. A significant expression of these changes is that there is "nobody" behind the bosses' back. Sometimes we can see symbols of state authority, such as the Hungarian coat of arms, and Hungarian and EU-flags. (Sometimes the arrangement of these flags copies that of the presidential office in the US). But the most typical place for the boss's chair is in front of the window. What is behind the manager? The life of the street. It is a symbol of democratic legitimization, and of a close connection to reality.

Since the window has become the "main wall", the curtain has become one of the most important symbols of prestige.

b) Some signs of power remained. The objects and pictures, which suggest the atmosphere of history, the measure or the (antique) style of tables and wardrobes, and their ornaments refer to power at any time.

c) In 1985 almost every boss's room had three parts, three spaces: the writing table, the desk and its surroundings, (like the conning tower of a ship); a long conference table with hierarchical seating, and a coffee table with comfortable armchairs for "informal", "unofficial" communication.

In 2005 there was an interesting change: the conference table was generally connected to the desk – this change can express the increasing importance of communication and team-work.

d) After the system change, signs of local authority became more important. This is another symbolic sign of decentralization. In 1985 it was very rare, but in 2005 flags, coats of arms, and local maps were designed for even the smallest villages, and used in different rooms of local council offices; these local signs are imprinted on different objects.

e) The monopolistic position of managers (and its signs in the manager's rooms) was a further typical symbol of the internal hierarchy. The bosses *monopolized* the objects of *comfort* (refrigerator, comfortable armchairs, divans). The objects of *communication* (newspapers, TV, videos, telephones, computers); and some objects of their rooms suggest *secrecy* (safe, padded door).

There were some remarkable changes in 2005: namely, objects of comfort also appear in the rooms of subordinates, and bosses have new symbols of prestige: these last (laptop, mobile phone, DVD-player, etc.) express a new, more mobile style, a more independent form of managerial work. The symbolic function of telephones also changed. In 1985 the number of telephones was a symbol of prestige (some of the leaders had 4, 5 or 6 telephones on their desk, expressing their importance. It was the main function of this phenomenon, because nobody can use more than two telephones at the same time). In 2005 traditional phones were changed to mobiles, and now the type, quality, brand, high tech functions of the mobiles (private mobiles, official mobiles, etc.) have become new symbols of status.

f) In 1985, in the time of centralized power, the objects representing achievements of the institutions (cups, diplomas, etc.) were also exhibited in the bosses' rooms. In 2005 we observed signs of decentralization in this respect: the majority of relics of successes can be found in common areas. This suggests that the successes of the leader are not connected with the leader, but are the results of teamwork; they are achievement of the whole institution.

g) Lastly we could observe changes in the proportion of the three types of power (economic, political and intellectual-academic). In the fifties an unambiguous dominance of the political power was significant. In 1985 there was a balance of the three types of power. In 2005 we observed the dominance of economic, financial power. (In the institutions it was expressed, for example by the multiplication of advertisements, the emphasis on the role of money, the increased importance of sponsors, the thematization of competitions and financial results.)

### THE "POTEMKIN SYNDROME"

The well-known story: Prince Potemkin invited Catherine the Great to show her the development of the county, and a new village was built for the visit. But only the front side, the front walls of the houses were made, behind these walls there was nothing. The essence of this story lies in the contrast between the visible and invisible, the illusion and the reality – such is the symbolic sign of a highly hierarchical world, where the opinion of the authority is the most important factor. This phenomenon is characteristic of different societies and different cultures, and in varying degrees. There is a very lucid analysis by Janos Kleinesel,<sup>3</sup> who compares the Scandinavian type of protestant tradition with the catholic culture of the Habsburg empire, and points out the dominance of the "Potemkin syndrome" in the latter. In the first model the exterior of buildings is simple, but the inner parts have an intimate and cozy character; the main values came from Puritanism; in the second model, the exterior has a bigger importance. The main aim is representation; the decoration and the symbolic signs of power are very important; there is a great distance between up and down. The buildings of the second model show everything upward and outward.

The majority of our institutions wear signs of the "Potemkin syndrome."<sup>4</sup> The changes in the last twenty years were not significant in this area. The "Potemkin syndrome" appears in three relations, three types of contrast.

First, there is a sharp contrast between the front of the institution facing the street, and the back of the institution. (The front is in a relatively good condition; renovated, decorated, etc. The back of the buildings is in a worse condition, the walls crumbling, rubbish accumulating around them).

Second, there is a similar contrast between front gardens and back gardens. The front gardens are well-kept, with a lot of flowers, while the back gardens grew wild, and are often the place where rubbish and building refuse is dumped.

---

<sup>3</sup> Kleinesel 1981.

<sup>4</sup> The contrast is similar between the main streets and side streets of cities.

The third contrast is between the visible and invisible parts of the institutions. (Invisible parts are for example cellars, lower parts and landings on staircases, places under counters, and so on). The contrast appears in most of cases as the difference between order and disorder or as the difference between new or renewed parts and neglected parts.

These different signs of the “Potemkin syndrome” were very frequent not only in 1985 but nowadays also, and symptomatic signs can be seen in every kind of institutions (even in churches).

#### CHANGES OF CIVILIZED CONDITIONS (CONDITION OF LAVATORIES, TOILETS)

As Norbert Elias wrote, one of the main indicators of the development of civilization are the methods of alimentation and excretion. Some years ago the distance between living standards and civilizational development of Western and Eastern Europe was very perceptible in the better and worse condition of toilets.

In 1985 the toilets of Hungarian institutions were generally in very bad condition; many were without running water, and there was a very great difference between cities and villages. Moreover, there was also a rather great difference between the Eastern and the Western part<sup>5</sup> of Hungary.

In 2005 we found much better conditions: running water, drainage, cleanliness, repaired rooms, nice tiles. At schools and nurseries there were separated toilets for boys and girls – as a sign of individualization. (It was not typical twenty years ago).

The general effect is very good. But we don't want to hide the fact, that in 2005 we were unable to visit as many small villages as we did in 1985 (so our sample is not fully representative). Neither do we want to conceal the fact that, while the majority of analyzed toilets were in good condition, the conditions of others have declined in a short time because of careless usage.

#### INDIVIDUALIZATION – CHANGES OF VALUES

The history of modern societies is marked by the increase of individualism and individualization. This process became widespread in the 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries in the most developed countries;<sup>6</sup> however, in Eastern Europe it happened more slowly; for example, in Hungary individualization started in 19<sup>th</sup> century and became widespread in the 1960's.

- In the sixties, individualization conquered private life. (It was very impressive in housing: the building of separate bedrooms, bathrooms, children's rooms are a symbolic sign of individualization, because the main function of these rooms is in connection with the possibility of having privacy and intimacy. These

---

<sup>5</sup> The reason for this may be explained by the fact that the Danube – the Roman Empire's border – was a demarcation between civilized and “non-civilized”; the consequences of this gap according to one theory; exert an influence on the mentality, and the cultural traditions of people who live on opposite sides of the Danube, which flows through the middle of Hungary).

<sup>6</sup> The process of individualization in the world of objects, (for example in the world of housing) was presented very suggestible in the early work of Jürgen Habermas: *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Habermas 1962).

rooms appear everywhere, when the importance of individuality become one of the main values. In Hungary these kinds of rooms appeared and spread even in small villages in the sixties).

- In the eighties, individualization also contributed to public life. The elements of the individualistic value system became central values in society.

– Competition (among individuals) became a key value.

– Individual efforts and results were emphasized versus efforts and results of communities.

– Private, individual responsibility was emphasized over state responsibility.

– Neo-liberal ideology reached a dominant position in the economy (and after the system change it penetrated healthcare, education, culture, research founding); the market became the basis for every choice.

– At the time of the system change the welfare model of capitalism seemed to have won over communism; but in recent decades the neo-liberal model of capitalism has began to displace the welfare model.

The individualization process has positive and negative aspects. (Its positive aspects are, for example, the possibilities of having privacy, intimacy, independence; some of the negative aspects of individualization are the absence of solidarity, alienation, loneliness of individuals, the generation gap, ruthless competition, frustration, and anxiety).

We can see a lot of symbolic signs of individualization in our surroundings.

- For one, we find more and more private spaces in institutions, more and more space for talking, for relaxing, for private meeting, etc.
- Also the designers of institutions tend to divide up the large spaces, (spaces for masses), replacing them with intimate corners and sitting places.
- We also find more and more signs of personal achievements on display, and people surround themselves with personal objects, souvenirs, gadgets, thus personalizing their working places.
- They show events of their private life (birth of children, wedding, etc.). If a colleague dies, they create a memorial to his or her memory.
- There is a special sign of individualization at schools. In the sixties a strict line of seats was typical; the school-desks were clipped together.
- In 1985 the seating was a little less rigid; then a typical form was a table for two persons with two chairs behind it.

In 2005 the line of seats sometimes was replaced by a circle of tables and chairs, or a round table.

Sometimes we can find a table and chair for one person: everybody has a private – and mobile – sitting place.

This particular trend has also spread to churches, where traditional long seats have been replaced with separate, moveable chairs.

## SYMBOLIC SIGNS OF IDEOLOGIES

One of the most impressive changes of the last fifteen years was the change of ideological signs. In 1985 the symbols of the Marxist-Leninist ideology dominated the visual effects of the institutions. Five pointed stars (pentagrams), portraits of Lenin or the aforementioned “Holy Trinity” were everywhere; with a lot of formal slogans, and signs of formal official celebrations around them. The militaristic character had lessened since the fifties, but some signs of it remained visible, even at schools. (At that time the main associative circle around socialist ideology was the atmosphere redolent of “happy days of youth”).

It is a self-evident fact, that the Marxist-Leninist ideology was totally gone in 2005. (Some symbols of it might be found in special restaurants, where these relics played a double role; mostly they are a means of irony, a caricaturist reflection of a dead system, but at the same time they could be instruments of nostalgia for believers in “socialism”. We were eager to know, which ideology had taken its place in the last decades.

### 1. Religious symbols

We supposed, that we would find a lot of symbols of rehabilitated religion. This hypothesis was verified only partially. In 1985 Marxism was the official “religion”, which used many elements of religious symbolism. Communist heroes were portrayed as “saints” – sometimes with a halo of light around their head. Communist slogans were similar to religious slogans such as “Faith, Hope, Love” and the like; the “communist future” had a similar character, something like the Christian “heaven”, and similar. At that time the signs of religion (in the traditional sense) were visible only in churches. After the system change, the official “quasi-religion” disappeared and freedom of worship was restored. Some schools became ecclesiastical (again), crosses (and sometimes menorahs as well as symbols of Buddhism and other exotic religions) appeared in public squares. We could find some symbolic signs of traditional religion (crucifix, Bible, Angels, saints, Virgin Mary, doves and other symbols) at various places – not only in churches and ecclesiastical schools, but in nurseries, state schools (as themes of children’s drawings or other decorations); in libraries, and even in some restaurants).<sup>7</sup> But this tendency didn’t become general.

### 2. Symbols of the “green” ideology

The idea of environmental protection became popular in the last decades of the twentieth century. This “ideology” has a lot of manifestations in different institutions. At schools and nurseries there are green corners; rooms and corridors of institutions are sometimes overwhelmed by green flowers; there are collections of samples of natural beauty (rocks, shells, etc.); many photos of beautiful landscapes; several notice boards, bearing posters with the themes of environmental or health protection. They often thematically portray the danger of pollution, assorted healthy and unhealthy foods; they also contrast the facts of pollution with the beauty of untouched nature. Gardens became organic parts of institutions, and are much better cultivated

---

<sup>7</sup> It depends on personal leanings: if the owner of a restaurant, or the director of a library is religious, he can (and may) put a cross or an icon on the wall.

than earlier. Restaurants set up more and more sitting places in their gardens. In short: nature became a key value.

### 3. Symbols of national identity

After the system change national ideology and national traditions received a greater emphasis. Signs of national identity are found in different institutions. National colors (red-white-green) are emphasized on different objects. National flags fly at almost every institution, but after the system change they also appeared on private houses and in the gardens of private houses, which became a sign of the emphasized declaration of national identity. In institutions the symbols of emphasized national identity are those of ancient Hungary or symbols of Hungarian conquerors (of the 9<sup>th</sup> century). A frequent symbol of national identity is the old map of the historical “Greater Hungary”, which shows the country before the Trianon decision. (After the First World war, the Trianon decision caused Hungary to give up two thirds of its former territory). Glorious events of national history, famous representatives of national art, national sport heroes are also frequent symbols of national identity. We often find their representations at schools and other institutions (nurseries, restaurants and naturally in council offices). Sometimes we can find national symbols (for example, flags) even in churches: religion and national feeling are connected. National identity is also closely connected to tradition. For a long time, it was a guarding of peasant traditions. It is an interesting change, that in the last two decades “tradition” has become associated with a higher social status, and the guarding of traditions has been concentrated rather on those of the nobility and the bourgeoisie.

### 4. Symbols of the EU

The symbolic signs of the EU are presented as representations of a new (artificial) meta-national identity. In Hungary these symbols are most used by the liberal and socialist parties. The EU has only a few symbols: the obligatory flags, the stars of the EU, maps (showing members of the EU). We can find information posters, about EU-tenders, or about different courses, which prepare their participants for accommodation to different expectations of the EU. A special symbol is the “EU-tree”: in some places memorial saplings are planted on the day Hungary joined the EU.

### 5. Symbols of consumption

The ideology of market and consumption has become the strongest of all ideologies since the system change. The main signs of this ideology are as follows:

- a plethora of advertising;<sup>8</sup>
- cults of money, richness, and celebrities (these cults appear in many elements of everyday life: on posters, in newspapers, on TV, etc.)

---

<sup>8</sup> A bibliography of advertising would fill an entire library. Our main “guides” were Packard (1964), Baudrillard (1984), Pratkanis and Aronson (1992).

- a typical instrument of this cult of money the slot machine; this instrument of gambling appears in nearly every place of amusement.
- symbolic messages of media enforce the idea that the aim of life is amusement, consumption, and hedonistic pleasure;
- the “flagship” of the mainstream is the US; hence symbols of the US are closely connected with this ideology. Symbols of the US (and Anglo-Saxon world) have become status symbols, signifying richness and the (successful) market-economy. These have penetrated into various areas of everyday life. Signs of this process include: the prestige of the Anglo-American language; Anglo-American trade marks; the celebration of typical Anglo-American holidays (Halloween, Valentine’s Day, Challenge Day); increasing popularity of typical Anglo-American sports (baseball, golf, basketball); and the successes of American products (such as Coca Cola or McDonalds), which embody a typical feeling and way of life.

In 1985 we could draw up a Lenin-iconography, in 2005 we could have drawn up one for Coca Cola.<sup>9</sup> Signs for this beverage appeared everywhere (even in nurseries, party headquarters, etc.), and in very different forms. Coca Cola advertisements appear in different sizes (from match-boxes to the bulkhead of multi-storied houses); on different objects (parasols, sunshades, fences, signboards, posters, kitchen counters, on refrigerators, and so on). The “Coca Cola Universe” spans the whole century: there are old advertisements which breathe the atmosphere of nostalgia, and there are pictures of young (dynamic and carefree) men and women, who wear up-to-date clothes and present the signs of fashionable behaviors. Coca Cola sometimes gets into very strange context: we can see, for example, a Coca Cola advertisement next to a Che Guevara poster (in a club), or a huge Coca Cola advertisement in the entrance of the office of the formal communist party. Coca Cola has a very wide circle of symbolic associations. It is a symbol of the American way of life; a symbol of the “free world”, the symbol of richness and a high standard of living; the symbol of modernity, the symbol of urban civilization and sometimes the symbol of uniformity, the symbol of unhealthy life styles, etc...

## CONCLUSIONS

To sum up: the change in the political system provoked a lot of changes in visual and symbolic sign systems of Hungarian institutions. One part of the changes is a result of the advance of Hungarian society as one of the central countries of the European Union, by making accommodations to a higher civilizing standard and more democratic forms. Other changes reflect the transformation of value systems (individualization, dominance of market economy, and so on). The changes of symbolic elements of our visual surroundings are results *and – last but not least – instruments* of the transformation of society’s values, ideologies, and systems of political power.

Budapest – Helsinki, 2009

---

<sup>9</sup> Coca Cola has become an idol, a product with its own mythology, in the same sense, as Roland Barthes (1957) uses this category ; hence to draw up its “iconography” would be a normal task for a cultural anthropologist.

## REFERENCES

Barthes, R. (1957) *Mythologies*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Baudrillard, J. (1984) *Le système des objets*. Paris: Gallimard.

Elias, N. (1982) *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation I-II*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Habermas, J. (1962) *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Neuwied – Berlin-West: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag GmbH

Kapitány Á. – Kapitány G. (1989) *Intézménymimika ("Mimic" of Institutions)*. Budapest: VITA.

Kapitány Á. – Kapitány G. (2006) *Intézménymimika 2*. Budapest: Új Mandátum.

Kleinesel, J. (1981) *Házak, városok, társadalmak (Buildings, Cities, Societies)*. Budapest: Gondolat.

Packard, V. (1964) *The Hidden Persuaders*. New York: Pocket Cardinal Edition.

Pratkanis, A. – Aronson, E. (1992) *Age of Propaganda, The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York – Oxford: W. H. Freeman and Co.

## CULTURAL PATTERN OF MUSEUM GUIDES – PORTRAITS OF A RECENT PAST

### (NATIONAL MUSEUM, HOUSE OF TERROR)<sup>1</sup>

---

Although Benedict Anderson (Anderson 1992) has rightly suggested that the Museum is one of the pillars of the making of modern national identity (just as the National Census and the Map), its role in the shaping of national identity today is much less prominent. In this respect, the printed text – which is also a high-priority subject of Anderson’s analyses – the press, fine arts, or tourism have always had a larger impact, as it is the case nowadays with film and electronic media. However, museums are still a part of the shaping of national identity, while going through the changes in part communicated by the afore-mentioned media. Museums appear to be reflections of the past, but they are of course really always about the present; not only in the well-known sense that the present always rewrites the past or presents it in a different way (“everything was different then”), but also that in this way, it reflects the present in the past, too: as the museum is a view in the present (more precisely an image that records the present way of organising an exhibition); it is a present-image, which is expressed with the aid of objects from the past<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand, the museum is a present-image which always has a relationship with the past; for its visitors, the Museum is the past itself; thus its importance and impact changes also according to the degree and kind of importance the given era gives to the past.

In the following sections we shall examine a few museum collections and the view they offer on Hungary’s unfortunate 20<sup>th</sup> century history to place them among the factors contributing to the creation of present-day national consciousness (and the reflections and constructions of cultural patterns<sup>3</sup> shaping national consciousness). For this purpose, it is important to take readers who are less familiar with Hungarian history and national identity through the events of that history and the landmarks of the creation-process of a national identity which reflects on the history.

---

1 This study was prepared as part of the research registered OTKA T-038287, as well as the international research project “Cultural Patterns of the European Enlargement Process”. Second part of this text (Cultural Pattern of a Museum Guide /House of Terror/) was published in: Wahnich, S, Lašticová, B, Findor, A (eds) (2008). Politics of Collective Memory (Cultural Patterns of Commemorative Practices in Post-War Europe). /Cultural Patterns of Politics, Volume I. / Wien – Berlin: LIT Verlag.

2 The analysis of exhibitions in this study does not draw on disciplinary methods of museology, but rather looks at the role of museums as carriers of symbolic messages in the representation and construction of national identity and cultural patterns.

3 We use this notion in the sense defined by Kroeber and Kluckhohn: „Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols”. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, p. 181). In a museum guide, these patterns appear in a double sense: as cultural patterns of the presented era, and as a cultural pattern, which is suggested by the conception of the exposition.

## I. HISTORY OF A “THOUSAND YEARS”

Like the majority of European people, Hungarians are also among peoples with a long line of history; in this case, it is one of more than one thousand years (and written practically from the beginnings), and a historical consciousness is built on it. The “thousand years”, as a symbolic number, is synonymous with “a sense of history”, (moreover, this just about coincides with the time past since the Great Migrations in Europe, which brought substantial changes and by and large laid out the foundations of the present locations of nations.) Thus, reference to the thousand-year history constitutes an important part of the self-consciousness of several nationalities. (Hungary also celebrated the 1000<sup>th</sup> and the 1100<sup>th</sup> jubilees of the “landtaking” with magnitude, as well as the anniversaries of the foundation of the Catholic state in 1896, 1996 and in 2000.)

The “thousand-year” history for the Hungarian people began with the *landtaking* (this is not true for the primeval histories of every nation, as there are peoples who consider themselves aboriginals). The occurrence of the landtaking gives two distinct features to this history (although these may be found in other histories as well): first, the *consciousness of an original homeland* (in our case it is feelings of having come from the East, the now stronger, now weaker understanding, as well as an emotional and associational range of an attachment to the East, to Asia), and second, the ‘*reception*’ complex, the sensitivity of the non-natives. A duality of feelings towards Europe that Hungarians raiding into the West had experienced still survives today: first, a desire and admiration for the civilisations they found in Europe, mixed with a feeling of wanting to belong but lagging behind, a feeling of longing for that culture but being separated from it, and for this reason, the acceptance of European culture as a whole. Secondly, due to the fact that first they aimed to take the treasures of this civilisation by force but were beaten out, they had the experience and a *bitter feeling of defeat*. It was precisely this defeat that caused landtaking Hungarians – who were much more peaceful and capable of compromise than were known to be in Europe at the time – to accept European culture in its entirety, but the negative sentiment related to the feelings of defeat could not fade because of recurring experience of hostility and rejection from a part of Europe even after Hungarians settled down, adopted Christianity and integrated into European order. In the historical consciousness of some of the neighbouring countries a concept of the aggressive, barbarian-uncivilised Magyars lives on to this day (albeit this was not true to such extent even of the landtaking Magyars, who came from farming and state-making cultures), and a concept of Hungarians as exotic Asian intruders can be traced in the farther West. (We can from time to time find such foolishness in present-day Western-European textbooks or even scientific studies, that Hungarians did not have a language of their own until the rise of national consciousness in the Modern Age; and the fact that the nobility, and some of the non-nobles as well spoke Latin in addition to their Hungarian mother tongue and conducted business and official affairs as well as literacy in Latin, in line with the ideals of erudition in the Middle Ages, was interpreted to be a result of the imperfection or lack of a native language. These sources know next to nothing about events in Hungarian history in the Middle Ages, which were parallel to those of Europe. To cite an example, the English Magna Charta was framed only seven years earlier than its Hungarian

equivalent, which came not as a copy of the former, but as a result of simultaneous social developments, and was signed by a ruler who participated in the Crusades just as Richard the Lionheart did. Another fact not generally known is that the first public equestrian statue in the Europe following the Great Migrations was the work of Hungarian masters in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and this exemplary accomplishment after the preceding centuries known for their 'darkness' could not be explained even by those who were aware of the prominence of the Renaissance court of Matthias Corvinus at the time.) Rejection or at least ignorance is a rather general phenomenon. Thus the defeat in the battle of Augsburg at Lechfeld has become quite symbolic for Hungarian history: seven "mourning cavalymen" were sent home carrying the message "stop at the gates!" according to the legend. Although Hungarians in the following centuries awaited Europe's welcoming embrace again and again, fought against the Mongolians and the Turks in defence of European culture, albeit slowly, but still tried to adopt progressive developments (the emblematic phrase that swept across literature from the pen of the 18<sup>th</sup> century poet Batsányi was: "cast your watchful eyes on Paris!"), they could only experience moments of acceptance when their revolutions served broader "European" purposes (1848, 1956), and even in those moments their experience was confirmed that they could not count on Europe for effective support. It is true that many countries could claim the title of "Europe's bastion" and that essentially these people were all defending themselves (although by being a part of European culture themselves, this self-protection meant protection for Europe at the same time); it is also true that belonging somewhere is not a merit to be acknowledged, but still Hungarian historical consciousness has acquired as a distinct feature feelings of *disappointment and resentment against Western Europe's attitude of seclusion and ingratitude*. (And a related reaction: the compulsive desire to prove themselves *a developed nation with skills for adaptation and modernisation*.)

In terms of consciousness, this causes an interesting case of double-mindedness. First (to the outside) there is a constant feeling of inferiority, an obsession to adapt, to catch up with the more developed (which, of course, primarily feeds from the fact that Hungary lies east of the Rhine-Elbe line, sharing the fate of the economically-socially less advanced region, where the "second serfdom" was created as a result of a lack of modernisation). At the same time, the successful landtaking, the fact that the natives found here integrated more or less without any resistance, the expansion of borders (inwards) have strengthened the sense of state and nation-making. This meant that parallel to an attitude of being a "ruling people", which the neighbouring countries resented, there is some kind of a *rebellious stance* against stronger powers, which evolves around never accepting subsidiarity.

The other important feature of Hungarian history is a result of just this. The second half of the "thousand years" was marked by a series of periods of *foreign occupation*, thus these were times of conflict with conquerors. But as all but a very few uprisings and revolutions were defeated, some sort of a *tragic view of history* was reasserted: "the enemy always outnumbers us, we cannot count on anyone but ourselves; failure can be dignified, elevated and exemplary, but still threatens with the *death of the nation*". It is not by

chance that the National Anthem and other hymn-spirited national songs, like the Szózat (second national anthem) or the Transylvanian Anthem have also built on this experience (and also unusual of hymns from the point of view of music, has acquired a tragic tone). A tragic national fate centres around three historical events: “the Mohács Catastrophe” in 1526, which deprived the country of its independence (and even in its name emphasises its resemblance to a natural catastrophe, although the “Mongolian invasion” in 1241 caused a more massive destruction); the final surrender to the overpowering Austrian-Russian troops at Világos ending the 1848-49 Uprising, followed by the execution of the rebel generals and the Martyrs of Arad (which name is of a symbolic importance); and finally the Dictate of Trianon after World War One, which served in part the aim of giving justice but was also largely unreasonable in reducing Hungary’s area by one-third. (There are defeats and occupancy in the histories of many small nations, but an experience like Trianon is rather rare.) These events occupy a prominent place in Hungarian national consciousness, feeding a *fatalist* vision of being condemned to defeat (and strengthening a willingness to compromise based on these experiences) at the same time as a vital and persistent *will to survive*, despite all blows.

## II. “VICTIMS AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE”

The interpretation of history is a very crucial part of national consciousness. In Hungary, as in most countries in Europe, the Romantic era of “national awakening” in the 18<sup>th</sup> and more so in the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries determined the basic values and themes of national history and made national unity and pride an ideal. By contrasting the above-described bitter past with the centuries of state-making and state-magnifying heroism, the opinion-makers of this period tried to create an ideal concept of future rebirth worthy of this heroic sentiment. This kind of a “Risorgimento” had a strong ethos: in part it attributed the tragic past to severe blows of fate even using the ancient notion of God’s punishment, but in a larger part was based on the concept of facing one’s own responsibility. As opposed to “cowardly” and conceding nations in conflict with themselves, the picture of a hard-working, responsible nation was sketched, which is united in its aim of nation-building. People active in the “reform era” (1825-1848) fought their battles more or less along the lines of these ideals, all the way up to the revolution of 1848, which broke out from pressures for reform, and its defeat in 1849. Another defeat was not beneficial for promoting attitudes of responsible self-confrontation. Although the poetry of the most prominent poet who survived (János Arany) put great stress on coming to terms with the defeat by understanding the accountability of the participants, and on condemning feckless moves, by then the humiliated national pride with all its hope lost could no longer take this bitter self-critique, and in the years to come, *deferring responsibility to external factors* became generally widespread. Even the eminent intellectuals who tried to recall the self-assessing part of national identity from time to time felt their tragic fate to be more or less *predestined*, and it was not until the 1930s when a new generation appeared, which could conceive of a nation with powers for self-rebirth (and stemming from this hope, the best thinkers – such as István Bibó – again raised in his works the issue of a need for facing one’s own responsibility.) However, this generation was first pushed to the ground by an emerging fascism, then communist dictatorship took the chance of shaping

the nation's future out of their hands - thus these initiatives also ended in failure (and if we regard 1848/49 as the final defeat of the reform-era, we can see the suppression of the 1956 uprising and revolution as the final defeat of the reform-generation.) We can overall say that in the past 150 years Hungarian historical consciousness has been dominated by the idea that the possibilities of progress and a better future are throttled by an *external overpowering force* (and the indifference of possible allies), and if the question of *internal responsibility* is raised, this most often means a *lack of unity, conflicts within or treason* (in line with the Romantic ideals of a united nation.) The divided nation as the most serious of national errors (and a crime) went down in common knowledge as a cause demonised and severely exaggerated (moreover, it blocked the way to a healthy development of the mechanisms of a pluralistic democracy.)

An idealistic vision of a national unity often encourages those shaping historical consciousness to hide contradictions, thus the past is often presented in a simplified manner: the endeavours of a nation seen in unity are throttled by external overpowering forces on the one hand, and the crimes of a small treacherous group on the other. The fact that there is a diversity of interests which are not well coordinated or the responsibility of majority groups are rarely raised as issues. The pluralism of well-developed democracies is based precisely on the idea that *diversity is natural, the opposition is not an enemy or a betrayer, and that national interest is something created through the long process of negotiations between forces acknowledging each other*. These democracies have undergone one or several periods in a natural way when some forces tried to squeeze out the others; several of these countries had bloody civil wars where intolerant minorities tried to gain exclusive power, but there came a time when a historical compromise was reached with the former enemy and slowly they learned to regard them as people just like they are. Literature dealing with the past has always been great help in this. For example, in the history of England and Scotland, the novels of Walter Scott represent a peace-making, revitalising power, which is able to express a modern British national identity – one that was created as the synthesis of previously strongly adverse religious parties and to some extent even English and Scottish people as a whole, who had been fighting over several centuries – at the same time as moulding-shaping that identity, and getting it accepted by a wide scale of readers. This process was not fully completed in Hungarian history. It is going too far to suggest that the history of Hungary has never included traditions of tolerance and a democratic coordination of interests. In places and times when the pluralistic mechanisms of self-governance were working (with the exception of short periods of dictatorship, these were more or less working in towns as well as on a national scale), we could trace many examples of healthy negotiation and tolerance. But the need to keep up a spirit of resistance against the powers that had throttled attempts for freedom, did not encourage the concept of making peace with the enemy, and in a divided nation, where those subservient to a foreign power stand on one side, it was easier to see things black and white. The Hungarian equivalent to Walter Scott, Mór Jókai, the great Romantic writer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tried to reconcile opposite forces in his time, and his efforts met with some success: it is not by chance that many parts of Hungarian national identity can be linked to his works and perhaps it is not going too far to see his ideas leading up to the compromise between the Habsburgs and the Hungarian political elite in 1867, and as an

intellectual soil for the “dual-power” Austro-Hungarian consciousness which followed. But history moved on, and the importance of the compromise was shattered by the demise of the Monarchy while new lines of division were created in Hungarian society, which have not reached a synthesis or peaceful resolution to this day. All this was only aggravated by occupation first by the Germans then by the Russians, which, – due to a lack of opportunities to express ideas or will freely – could naturally not result in a blending of opposite interests. It is not surprising if under such circumstances – basically deprived of exercising responsibility – an aversion of responsibility dominates historical consciousness. Though incidentally, the Hungarian political elite, with a few exceptions, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century was reluctant to come to terms with its own responsibility even in times when it would have had the opportunity, and what is more, it could not act responsibly on these opportunities either. (For example between the two world wars, but the recent years since the transition to democracy were not without fault in this respect either.) Of course, it is no easy matter: the elites of even relatively more independent periods were socialised in the decades of subordination and the same could be said of the whole of society. The mechanisms of action and reaction are also firmly present. If for example, the notions of the “sinful city” or “sinful nation” are for decades hammered into the minds of people (the first notion is a depiction of Budapest under the Republic of Councils in 1919 by Miklós Horthy, regent for 25 years between the two world wars, and the second is how Stalin’s disciple Mátyás Rákosi stigmatised Hungary as the country of “nine million fascists”), then it is only a natural reaction that people’s historical consciousness will try and free itself from such an unfairly exaggerated stigma, and the survivors of history do not wish to engage in issues related to their own past responsibilities. (And in raising the idea of responsibility, people will again resort to condemning external forces and traitors, and creating an image of the victim-nation.)

Defining responsibility, however, is only one element of dealing with the past. It is at least as important in the making of historical consciousness to see what direction a society in a certain period is taking, as the past is always interpreted and reinterpreted along the tracks ahead, where a society feels progress is possible (and necessary). The events of the recent past are important in this respect as well. Under “socialism”, progress was outlined from a feudal past towards an egalitarian communism (accordingly, only those events of the past were seen as positive which either expressed *resistance to inequality* – such as peasant uprisings, revolutions, heretic movements, workers’ campaigns – or involved “the people”, the community of equals, which under feudalism was represented mainly by the serf-peasantry, and later the working class and the “working peasantry”).

At the same time (secondarily), *the rise into a middle-class status* was also seen as positive when looking at the past – at least compared to feudalism – as under Marxist formation theory, which deemed capitalism the most developed stage of social formation before socialism; (this idea was confirmed by the modernism concept of “socialism”, which looked at developed capitalist states as a model stage to achieve and to surpass.) Marxist history studies often express regret at (and base some of their arguments for explaining Hungary’s backwardness on) the fact that the transformation to a bourgeois-middle class society was late and

only partial. In the vocabulary of the era, the word “bourgeois” was clearly negative, the only adjectives which carried more negative connotations were “noble”, “feudal” (or semi-feudal) and of course, “fascist”. (This ultimately suggested that feudal structures may be superseded by a bourgeois-middle class transformation, but if this failed to take place, it should be overstepped and the move must be made straight into a “workers’ society”, which meant an egalitarian worker-peasant-state civil servant structure in the socialist terminology.) The collapse of communism (and the shifts in historical consciousness that preceded it) triggered a counter-reaction even to this several decades-long path. “Worker” and “working-class” were stripped of their positive connotations, their goal-determining nature, and “middle-class” came to take their place as the social ideal. Even if “noble” did not win back its previous status; “nobles”, “aristocrats”, “priests and monks”, “landed peasants” – groups that had been eliminated, attacked and stigmatised just like the middle-classes under socialism – recouped their position and became seen as positive models again (though with a touch of nostalgia). All this accurately reflected the changes taking place in society: towards a transition to middle-class values (“building” a middle-class, capitalist society), in a way that (as a correction of the artificially-enforced social changes) all the other (pre-capitalist) social groups eliminated by force under socialism were given a chance to reconstruct themselves. (While the action-reaction pendulum swings back, the fact that after four decades of socialism a society cannot be the same as before gets no recognition or importance, and “building capitalism” is often done with no regard to the social changes that have taken place since, in the same artificial-unstructured manner as “building socialism” had been. The stress is on the readjustment and redirection of historical consciousness, and the ideals of a “middle-class Hungary” seem to fit this model perfectly at the moment.)

With a dominance of the ideals of the creation of a civil (middle-class) society, it is not surprising to see the earlier dogma, which saw Hungary’s economic-social “backwardness” rooted in a lack of civil society, to live on more or less in an unchanged form. We have pointed out ourselves that indeed many things were missing in the history of Eastern Europe from the conditions which had driven developments in the West, and it is also no doubt true that compared to western models, there was hardly any bourgeoisie in Hungary, and, as it is often stressed, those that were there were of foreign origin. However, a lack of bourgeois modernisation is slightly exaggerated in history studies – and through them, in western research on the history of this region. It is inaccurate to say that bourgeois developments were entirely unprecedented. It is possible to see Renaissance in Hungary as the affairs of a small group of lords and courtiers (although motifs stemming in this Renaissance culture can still be found in folklore today), but it is incontestable that there were significant attempts at amassing capital on the cattle and salt trade in the 16th century, which generated wealth for groups of nobility and peasantry who were taking the first small steps towards creating a bourgeois layer (these groups gained strength during the *kuruc* insurrectionist war of Ferenc Rákóczi fighting against Hapsburg oppression, and Hungary’s strive marked by independence and “westernisation” was only bolted down in the defeat of 1711.) In the same period, market and mining towns gained some strength, and life in these towns was not much different from those in western ‘*civitas*’, which are regarded as forerunners of classical

bourgeois developments. It is also not by chance that Protestantism, which Max Weber has rightly connected with the spirit of capitalism, was so well-soiled in Hungary in this period that Catholicism could only be restored to about a two-thirds degree, and even this took all the strength of 200 years of counter-reformation. Attempts to turn towards bourgeois modernisation led by the middle-nobility/landed gentry in the 19th century already leave their mark on general historical consciousness (this is an essential feature of the reform-era), but as these attempts were also thwarted, and in the second half of the century, nobles turned away from reforms, later history interpretations looked at the reform-era as a failed attempt and dated the real beginnings of bourgeois modernisation to the Gründerzeit after the Compromise, under the Monarchy. Consequentially, historians only recognised features attributed to the mainly urban and especially Budapest-resident members of the developing bourgeoisie at the end of the 19th century (who were to a great extent from a non-Hungarian – German, Jewish or Slovak – background) among criteria for bourgeois developments.

This introduction was to herald an understanding of the fact that a view of history present (also) in museums is always clearly influenced by the above factors, which generally determine historical consciousness as well. In the sections to follow, we examine some museum exhibits in Budapest from two aspects of the role they have in shaping historical consciousness. 1. Their relationship with the recent past of the 20th century; their self-perception in taking audiences from the past eras of fascism and communism into a United Europe. 2. The conceptual changes historical consciousness as represented by museums undergoes in its relationship with history (including interpretation of the recent past).

Due to the fact that – as we have pointed out earlier – museum exhibitions and the brochures and exhibition guides prepared from them highlighting certain features always convey some kind of an interpretation of history, and through this an established view of society, we consider this symbolic message a suitable subject for analysis and interpretation (in which we may find the effects of the general changes in national consciousness, as discussed briefly in our introduction, just as the individual or group opinions of the exhibition organisers). In the next sections, *we shall look at these symbolic messages with special regard to those elements we see prominently featured in present-day public discourse.*

### III. THE MUSEUM'S (CHANGING) VIEW OF HISTORY

(National Museum: 1977-2002)

We have selected two museums among Budapest's exhibits for analysis. The National Museum is of course the most important in terms of shaping national consciousness; it is one of the symbols of Hungarian history in its mere existence, a "sacred place". National museums everywhere play an important role in creating modern national consciousness, but in Hungary this is topped with two other symbolic sets of concepts. First, it was the *initiator* symbol of modernisation and the accompanying support for culture by the aspirations of the nobility in the 19<sup>th</sup> century reform-era discussed above. The museum was founded by Count Ferenc Széchenyi, whose

son, István Széchenyi, probably following his father's example, was the instigator of the reform-era with his parliamentary speech in 1925 and the founder of national institutions, while being the main engine in the creation of other key establishments pivotal to bourgeois modernisation for twenty years. Secondly, the building of the National Museum is connected to *symbols of the 1848 revolution*: just as the Bastille in Paris or the fall of the Winter Palace in Russia (raids against buildings of hated emblems of tyranny) symbolise revolutionary change, so does the National Museum represent the events of the practically bloodless revolution of March 1848 in Hungary (not in the name of "something to destroy" but in the name of "what we are building"). It is at its steps, before the collected treasures of a nation in midst of creating an identity and building organically on its history, that the young revolutionaries declare that the nation will take its fate into its own hands (as well as its past, its achievements and possibilities) and by the selection of the building will express that the revolution is a direct continuation of the attempts of the museum-creating reform-era. (It also carries a symbolic meaning that the national petition and Sándor Petőfi's poem calling people to rebellion were read out here on the eve of the revolution in this core institution for public thought, in the coffee house symbolising freedom of thought, and then in the seized printing house, which embodied the struggle for a freedom of the press. This was followed by the seizure of the museum, that is, of national culture or the nation as the "subject", then the revolutionaries march to the Castle, which is a symbol of royal-state power, and by opening the prison cells which confined political convicts, it was also an expression of the general fight for political freedom.) Although such intensive feelings were not attached to the museum later in its history, from time to time it became a symbolic stage of the nation's historical consciousness. Under the "dualism" of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was here that after they were returned home, the ashes of Lajos Kossuth, a leader and along with Petőfi one of the emblematic figures of the 1848/49 revolution, were put on a bier. During the bourgeois revolution of 1918, it was here that they placed the bier of Endre Ady, one of the greatest poets of his time and a herald to both that revolution and the ensuing national awakening in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And it was here, too that the Holy Crown returned to Hungary in the final years of the Kádár-era was first put on display, the symbol of independent Hungarian statehood, which in those times before the transition in political systems, carried the message of a non-communist past as well as of a country independent of any occupying forces. (The first meaning was accepted by the Kádár-regime, with the aim of introducing some kind of a "compromise" after the Stalinist view of praising exclusively a "progressive" past and to integrate all aspects of the national past which posed no threat to its power. The second meaning was only understood by the historical common consciousness, which is why the site became an attractive place of pilgrimage, attracting masses, against the communist regime, and after the political turnabout, the regalia were moved to the Parliament amidst heavy debate, following the election victory of the political party which considered the traditions of the Christian Hungarian State as ones to follow directly and wished to express that this conservative Christian state embodied in the Holy Crown is not only a Past preserved in a museum, but one of the features of the current execution of political power.)

The National Museum therefore has always played a distinguished role among exhibition halls. As a result, its exhibits have increased symbolic value: they always reflect views on the origins of Magyars and the state, an up-to-date interpretation of big historic events and current streams of cultural orientation. (To give only one – though very telling – example, the first exhibition which opened here in 1946 covered the subject of “Russian-Hungarian relations” (on the first floor) and the “Images of the American lifestyle” (on the second floor), representing the winning powers, those who will provide the definitive trend to follow, and at the same time the fact that for Hungary it is the Russian power that is influential (and it is needless to say that after the end of the coalition period, there was no more to be even heard of presenting an American or Western lifestyle – not even in the most backwoods corner of the museum).

Naturally, for decades after the communist takeover, the National Museum’s exhibitions and brochures presented the ruling ideology. We cannot venture to analyse this period in the scope of the present paper. Our aim is to compare three museum guide-leaflets, the first of which is from 1977, around the beginnings of a descending current in the Kádár-regime, the second from around the time of the political transition, and the third reflect present day (that is, currently domineering) views. The first two texts can be helpful in contrasting conditions before and after the political changes, and the third one is especially worthy of attention, as it had been prepared with a representative purpose, to commemorate and summarise 200 years of the museum’s collections. The three texts (including a rich variety of photographs which we have also analysed) are as follows:

Fülep, Ferenc (ed.) (1997) *A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum* (The Hungarian National Museum). Budapest: Corvina.

Fodor, István (ed.) (1992) *Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum*. Budapest: Corvina.

Pintér, János (ed.) (2002) *A 200 éves Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Gyűjteményei* (Collections of the National Museum of Hungary celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary). Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum.

The museum’s nature of expressing the ideological orientation of a given period is well represented by the following lines in the museum guide of 1997: “the object material of Hungarian history under the Horthy-era was exclusively collected from the glittering objects of the ruling class, and the artefacts related to the common people, to serfdom, were missing entirely”. An interpretation of history based on the class struggle, explaining every phenomenon from the point of view of class relations, clearly dominated after the communist takeover, and although from the mid-1960s, when an “easing of severity”, and the “softening” of dictatorship came about, the emphasis on class struggle gradually diminished, to give its place over to a “global view of society”, this kind of view was still there in the entire range of publications and through it was no longer considered “contemporary”, it was most certainly not against the likings of the ruling power. In this a swinging movement prevailed as well: as the socialist system overstressed the importance of social inequality and differences, the perspective of the “oppressed people”, so did the transition period after the demise of socialism put the stress on the opposite end, and as we shall see, current trends of history do not problematise these questions at all, but regards them wholly as topoi of a discredited paradigm.

However, there are continuations in the historical interpretations of the Seventies and the period after the political transition. For instance, the leaflet from 1977 already greatly emphasises Hungary's location in Central Europe, which is a significant difference compared to the 1950s and 60s, when the east-west polarisation of the Cold War put Hungary definitely among Eastern countries (Eastern bloc, Warsaw Pact, Eastern-Europe). In the 1970s, in line with the Kádár regime's cautious attempts of "warming up" to the West, the concept of "a Europe of three historical regions" became popular (which is the title of a book by the most famous Hungarian historian of the era, Jenő Szűcs). This concept centres on diluting an East-West polarisation by inserting a (mixed) image of an independent Central Europe and the special (mediator) role that would stem from that image. These ideas have a great tradition in Hungary: Kossuth, the leader of the 1848 revolution, had already recognised (though already in exile) the possibilities of a region seen as a complexity of small nations living among the large German and Slavic powers in the 19th century and he formulated the vision of the Danube-confederation, which was to serve as a political-economic collaboration. Not much later, Hungary is referred to as the mediator between two worlds in the great turn-of-the-20th century poet Endre Ady's "ferry country" metaphor. (The reference is to Hungary ferrying back and forth between the shores of Eastern and Western cultures.) This latter idea is revitalised at the end of the 20th century, when a book entitled *Soldiers of Ferry Country* was published discussing Hungary's drifting role in the Second World War. The metaphor lives on. A current exhibit at the National Museum is entitled "Hungary on the border of East and West", while accession to the EU was interpreted by the media as the end to a ferry country status, with Hungary coming to port in the West. (The business weekly *Heti Világgazdaság* printed a cover image of a harbour piling to emphasise the feeling of "arrival"). Another strong metaphor in addition to the ferry-image with a similar function is the "bridge"-metaphor: Hungary as a bridge between the East and the West. (Among the celebrations of joining the EU, nearly every city held events in some way built on the symbolism of the bridge-metaphor. The emblematic decorations of the bridges in Budapest were spectacular: a festive breakfast on the Chain Bridge, a grassy pasture installed on the Liberty Bridge and a curtain of waterfall on the Elisabeth bridge were all among festivity gear, but even in those provincial cities where there was a bridge, this element was given a prominent role in the enlargement celebrations. The "bridge" in this sense mainly referred to a link between the East and West, but recently the image of Hungary linking the North and the South has also gained ground: for example in respect to goodwill missions to the Balkans, or the motorway extension programmes to the south.) In an East-West perspective, the swing had moved nearer the west already in the 1970s, in a manner described earlier, and finally arrived there with the transition to democracy. (Being a part of the West, of Europe, is already evident in the current museum exhibition. The reason why we still speak of a swinging movement is that we should like to refer to the fact that this kind of to-and-fro' movement happened several times in the course of history: Saint Stephen in 1000 was clearly attached to the West, some of his successors looked for allies in Byzantium and Russia, but choosing Western Christianity decided this question for a long while. The conquest by the Turks again put Hungary in a middleman position "between two pagans", as the chroniclers of the time saw it, then after the Turks were beaten off, another period of westernisation began,

for example, Széchenyi in the reform-era pointed to England as an example to be followed, but Endre Ady at the end of the century was "Western-oriented" in a way which he expressed as an "Eastern-type" yearning. The 20<sup>th</sup> century journal channelling literary-intellectual movements of the time bore the normative name *Nyugat*, "West", but the movement of the "popular" writers of the 1930s and 40s already turned against this current and outlined an alternative "Third Way" programme by the title of "Eastern People", which in content was more or less a centralist viewpoint, but was also informed about Soviet developments, hence the title. Communists moved the country in spirit nearer to the east, but already from the 1950s and 60s Hungarians more and more distinctively chose to look to the west instead, which represented higher living standards, civilisation and democracy, and intellectual life was shaped accordingly as well.)

There is another aspect of change continuously present parallel to the above occurrences, and this is the widening of the scope of cultures, of cultural effects. The prevalent currents of the 1950s, in line with an economic policy based on autarchy and a military policy based on the "hedgehog" or all-round position, which was applied to cultural life as well, tended to join Hungary up to the Slavic cultural community. As Hungarians are Finno-Ugric people, this fraternity could not be based on blood relations, but the idea that wild landtaking Hungarians took patterns of "civilisation" over from the Slavs was especially emphasised. (Although this view was beneficial in overriding feelings of cultural supremacy and arrogance towards Slavic people demonstrated in the previous centuries, but it now slipped into the other untrue extreme, often aggressively rewriting history in the process to fit the theory.) In the 1970s, the isolationist position melted somewhat, and the sampled exhibition displays references to many cultures and a wide scope of cultural contact (eg. with cultures in the region of the Aegean sea, Celts, Sarmatians, peoples of the Byzantium, Western Europe, the Rhine-region, Limoges, Flemish influences and the marks left by the Italian Renaissance, etc.) These trends continue: a Western-European influence becomes more and more of a factor in exhibition material, even in size. An opening up to cultures brought about the adoption of *multicultural values*. Multiculturalism is a global trend at the end of the millennium, and this is represented in the museum material on two levels. First, Hungary, which had been presented as a homogeneous country earlier, is now looked at from multicultural aspects, as a country bringing together many cultural influences and minorities, and the connected strengthening regional differences (which is another way of stressing that Hungary can be seen as a "patchwork" of several sub-cultures.)

In connection with these trends, the above-described special features of Hungarian history – the wavering between the East and West, the cultural openness and a synthesis-seeking nature, which is to welcome many different subcultures – can be found in Hungarian historical consciousness and self-image as representations of a stance of survival, vigour and having *roots in Europe* (several studies reveal that this is one of the strongest sources of national pride). These topoi already form a substantial part of the current exhibition, as *survival* and European roots are forcefully problematised as the main streams of thought governing historical consciousness.

The third marked symbolic element we found in the exhibition material was the accent on the settled, agricultural, handicraft-culture aspect of Hungarian culture, rather than the image of the raiding, nomad, horse-riding Magyars. The figure of the conqueror on horseback was greatly emphasised in the Romantic era, and later in the millennium version, celebrating the thousandth anniversary of the landtaking in lavish style, and the figure was well suited to deeply-engraved Western European stereotypes as well. Modernisation is a value based on a development of civilisation, which recognises settlement and the birth of farming cultures as a serious landmark. Thus, traditions suggesting a settled, established, developed and developing culture will be strong in the self-image of a country wishing to follow the treads of modernisation. From the industrialisation in the 1940s, the earlier image of an *Agrarian-Hungary* gradually transfigures and we have the industrial-agrarian country in the 50s and the progress into a civil-modern society from the end of the 60s as the ideal images. Accordingly, *handicraft products*, seen as preceding production in the automated industry, and *objects of urban culture* were given more scope among the relics of the past. Objects of fine craftsmanship, elaborate detail and a display of industrial achievement were emphasised among exhibition objects of the distant past, and the temporal arrangement of the exhibition portrays the 1100 years of Hungarian history as embedded in cultures inhabiting the Carpathian basin in earlier times, also implying that Hungary has a very civilised historical past, where cultures found here on arrival (on which Hungarian history was built on) represented a *high level of civilisation*. This suggestion gained further ground recently: the most spectacular (and most innovatively installed) part of the exhibition is the area presenting the period before the landtaking, which stresses that the Carpathian basin was home to *important stages (and centres) of the development of European culture and civilisation*: the historic artefacts displayed here are not relics of a periphery, but of the “mainstream”. The Roman province of Pannonia had always been one of the prime displays, but this, too has gained importance recently, as the exhibit highlights that the Roman period was the *cradle of European civilisation*. This message is carried most prominently through the aspects of religion, art and development of individuality. But while an earlier picture on the whole conveyed the message that nearby “barbaric” cultures were relatively underdeveloped compared to Romans, now each of the other cultures are presented as a developed centre in its own right at the time. There are two additional items of interest to support this. First, it is often noticeable that future generations look at certain periods through the extension of the present: for example, in the case of Roman history, it has been held true from Aquincum to Pompeii that the lifestyle of Romans were very similar to those of modern man (from floor heating through sewage systems to shop arcades and barracks, from promenades to seaside holiday resorts). This kind of extension of present times now reaches back to a more distant past. There is a display of a reconstructed home dated 5000 B.C. and a village protected in a clever way by a watch-tower from 1200 B.C., both showing a lifestyle of elements familiar in today’s world, and the objects themselves are arranged (restored) in a way as if they were from the present-day. Thus, the past is not a (destroyed) world of broken tiles and withered pieces of metal, but something evoking power and continuation. The other interesting aspect is that the border of the Roman province, the limes, more or less cut the present-day area of Hungary into two parts along the Danube: and by portraying

items and original sites accordingly, implicitly the concept of *a declining slope measuring the standards of civilisation* between the two parts of the country, which lives on today, is captured, and with it the idea that Hungary is not part of the East in the East-West polarisation, but the *border between East and West actually lies right within the country*.

Therefore, the exhibition as a whole – and this unique way of looking at things leaves its mark on the parts that cover periods after the landtaking as well – underlines not only what Hungary has received from the developed world but also what “we” have given Europe. (There are severe differences on this agenda in the history interpretations of political parties and the subcultures behind them in Hungary today. Some, predominantly the *social-liberal parties*, stress the *West’s impact of development*, forthcoming in such slogans as “It is not the EU that wants to join us”. Others, primarily the *conservative parties* on the other hand argue – and the museum tilts towards reflecting this viewpoint – that Hungary has something to be proud of, that we are taking a rich cultural heritage into the EU. The slogan attached to this latter group is: “There is life beyond the EU.” The discourse on this side mainly showcases such traditional items of Hungarian agriculture as outstanding wines, fruit and animals, sometimes with the suggestion that the EU is “afraid” of competition from such high-quality products. However, as the Agrarian-Hungary image lost importance within the museum’s scope, these motifs were not so highly represented either.)

From another aspect, the museum exhibition material is successful in reflecting a shift in importance of elements in the historical self-image, in a re-inclusion of *traditions of the nobility* from the mid-eighties, and increasing practices of noble and bourgeois traditions from the time of the political turnabout. In a later part of this paper we shall elaborate on the changing weight of representations of social groups, here, we shall only present the way the museum is able to reconcile its aforementioned attempts to show the past to be of a civilised nature with a strengthened preference to noble traditions apparent in public thought. As nobility itself saw its historical legitimacy rooted in the victories of landtaking nomads fighting on horseback, noble traditions are strongly tied to this tradition. The concept of the nomad horseman had been gradually played down under socialism, first because of the earlier described modernisation attempts, and second, as an ideal linked to the “ruling class of Hungary under Horthy”. After the transition to democracy, some subcultures developed a reappraisal of this tradition for the very reason of denial of something denied in the socialist system. This can be seen in recent fashions of equestrian sports and horse-breeding, as well as an abundance of riding tours and hussar associations, equestrian archery and a rediscovery of other customs of the landtaking period. In the sphere of museums, this conceptual change is well-represented by the *reconstruction and reputed installation of Feszty’s panoramic painting* depicting the Landtaking in a Millennium spirit, which had been locked away in a store-room under socialism, and the *pilgrimage-like mass movement organised around it*. The nomad-horseman traditions are there in the source material of the National Museum, too, but – as earlier said – it is not given great importance. A noble tradition is brought to the foreground in another way: as the renaissance of the culture of the nobility was put on the agenda in connection with and highly interlacing with the ideals of

conversion to a civil society in the 1990s, a presentation of the historic *nobility* (and gradually its placement in the limelight) is largely done through its “*bourgeois*” features and lifestyle, together with the representation of the bourgeoisie of the time.

The fourth conceptual change we shall look at is related to changes in the image of the nomad-horseman: while earlier this image came through in national identity as representing Hungarians as a *militant nation* (this was reinforced by the 19<sup>th</sup> century nobility movement, the ethos of the war of independence, then by an irredentist disposition between the two world wars, and finally the basic platform of turning everything into a military issue prevalent in the 50s), soon some elements insisting on the quality of a “*peaceful nation*” were more and more forthcoming (and became dominant from the Seventies and Eighties). (The foreign visitors of the exhibition organised to commemorate the 1100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landtaking in 1996 were indeed surprised to see an image of a peaceful, farming nation, which was projected by the material on display there. It is also true of the present exhibition, that if a weapon is displayed, it is usually not fighting, but fishing or hunting equipment.) Slowly shifting away from the role of “*bastion of Europe*”, Hungary began to identify itself as the homeland of talent, putting talented professionals in the focus (scientists, inventors, musicians or film directors) who were in one way or another linked up to European and global culture and were not at the edge of it (as a bastion) but within it. The power of the intellect started to come before military merits. (This message was very powerful in the temporary exhibit set up at the Millenary Park, the new exhibition centre of the years 2000 also referred to as the “*Hungarian Beaubourg*”, with the title “*Dreamers of Dreams*”). By the 1990s (from the mid-Eighties), weapons and equipment connected to mounted warfare are fewer in the exhibits, and get replaced by jewellery and other symbolic elements of a peaceful lifestyle (objects related to food and eating, and objects of the home). The exhibition currently on display at the National Museum gorges into the theme of inventors and Hungarians who won the Nobel-prize: after a series of rooms presenting each period of history chronologically, the exhibition ends with a room dedicated to Hungarians famous for their knowledge and talent. Here we see another characteristic theme: the country is putting out talent but is unable to provide the circumstances for them to unfold: *they must go abroad* to make something of their talent. In this concept-group, *the West has a positive and negative role at the same time*: it is the patron of talent (through being well-developed and rich); but at the same time with the act of “*brain-drain*” it takes its own tribute. (This issue is also problematised either explicitly or implicitly in connection with the accession to the EU. This is also what the government kept in mind when it set up the Széchenyi grant for professors in the Nineties, to keep professionals in the country. A small reference also to the “*brain-drain*” effect, is that in the weeks following EU enlargement, many Hungarian doctors received letters addressed to them personally, offering a job abroad.)

Not only does the concept of the “*militant people*” wane in the museum representation, but the actual *battles, wars are lower represented* as well. For example, the view earlier offered of the Turkish conquest was of a perishing-demolished country; but this view is less prominent in the 1997 exhibition, and is

slowly replaced by a focus on objects from Turkish culture (drinking vessels, ornamental leather cloaks distinctive of the period, etc.) as elements contributing to integration and cultural development; and Hungary is shown not as a miserable country wiped out again and again, but as a country constantly on the path of civilisation while absorbing the impacts of different cultures and working them together. (This message is strong in the *Expo 2000* catalogue, one of the important documents of the country-image aimed at the outside world.)

The fifth shift we recognised in the historical interpretations of museums: a change in terms of the regard for *social status*. The total effect of the image conveyed signals *a status much higher than before* (it is important to note the proportions to which various social strata are represented in the presentation of the national history of a culture: different degrees of representation of a certain status suggest lower or higher status for the entire culture.) It is striking to see a fairly large share of jewellery, including gold jewellery – as opposed to iron tools and tile vessels. The cultures portrayed as part of the history of the Carpathian basin (including Hungarian culture) are presented as highly civilised and prosperous societies. Work and farming tools are less prominently featured than before. The history presented here is mainly a history of power, of the ruling classes. There is an abundance of symbols of power (distinctions, seals, currencies, deeds of conveyance and founding documents.) There are many decorative objects. (Of course, this has been the case for some time; the real change is that the share of objects belonging to the working class has declined in the historic material.) The culture of royal courts and related cultures has always been highly represented, but its importance has only increased (Saint Stephen, Louis I the Great, Matthias Corvin, Habsburgs). The bourgeoisie is also well-represented. (In the displays of the Middle Ages and Pre-Modern times, relics illustrating a culture of guilds dominate; as does the bourgeois lifestyle of the nobility in the 19<sup>th</sup> century collections and, to a smaller extent, middle-class influences traced in the objects of the working class in connection with 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century workers' movements. In the exhibits organised after the political transition, collections cover the subject of freemasonry as well.) Sociology research reveals that the value system of the nobility is mainly centred around continuity, while that of burghers is focused on achievement. This is reflected in the museum collections as well, and the two sets of values give the exhibitions full effect. Within the scope of concepts related to the Hungary of nobles while adopting bourgeois elements, we must note a marked interest in the aristocracy, including a *much more positive representation of the Habsburgs* as before: featuring a cult of Queen Elisabeth, memorabilia of Francis Joseph I and the “Hungarian-friendly” role of Palatine Joseph as seen in the context of the reform-era, etc.)

It is true not only of the cultures of production but also in social spheres that a shift is seen from the image of a rural Hungary to a more urbanised Hungary. (The campaign for EU membership showed differences belonging to different paradigms: conservative parties tended to evoke a picture of the rural Hungary, while liberals turned to European culture, as the culture of cities, and presented Hungarian culture also as an urban culture in their campaign.) In this respect, the museum material generally builds more on urban sources than

earlier. (In the collection on 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century Budapest, a “global city” feel - night life, night clubs - is emphasised, which had not been there in earlier presentations.) In sum, the image created is of a *socially stratified, middle-class Hungary*, rather than the *Hungary of peasants and proletarians* stressed in the 50s and 60s.)

The concept of Hungary as a country of music fits right into the symbolic field of the country turning into a civil society; this image is especially important in museum brochures (Beethoven and Liszt’s piano, Haydn’s barytone, Marie Antoinette’ harp, Katherine of Brandenburg’s virginal, a Hungarian cembalo. It is striking that this image does not hold out to the present day: for example, the world-famous Hungarian personage of music, Bartok, is not represented.)

The tendency to adopt middle-class values is captured not only in the weight each social stratum is represented in, but also in the way of representation. While in 1977, the presentable atmosphere of festivities dominates the scene and everyday life is hardly portrayed, from the 1980s representation turns strictly towards everyday practices. Already in the displays on prehistoric civilisations food and drink and consumption in general is accentuated, including herbs, various cooking methods and modes of living. This focus on lifestyles is a central theme throughout the collections. (In terms of a shift in history interpretation, the moving away from a history of events, especially a history of dynasties, over to a history of lifestyles is predominant in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is no doubt connected to a general process of democratisation in society as a whole. This connection is even stronger with the spread of middle-class values, which first and foremost affects cultural attitudes centred around lifestyle, ever since its stems in the late Gothic-Renaissance period. However, the exhibitions examined support the idea that it is more the adoption of middle-class values than democratisation which is a factor here; for example, in the sections on Hungarian history, a preference is given to the presentation of the upper classes, but in their portrayal, the stress is on lifestyle, common every-day details: and this is precisely why the earlier mentioned feature that the presentation of nobility is permeated with middle-class traits came about. An increased role of elements of lifestyle is also related to the trend of a shift from a history of ideologies towards more pragmatic world views.)

In 2002, the nostalgia for “balmy days of peace” (a term used for the period before the First World War) heats up again. It is in this context that the object range of classic everyday middle-class life appears most markedly (bills of fare, Orders of Dance, ‘ex libris’ bookplates, advertisement leaflets) and not only individual objects recall a life on the way to middle-class status (pre-socialist years) but the whole atmosphere created by the displays. It is obvious that the exhibition designers planned the visual composition of objects and other elements – and in most instances there are object groups for this purpose – in a way that would work towards evoking this complete atmosphere.

The sixth area where a significant change can be identified is the interpretation of the problem of *nation and/or progress*. (The issue was first raised in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the time of Maria Theresia and Joseph II,

the first period when the economic-social-cultural development was not primarily related to internal resources, but to an eternal oppressive power, and the “civilising”, “enlightening” activity of that power, therefore, one's relation to power, became ambivalent from the point of view of national consciousness. The conflict of those in favour of progress and those emphasising nationhood has accompanied the country's history through the centuries ever since, although there is consensus that the ideal periods in the history of Hungary are those in which the two ideals are successfully represented together (as in the Age of Reform or the Western-oriented wing of the populist writers' movement, or in the work of certain prominent writers or poets of various periods). The conflict of the two different attitudes still remains on the agenda today: intellectual life and public thinking are still divided by the debate of these two alternatives: the one *focusing on nationhood and internal resources and emphasising the importance of traditions* and the one *primarily looking to Western models and emphasising the involvement of external resources*. (This issue is also related to the East-West polarisation: for the Western-oriented, the attraction of the West lies primarily in the progressive influence; while for those favouring nationhood, the attraction of the East is in the associations of the roots and the peculiarities of Hungarian identity. (In the Communist era, the “East” meant the Soviet model: and the propaganda of the fifties tried to integrate the various associations linked with the “East” into this model, and they actually managed to divert some of the “nationalists” of the time, although for a short while only, towards this Soviet orientation, building on the group's former “People of the East” programme. However, the “East” was compromised for a long time by this attempt -- as the world of backwardness, brutality and despotic inclinations. Thus, today, even the “nationalists” are not primarily Eastern-oriented: even those strongly criticising the West's negative phenomena and its “colonising” attitude towards Hungary emphasise Hungary's belonging to the West. Thus, a smaller or greater degree of “Western orientation” today carries *the possibility of the reconciliation of progress and national interests* to most Hungarians). This shift of emphasis is also a source of further examples of reinterpretation such as *the reassessment of the historic role of the Habsburg Monarchy*. While in the fifties and sixties the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was only regarded as a symbol of foreign oppression, with the opening towards the West, the revaluation of modernisation and a stronger influence of the Austrian-German cultural models in other areas (such as in building construction and gardening culture, lifestyle, etc.) (from the seventies onwards) the historic role of the Monarchy was also reassessed; and the positive elements of the former empire could also appear at last (such as the economic-political benefits of a large state organisation unit). Emphasis was gradually shifted from 1848 to the Compromise and to the Gründerzeit. Széchenyi became the ideal instead of Kossuth, and reform was idealised as opposed to revolution (in the seventies, this also supported the self-justification of Kádár and his regime as opposed to the 1956 revolution). Historic consciousness was gradually realigned. (Along with the gradual opening to the West, the idealisation of the Gründerzeit and the reformism played a major role in the way in which Hungary's intellectual life and public thinking reached the change of system and the current forms of historic consciousness through a virtually uninterrupted path of two decades.) Today, the revolutionary Kossuth, the reformer Széchenyi, who remained loyal to the Monarchy and Franz Joseph, the emperor who

crushed the war of independence, are displayed in the same exhibition room. (Franz Joseph's rehabilitation also began in the spirit of the legitimating efforts of the Kádár regime: from the seventies onwards Kádár and Franz Joseph were compared in a latent way: on the basis of the idea that the rule of both were characterised by a long period of relative peace and both went through a process whereby the hated oppressor crushing the war of independence turned into the well-loved “father” of the people, and both cases involved a certain – although temporary – compromise as well. It is typical that while members of the Habsburg house were not even allowed into Austria, in the Hungary of the Kádár-era, Otto von Habsburg, still relatively popular today and still a figure awakening nostalgia for the Monarchy, was frequently interviewed on television. Another reinterpretation of the comparison between Kádár and “Ferenc Jóska” happened at the time of the change of system when the general public – maintaining the more positive image of the Monarchy – “withdrew” the “glory” of the compromise from Kádár. While in the seventies and eighties Kádár featured as a victim of the fifties, a sufferer of the Rákosi-era not only in the propaganda, but more or less in the general consciousness as well, today, at the exhibition of the House of Terror to be discussed in detail in the following section, but at the National Museum as well, he appears as an integral part of the brutal Stalinist world of the fifties, as minister of the interior, as Rajk's interrogator, as an active participant of the compulsory produce deliveries, then as the party leader commanding the execution of Imre Nagy. While in the seventies and eighties they emphasised the idea that Kádár, unlike other leaders, objected to a cult of his personality, today's exhibition displays elements explicitly suggesting a personality cult: Kádár's pictures, his portrait made out of grains and seeds, hugging Soviet leaders, etc.).

The next shift can be registered in *the representation of national symbols*. The fate of ethnic Hungarians living beyond the Trianon borders was considered taboo throughout the Communist era. While at the 1977 exhibition many place names from beyond the borders were mentioned as the original site of the objects exhibited, there is no mention of *Greater Hungary* in the text. By the nineties, the image of Greater Hungary again became part of the agenda. This, however, does not reflect a return to the irredentism of the period between the two world wars; but rather a shift in the historic consciousness from a *state nation* view towards a *cultural nation* view, towards an approach thinking not in terms of state culture, but national culture, which has been registered by several sociologists (Hunyady, Csepeli, Gereben) since the mid-eighties. This is also the time when the rediscovery of *Transylvania as the location of the intact traditions of Hungarian culture* is placed on the official agenda. In unofficial initiatives, this began from the early seventies. The idea that it is desirable to promote the national spirit also returns to the official scale of values after the change of system. (While in the fifties – following the Russian nationalism enveloped in Soviet ideas – there was a certain kind of “national” propaganda, this was restricted to the half of the national heritage classified as “progressive traditions”; after the 1956 revolution and war of independence the regime regarded any national emphasis as adversary, “counter-revolutionary”, a carrier of nationalist threat. Therefore, a rediscovery of a major part of the national traditions was not possible until the change of system for the wider public.) The current exhibition of the museum displays many of these relics “forgotten” or concealed-forbidden in the meantime. One of

these is the national costume of the period between the two world wars, which (in line with the above-mentioned synthesis of the values of the nobility and the middle classes) combined Hungarian and Western styles to try to induce a “Hungarian” dressing movement, as a manifestation of a kind of concealed anti-German feeling in the context of the era as the exhibition catalogue emphasises.

The idea of *Hungary as a small country fallen victim to the great powers* is also part of the reinterpretation of national symbols. The traditional image emphasises heroism: it is a small country, but it will encounter any great adversary (this is the way the events of the fights against the Turks are emphasised or the rebellion in 1848 against the joined forces of the Habsburgs and the Russian empire or the 1956 rebellion against the Soviet army). After the change of system, *heroism* receives less emphasis, in line with the above-mentioned decline in the military character. As hopes related to the West increase, however, the image of *Hungary as a country abandoned by the West* receives increasing emphasis (abandoned in the struggle against the Turks, in the wars of independence of Rákóczi and 1848 when Hungary sought help in vain, at the Trianon negotiating table, in the attempts at pulling out of World War Two, in the 1956 revolution, and recently often in connection with the EU as well: when in certain debates discussing the future of the EU and Hungary it is suggested that Hungary might have secondary status in the union after its EU entry, or when the issue of “who is paying to whom” is raised, the underlying idea really is that the West is again reluctant to support Hungarian interests, in fact, sometimes they won’t even take them into consideration). The most extreme version of this idea was raised in the period between the two world wars when the motif of a “*martyr-nation*” or victimisation came into focus (based on the idea of the nation’s death created by 19th-century romanticism). This idea can no longer be considered significant. The idea of being abandoned or plundered still comes up (the latter even in the context of museums as well as the issue of the fate of certain treasures first unearthed in Hungary but taken abroad – such as the Nagyszentmiklós treasures, the Seuso-treasures, the Gepid treasures or the Russian “reparations” treasures – is raised over and over again. In this context, the coronation regalia stayed in the centre of interest – until they were brought back.) Instead of lamentation, however, the idea of being abandoned is associated with accepting the necessity to fight one’s way up without assistance, relying on one’s own resources alone. In the museum’s view of history, this is reflected in the way the proportions of the material on display are shifted towards the *periods of economic recovery* as opposed to defeats. (The age of János Hunyadi and King Matthias – with special emphasis on Matthias’ European identity – Age of Reform, the Compromise with the Habsburgs).

The eighth shift can be registered in the representation of the importance of *Christianity*. Christianity is not particularly emphasised in the 1977 material, although – in contrast with the earlier bigoted persecution, the softening Kádár period, engaging in “dialogues” with the churches, permitted the representation of the positive cultural role played by the church, a strong acceptance of the tradition of the Christian country does not appear until the eighties, first in public thinking, intellectual life and later, after the change of system, officially as well. Christianity is then defined as an essential component of a European identity. After the

change of system, special emphasis is given to Christian morality as opposed to the moral groundlessness of Communism, Christianity as an ideal of love as opposed to the class struggle ideal of Communism; Christianity as a genuine identity as opposed to the artificial identity of Communism. The current exhibition also gives a representation of the role of the churches, with special emphasis on the saints of the Árpád-dynasty and many church-related objects.

There has also been a shift in the *judgment of the historic role of personality*. In 1977, the representation of the past was depersonalized, with signs of the vulgar Marxist view which says that history is shaped by the movements of the masses and of material factors, and historic personalities are merely the reflections of this “historic necessity”. From the eighties onwards, there is an increasing personification, interest in personalities and personality as a historic factor is taken into consideration. The Kossuth-Széchenyi debate is now interpreted as a contrast of two alternative personalities. There is a shift from a community-based authoritative view of history towards a much more individualised view. (A typical example is the Széchenyi film made at the time of the millennium, strongly interested in psychological motives, as opposed to the historic films of earlier periods.) The museum contributes to the re-personification of history by highlighting the objects of historic personalities: Petőfi’s tricolour rosette, Kossuth’s death-mask, the waistcoat the bullet passed through when Batthyány was shot, the *personal objects* of Horthy, minister of education Klebersberg, Imre Nagy, Kádár, József Antall, Árpád Göncz and many other named historic personalities. *Photos* as historic documents are given more appreciation in the material of the museum. Photos play a major role in the fact that the authentic documentation of history increasingly comes from the presentation of the *private* as opposed to the public.

What *does not appear* in the official discourse is also worth considering as an important factor in the shifts. Whatever appears in the historic consciousness of public thinking but is ignored by the official discourse will often appear in society as *alternative or counter-culture*. (Just as many of the re-introduced cultural elements remained dormant as counter-culture during the decades of Communism.)

This time, shaman traditions are not in the focus of Hungary’s early history, therefore, these traditions, just as Hun traditions, can be considered as part of an alternative discourse. The above-mentioned equestrian culture can also partly be classified here, just as the entire pagan mythology as opposed to a well-emphasised Christianity.

Independence and revolutionary efforts are not really given special emphasis. (This, as it was mentioned in the introduction, is a rather obvious reaction to the revolution cult of the fifties and sixties, and the current consolidated social ideal is not attracted to the periods of “disorder”). Class differences, peasant revolts and the divisions of society in general are missing almost completely. Fugitives, exiles, refugees do not get mentioned as much as earlier. As it was pointed out above, the image of the martyr-nation has faded: there

is only one picture displayed in the corner of a room of the thirteen martyrs executed in Arad. The horrors of war are hardly mentioned compared to earlier.

The *recent past of the twentieth century* is also represented in a different way (in fact, this is where the most significant changes can be detected, however, this would have been impossible to analyse without the context of what was discussed above). The twentieth century is hardly represented at all in the 1977 catalogue of the National Museum. Following the propagandistic representation of the events of the twentieth century in the fifties and sixties, the official position of the seventies was to ignore the “delicate” periods of the recent past. This view further strengthened around the change of system: most history teachers simply did not teach almost the entire twentieth century, particularly not the events following World War I and especially not the events after 1945, afraid that they may not be able to meet the fast-changing expectations regarding the judgment of these periods. There is still no real consensus as regards these periods. There are considerable fluctuations particularly regarding one of the key issues – who were the criminals and who the victims; as the roles are interchanged in the various paradigms. Of course, on the key issues, the change of system resulted in relatively unambiguous changes, and on these issues, the museum, as a representative of an official view, takes a position.

Although the twentieth-century material does not dominate the picture, its major events are presented. The *Horthy-era* is given more emphasis than earlier (the objects hidden in the Communist period are brought forward: uniforms, national costumes, symbols of a middle-class lifestyle). The *Holocaust* becomes part of the picture again. The *fifties* are, naturally, re-interpreted. The fifties were presented in a negative manner as early as in the sixties, but only as the rule of a Stalinist group, and the terror, the poverty and the economic irrationalities were presented as the negative consequences of this, with the accomplishments, the achievements of the people, the appearance of a “new society” presented as positive elements throughout the Communist era. After the change of system, the image of the period becomes clearly and in every bit negative. On the one hand, some crimes of the regime that the Kádár era did not distance itself from are now revealed and exhibited, and on the other hand, the “results” and the “new society” are now presented as a dead-end, condemned and caricatured.

In the twentieth-century material, – in line with the above-mentioned effort to create atmosphere – depressing installations suggesting imprisonment or the confinement experienced during air-raids are presented with great emphasis (illustrating the war, the fifties, the 1956 revolution, and the ensuing retribution). On the other hand, in line with the view focusing on everyday life, there are a strikingly high number of objects that, although they are insignificant, low-value items, still, – precisely because of their low standard and because of the way this low standard was typical of the era – illustrate the period very well. Objects like these did not use to feature this much in the museum’s collection, into which objects (even the simple objects of the distant past) used to be selected because of their rarity. In addition to the fact that these objects seem to offer the most adequate way to present the image of a downward levelling mass society, this

change must also result from a re-interpretation of the “past”. While earlier the societies of the distant past were regarded as the past of the (superior) present, in the re-assessing light of the change of system, the objects or documents of the *recent past*, even things that only came about yesterday may become museum pieces. As the *present quickly turns into history* (the accelerated pace), this new interpretation of the past will probably come to the fore even in societies not experiencing such radical changes. The current exhibition considers the *Kádár-era* as a *natural continuation of the fifties* more clearly than the one compiled during the Kádár period because one of the characteristics of this era was that it turned people towards their private lives. Therefore, the exhibition tries to present the age adequately through presenting *the world of the little man* instead the elite, and to criticise the era through the inevitable *pettiness, provincialism* and the clumsy objects of this lifestyle. Finally, special emphasis is given to the documents of the change of system: the samizdat press of the eighties, documents and demonstrations related to the Bős-Nagymaros dam, the reburial of Imre Nagy, who was executed in 1958, – an act symbolising the change of system, pictures of the taxi drivers’ blockade, the first significant political action after the change of system, documents of the country’s NATO entry, certain representative events featuring the elite of the change of system, demonstrations, commemorations. The changeability of history is highlighted by the presentation of the renamed streets which often got back their old names from the time proceeding the Communist era. Although the presentation of the short and peaceful change of system compared to that of the previous era which lasted several decades is somewhat disproportionate, this manifestation of the new political elite’s self-laudation can be regarded as a natural exaggeration of any society undergoing radical transformation.

Thus, the exhibitions of the National Museum illustrate well the process whereby the view of history of (a more modern, liberal phase of) Communism was replaced by a bourgeois view combined with the revival of Conservative ideals, changing the proportions and the scale of values of the exhibited material as well as the manner of presentation. This is accompanied by relatively modern multimedia technology using photos, moving pictures, sound effects and computer programmes (still lagging behind the British museum practice, for example, which uses far wider-ranging effects and much more interactivity).

Let us now look at another example, a brand new exhibition building on the one hand (which therefore does not necessarily build on its own centuries-old traditions), and on the other hand, one that does not deal with the major periods of twentieth-century national history as just the last phase of a long historic process, but regards these and these alone as its subject.

In the following sections we shall examine the official museum guide to the House of Terror.<sup>4</sup> In the course of our analysis, we follow the thematic blocs of the museum. These thematic blocs present different elements of state terror: militarism, police state, deportations, limitations of free movement of people, the

---

<sup>4</sup> Schmidt, Mária (ed) 2003. *Terror Háza*, Budapest: Közép-, és Kelet-európai Történelem és Társadalom Kutatásáért Közalapítvány [*The House of Terror*, Budapest: Public Foundation for Research on History and Society in Central and Eastern Europe].

“justizmords”, the manipulations of propaganda, the harass of religion, the pressing of different social strata, etc. Our analysis follows the structure of the museum guide. First, we write about the museum’s building, then we analyse how its expositions represent the symbolic faces of the state terror. When somebody defines their relation to a dictatorship, there is a pivotal question: the question of responsibility. Who was victim, who was perpetrator, who was collaborator? It is also a key issue from the point of view of historical consciousness. We therefore return to this question in our analysis several times.

## THE HOUSE OF TERROR

The House of Terror is a place enmeshed in strong symbolic associations. The House of Terror was opened as a museum in 2002, with the aim of documenting the atrocities committed by the Nazi Arrow Cross Party in reign in Hungary from the end of 1944 to the spring of 1945, and by the Stalinist dictatorship of the Communist Party, which followed a short period of coalition rule. The building of the museum has been subject to debate from the very start. One of the debated issues is whether a museum should be set up just for presenting such a relatively short period in history. It is difficult to oppose the initiative. First of all, the two extreme political systems of terror, which have caused the death of many hundreds of thousands of people, are of such crucial importance in the history of Hungary that they deserve to be put on the pedestal when it comes to remembering history. Secondly, there are many examples, in fact it could be seen as the general practice that some sites of a historic importance give home to a museum, and the building located at number 60 Andrásy Boulevard is emblematic in itself as it had a central role in the terrors under both systems of tyranny. It is not by accident that the building was converted from the headquarters of the Arrow Cross Party to the centre of the Communist State Security Department (ÁVO). Another example for this continuity is that occupying Soviet troops moved their central security office into the Hotel Britannia, which had earlier been occupied by the Gestapo. As part of another line of discourse, the *external appearance of the building* was questioned. Many critics<sup>5</sup> have voiced the view that the building’s “blade wall” (a partition placed on the sidewalk) and the new roof decoration do not fit organically into the relatively uniform row of villas on Budapest’s prestigious Andrásy Boulevard, not to mention that the roof decoration displays the emblems of the two extremist entities, which were banned after the political changes of 1989/90, towering above the building. From another point of view, these emblems have a rightful place for attracting attention here, as the need to create a historic memento – which, through remembering, is generally considered a risk-reducing factor preventing the atrocities from happening again – is perhaps stronger than the feelings of those who, though very understandably, do not want to face these images recalling their agonies from day to day. A third layer of the debate is that the treatment with a *common denominator* is disturbing and objectionable for the people or their descendants, who identified with or were involved in the two regimes, or even by those who were victims of only one of the two systems. However, as the positive function of such a museum is to say no to terror,

---

<sup>5</sup> Some examples: Tamás 2002, Radnóti 2003, Ráday 2002

methods of dictatorship and inhumanity (*any* form of inhumanity), it can be seen as a justifiable argument that various systems of terror should be presented under the same roof.

In fact, a connection between these two extremist periods has had its precedent: in the 1970s, the writings pointing to well-documented correspondences and continuity between the fascist-leaning Horthy era and the industrial and economic policy of Rákosi, as well as parallels between bombastic fascist art and “social realism” created a shock to their audiences.

The proportions in representation set up by the museum also received much criticism (this is the fourth field of debate). If we look at the number of victims in the two periods of dictatorship, it is indeed questionable that the museum covers communist dictatorship in much more depth (and there are other questions of weighing, which are also debatable); the scope of the presentations seems to reflect more the amount of time in history spent under the two terrorist regimes (the few months of Arrow Cross terror as opposed to more than ten years of Stalinist terror). Another part of the debate was that in the eyes of some critics, the museum has *blurred the difference* between the Kádár and Rákosi regimes.<sup>6</sup> The House of Terror is also clearly different from the National Museum in its function, that is, its focus on terror and its articulations under various regimes, the National Museum providing a more comprehensive interpretation by presenting the Kádár-consolidation, the lifestyle of the times, and pointing also to the beginnings of pluralism.

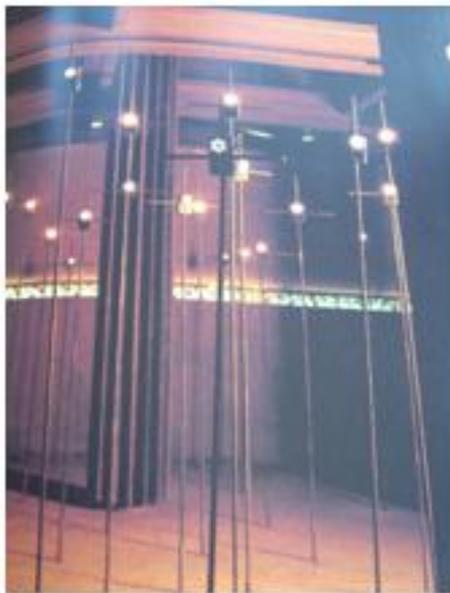


The design of the House of Terror incorporates several aesthetic elements. Strong and emotionally loaded visual symbols have been used (a whole team of interior designers was commissioned in this work). One of the first impressions, a tank placed on a glass panel in the stairway (*see Picture 1*), is already shocking; the Wall of Victims: a big wall surface with pictures of hundreds of victims; the Arrow Cross room is demonic and offers a

---

<sup>6</sup> Rákosi was the radical Stalinist leader of the 1950s, he – as “the best pupil of Stalin”, which was his official *epitheton ornans* – was responsible for the extreme terror and catastrophic state of the life standard in Hungary. The revolution in 1956 overthrew the power of his group. The new leader of the Communist Party, János Kádár, was a reformist, but he went over to the side of the Soviet army and helped them suppress the revolution. After the revolution, he was responsible for the execution of the participants of revolution, but after five years he finished the terrorist period and started reforms. As the result of these reforms, a so called “soft dictatorship” (“Goulash communism”) was installed in Hungary: he kept the restriction of human rights, but reduced the state control over the private sphere, increased the life standard and tolerated some non-communist ideological outlets (books, films, theories), if they didn’t query the base of the political system.

disturbing, ghostly ambiance; the room of “(In)justice” with school seats covered in copies of indictments and trial documents (*see Picture 2*); the room of Churches with an enormous cross-shaped glass piece inserted in the floor, the Hall of Tears (with names of the victims executed between 1945 and 1967); the Hall of Compulsory State Deliveries with walls built of bricks of “pork fat” where the sensual effect of contradiction Joseph Beuys experimented with in his postmodern works can be seen to create a strong, queasy feeling by the cross-references between soft fat and hard wall bricks; the Gulag Room with its large wall-to-wall carpet of a map locating the places of forced labour camps (this and other floor-fitted installations create an uncomfortable feeling encoded instinctively in the visitor, which stems from such things as the fairy tale of the “girl treading on bread” or the taboo of treading on pictures originating in magic, and thus unconsciously links a more sensitive conscience to perceive the world of brutality presented.) The slowly descending elevator taking the visitor to prison cells in the basement plays on even stronger stimuli, in this case it is the unusually slow motion which achieves the uneasiness which helps to identify with, if only partially, those who had been imprisoned here. The Torture Chamber with instruments of torture on display, the room of gallows and a strong claustrophobic feel radiating from the prison cells take these effects even further.



But the strong visual impetus also helps bring about catharsis, and evoke elevated feelings, as in the room towards the end of the exhibition called the “Hall of Remembering” or the “Hall of Tears” (*See Picture 3*), where torches fitted on small metal crosses are displayed as if in a burial ground of soul lanterns commemorating victims. A visual (and aesthetic) consciousness appears in the two colours dominating throughout the museum, an intentional use of black and red, which are on the one hand colours symbolic of fascist and communist dictatorships and thus give a true representation of the two eras, but on the other hand are the two satanic colours of Christian iconography, which may link the two terror eras with the symbols of Satan, the rule of the Original Evil. (A multimedia effect is achieved with original photos and films

from the period, the recollections of survivors, music and sound documentation.)

In the following section, we attempt to summarise the most explicit messages carried by the museum, and we shall mainly point to items of groups of impacts, which are still part of Hungarian political culture today, as well as historical consciousness and symbolic themes of the recent past.

## VICTIM OR COLLABORATOR?

If we refer back to our central theme of whether Hungary is victim or collaborator, the answer in this case is quite clear: the emphasis on a *victim role* is very strong. (Hungary as the victim of the Trianon treaties and the battle ground in the German-Soviet conflict. We must note here, too, that both Trianon and the Soviet crimes were taboo subjects for decades, and these subjects could not be discussed in any way, let alone in a comprehensive light – in this respect, the extension of a public treatment of the subject, a problematisation of long-neglected *topoi* have liberating effects.) However, identifying with a one-sided victim role also has its downside in terms of the evolution of a view of history (and national self-consciousness). For example, when the museum guide writes that “there was no place for an independent Hungary” or when it stresses the absolute inevitability of events, these are somewhat exaggerated views. In any era, reference to an inevitability of a path taken can be used to lift responsibility from the political leadership of the time of seeking brave and productive decisions. This *sense of determinism* is strong to this very day in Hungarian political culture and public thought, and in its long-term effects it is most certainly disorientating.

The sense of determinism even constitutes a part of interpretations of the political transition and represents important conceptual paradigms in viewing the relationship with *fascism, communism, the transition to democracy, the EU, the US and NATO*.

Following the path of historical events laid out by the museum, the first theme for discussion that is different from earlier ones is the re-evaluation of the entire *Horthy-era*, as well as the role of Horthy himself. Earlier, the entire period was classified as “fascist”, and by leaning to the far end of the scale, this interpretation implied that Hungary had basically been a democratic country before the Nazi occupation of March 1944 (with a legitimate, elected parliament, opposition parties, MPs in parliament, freedom of the press), and only the period of Nazi occupation may be regarded as fascist. (The aim to differentiate between the various stages is a valid one, but it is impossible to distance the country entirely from fascism as it is a well-known fact that Hitler in some ways saw Horthy as his model in the combat against communism for a period of time, and it is also difficult to find logic in the argument, which sees the late-Kadar era still as a terrorist-regime based on its politically-motivated executions, but does not apply this same standard to the Horthy-era, when politically-motivated executions are also known to have happened, and not only after German occupation.)

The museum guide tries to keep a balance of two sides in the presentation of the *prosecution of Jews* under the Horthy-era: on the one side arguing that 473,402 Jews from the countryside were taken to forced labour camps or death camps, but on the other side pointing out that Jews in the ghetto of Budapest were saved, which is unique in Europe.

This interpretation makes Hungary’s responsibility in the acts of fascism look ambivalent: *in a duality of participant and victim*, and puts strong accents on a resistance by Hungarian leadership to the extremities of

fascism at the time. Basically, this interpretation conveys the view that while Germans as initiators have to take responsibility for fascism, Hungarians, who were pressured into an alliance and were the victims of this pressure, do not. The Hungarian political leadership's responsibility in the Second World War is a much more complex issue, but a defensive-excusatory standpoint is inseparable from the context of a discourse, in which this issue is usually channelled into by those posing the questions from the outside.

Neighbouring nations (of whom Romanians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Ruthenians and Serbs, which were subordinated based on their ethnicity during the land taking and the conquests to push out the borders of the country) are all finding it offensive that the "gentry" Hungary (for hundreds of years) has failed to practice self-criticism on its past and accept responsibility (including Hungary's role in the Second World War as one of these "historical sins"). Adopting this attitude is problematic for the Hungarian historical consciousness for at least three reasons. First, the fact that the historic wrongdoings committed in the past were answered by historic injustices from the opposite side during the 20<sup>th</sup> century; secondly, in the propaganda accepting Stalinist and Russian rule in the 1950s, the label of "historical criminals" was attached excessively and Slavic people were regarded as almost superior or heroic compared to Hungarians all throughout history, which generated an anti-reaction to the extent that anti-Stalinist thinking, which tried to rid itself from the burden of Russian supremacy, would not retain the slightest element of this type of a self-submissive attitude; and finally and perhaps most importantly, the historical experiences of the majority of Hungarians have never been part of the "gentry" (serfs of various nationalities fought side by side in the peasant revolts) and thus their descendants feel it is unjust that the entire nation should take on the responsibilities of a single social class or group. This applies to fascism as well, which the majority of Hungarians feel they did not choose, support or follow.

The exhibition diffuses an image of *Hungary = victim* with even greater force in the section presenting the next period, the *years of captivity for prisoners of war*. The museum guide underlines that 600,000-700,000 Hungarian prisoners died in the Gulags in Soviet labour camps. Although internments generally reflect the relationship between two adverse countries, in the context presented here, these acts are also put down as crimes of the socialist system. It is intentional that the museum guide notes that the last Hungarian prisoner of war returned home in 2000 (that is, as long as the political system was intact, the prisoner could not return). The text also points out that up until the transition to democracy, those who had returned from the Gulag earlier could not speak of their experiences, thus, the physical confinement is interpreted as part of the world of intellectual confinement. Here and elsewhere the exhibition makes a point of the *continuity in dictatorship* from its beginnings (Soviet occupation) to the change in political systems.

## THE FACES OF STALINISM

## 1. Militarism

The museum offers views of Stalinist dictatorship from many different sides. First, there is the militarization of everyday life: a tank entering a house, uniforms, weapons, instruments of torture. Then there is militarization of the intellect, with militant rhetoric permeating through the whole era, the slogan: “Hungary is not a crack, but a bastion on the frontier of peace”, the MHK (Ready to Work and Fight) movement, a defence training built into secondary and higher education.

## 2. A Police State



The militarization of society with weapons turned outward to the enemy suspected always and everywhere was on one side of the coin and weapons turned inside, creating the sense of a *police state*, on the other. The exhibition material also highlights the topos of *police control over society* and its imprint on people’s souls: the fear of being observed or tapped. The room displaying tapping equipment (see *Picture 4*) thus showcases one of the central institutions of the system. An outside observer will have a hard time imagining how the methods known to people in democratic societies only from films became part of the conditioned lives of people in this period: using coded or figurative language, opening the bathroom tap to its fullest to flow loudly or turning the volume up on the radio during conversations; talking openly only during walks in the woods - to avoid being recorded.

The theme of being bugged is still sensitive in Hungarian society. The society surviving a dictatorship is more allergic to the police observation system, which was like a hatchet lingering over the heads of everyone waiting to strike, than to more brutal forms of terror. To this day, the public is still interested in who had reported or informed on whom, and questions on who is guilty and who is a victim are subjects of debate to date, as are issues like to what extent the prisoners who were forced to collaborate with the regime are culprits or victims of the system; or judging the case of an informant who was observed himself. “They interrogated, they confessed, they interrogated,” the museum guide recites, in order to illustrate that under this system no one was safe in the strictest sense of the word, as the tables could turn any time.

There are still stories going around about being observed, feeling exposed or betrayed. As observance was present in all layers of society, the scandals about former agents surfacing again and again these days also affect all kinds of subcultures. To mention only the latest incident, the aristocracy was exposed in the story told and digested by Péter Esterházy (2002) in *Javított kiadás (Revised Edition)*, while at the same time a scandal

broke out involving another prominent writer who was found to have been an informer, but the list goes on to include famous musicians, disc-jockeys, sportsmen and sport managers all the way to the recent discovery of the Socialist Prime Minister's security officer past, and a picture of the father of a top opposition politician is displayed in the House of Terror among those the ÁVH (the Hungarian NKVD, KGB) had arrested-tortured.

Public discourse is divided on these issues: there is a general sense of the *victim-role*, that is empathy for and understanding of the fact that people who were blackmailed with threats to their children, family members or other things sacred to them, or “only” tortured often had no choice other than death, and choosing to die was not always the most ethical solution either; but at the same time there is widespread consensus in the same public sphere that it is enough for anyone to be accused of an *agent past* (that is, any credible proof of this fact) for that person to be secluded as an undesirable person. The two different viewpoints coexist – society symbolically experiences the alternatives of criminal and victim by projecting these roles into each other in the figure of the (blackmailed) “agent”: the victim and the emblematic figure of the political system are one and the same person, who in this way may just as easily be forgiven as not. (This is a slightly schizophrenic view of society, a consequence of a regime's schizophrenia, but it is still a more complex approach to the problem with a more accurate view of reality than a black-and-white image.)

The room of ÁVH head Gábor Péter is an interior placed in postmodern parentheses: one side of the room gives the feel of a “normal”, peaceful, presentable office (on the General's side), while on the other side (where we may think the interrogations were held) everything is made of metal, and carries feelings of uneasiness and confinement. This symbolic arrangement has a strong message of the coexistence of *appearances and reality*; and refers also to the way the superficial reality of the propaganda, the fanatically enforced optimism and permanent “summery cheerfulness” of the era was able to cover up the “underworld” of terror and torture.

### 3. Occupation, Deportation

The rule of state security authorities cannot be detached from the activities of the Soviet powers. The *Soviet presence* receives considerable attention in the exhibition (Room of Soviet Advisors). In the background of a photograph, the advisors are seen in a typical Hungarian landscape, and this only makes the reality of an aggressive occupation of the country more vivid. Underlining the fact of the foreign occupation again confirms the image of “Hungary as a victim”. According to the authors of the museum guide, “realised socialism” is the same as the Soviet system, and in this way they emphasise its strangeness from Hungarian culture. (It is irrational to ask the question of what would have happened differently if an internal revolution in Hungary had taken a socialist system to victory by its own strength, but examples from Yugoslavia, China or Cuba show that similarities are more striking than differences. Besides, this does not change the fact that even if Kádár was trying to push through a unique “Hungarian model” after 1956, the cornerstones of the whole history of the system were based on the characteristics of the Russian experiments.) Present-day discourse, in which the

museum's views are also embedded, stipulates that "*attained socialism*" was an alien structure forced upon Hungary, compared to which joining the EU is seen as Hungary's return to its cultural traditions in Western Europe (after a 40-year detour in the east).

Placing memories of the Gulag in funnel-shaped containers carries a strong visual effect: these large funnels soak up everything, they are grinders, making all that is individual disappear (like Ibsen's *Button Molder* Peer Gynt), but at the same time they are flowers grown out of the ground of the camps (as goblets of recollections of people there): the symbols are two-sided again with a strong double-action of *destruction and preserving commemoration*, which is channelled through a sign carrying the possibility of catharsis.

#### 4. Limitations to the Free Movement of People

The next element of dictatorship to be analysed is the *limitation to the free movement of people*. This element of confinement (which can easily be experienced physically, too) is referred to on several occasions in the museum collections: population removals and exchanges, the Gulag, prison cells.

The limitation to free movement of the individual is mentioned in several aspects, such as the removal of Germans, Slovaks, the establishment of camps in the Great Plains, or temporary lodgings. The Beneš decrees, for example, called for the removal of 200,000 Hungarians from the uplands in Slovakia near the border with Hungary. The exhibition takes note of the fact that these people were stripped of their property as well as their personal freedom.

The limitations to the free movement of individuals, placed in the foreground several times, is one of the most emblematic features of dictatorship, experienced by millions through the decades, both in terms of limited movement within the country and between countries, while the latter was depicted most clearly by the *closed border zone* in existence until the political turnabout. A slow expansion in free travel opportunities from the 1960s pointed to a liberalisation of the regime and in the end became a sign of its final collapse. First, the complete ban on travel was eased to a three-year restriction, then travel was limited to once a year, and later the restriction was lifted altogether (except for those restricted for political reasons, as these stayed in place until the political transition). Many people still remember this restriction on travel as being the most oppressive element in the system, by its curtailment of individual freedom. Understandably, the opening up of borders and cutting through the Iron Curtain (barbed wire) was a symbolically important act before the change of regimes, and the fact that hundreds of people travelled close to the borders on the night of Hungary's accession to the EU in order to feel the freedom of being able to travel without a passport, signals that the reflexes of years in confinement are still active.

The most extreme example of limits to free movement is represented by prison cells in the museum. Unconsciously repressed fears surface in visitors who lived through the period when seeing the windowless, suffocating cells, torture chambers, the electric wires and heated furnaces used during interrogation, and the

gallows in their brutish simplicity. Perhaps the implicitly conveyed horrors are even more effective: for example the marked presence of the large gutters in the middle of the torture chamber – a direct reminder of the channelling of callous bloodshed.

#### 5. The Lawless Law

A recurring element in anecdotes about Western visitors is their naivety in questions like: “Why did they endure it?” or “Why didn’t they tell the sheriff?” To see why these questions are meaningless, the topos of a *rule of law* (that is, the complete lack of it) must be presented in the context of dictatorships. This purpose is served by the room of (In)justice (Picture 2). The numbers cited by the museum guide illustrate the enormous amount of people who were unjustly prosecuted. Charges were filed against 300,000 kulaks (wealthy peasants). After 1956, 15,000 people were imprisoned, with nearly 200 death sentences and some 200,000 people were forced to emigrate because of a lack of constitutionality. A rule of law and constitutionality are still such strong issues that allegations of political pressure on jurisdiction with respect to certain court cases come up again and again (on both sides, against the Government in power), and these include cases where a final appeal is made in Strasbourg, enjoying wide coverage by the Hungarian media. After decades of injustice from the law, the public is still distrustful whether a just, objective, impartial rule of law can be imagined in Hungary.

#### 6. The Anti-peasant Politics

*Landed peasantry* were one of the groups the trials targeted. The museum renders peasantry and the entire agricultural sector as victims of communism. The destructive agricultural policy of the 1950s, including the system of compulsory deliveries to the state, had devastating consequences both for peasant groups and the entire economy. Even the quasi-compromises of the Kádár regime, which raised average living standards in the agricultural sector and in the peasant population, could not make up for the damages caused by the compulsory delivery system and campaigns against kulaks in the 1950s, or the aggressive collectivisation forcing peasants into cooperatives during the 1960s. These injuries were kept alive and carried by the victims and their descendants until the change in political systems (and to this day). *Agriculture* on the whole is identified within the victim-role to this day: one of the main points for worry in respect to EU membership was agriculture, its dangers for farmers (after being subservient to the authoritative state, now left at the mercy of external forces with strong capital resources).

#### 7. Propaganda, Ideology, Cult

*Propaganda*, which appeared in every corner of life, was an important pillar of the system, and the exhibition recognises this fact, too. Propaganda was present in all parts of *everyday life*. The House of Terror refers to this with displays of posters and pictures of mass processions. (However, there is no differentiation between the

various periods; posters from the 50s, 60s and 70s are mixed together.) One of the counter-reactions to propaganda entering everyday life in this brassy, aggressive manner was to retract into the private sphere, to seek its protection from the intrusion of politics, against the distrust and disillusionment felt with political institutions. The atmosphere of the Kádár era can best be expressed through presenting this envelopment in private life (which, by the way, was also in line with, and made possible by the aims of the ruling power to keep the masses away from political engagement.) This private life however was a small-scale one, especially in comparison with Western lifestyles and technical progress, which were more and more idealised.

The presentation of *low-quality living standards* serves the aim of expressing the irrationality and failure of the socialist ideals of progress. The unrealistic “dreams” of the 1950s, like cotton, rice or oranges intended to be grown in a Hungarian climate, or the “Hungarian silver”, the aluminium plan built on Hungary’s modest bauxite mining, which is the subject of the aluminium room in the museum where ridiculous objects made of aluminium are put on display, are all among examples to conjure an image of the limitations of the era. Other topics are the shortage of goods, the society of unfulfilled needs and limited consumption, which in public thinking only made the image of the West as a “Canaan with streams of milk and honey” stronger to this day, along with the concept that a Western origin is a guarantee of quality.

#### 8. An Anti-religious “Religion”

One of the fundamental issues of communist dictatorship is the question of the *freedom of religion*. Issues such as the separation of state and church, financing churches, returning confiscated property to churches, the relationship between church and state schools, a differentiation between large and small churches, etc. are still on the political agenda today. These debates carry different overtones in Hungary than for example in France - precisely because of a very different historical past. Everything that happened as part of secularisation movements on the back of bourgeois revolutions was not regarded by communist societies as acts of justice, but instead they turned injustice in the opposite direction and persecuted and radically oppressed clergy and the congregation of churches. Thus, it is difficult to see what it is that society should revert to after dictatorship (doing justice to churches), and what does not belong to a church in a modern society (or what belongs, to which church to what level). In the post-totalitarian period, churches were quickly (and understandably) attached with the victim-role.

#### AGAINST DICTATORSHIP – 1956

After seeing various social groups presented as victims, the sensitive issue of *resistance* comes to the horizon. The image projected by the exhibition predominantly places Hungary in the position of the victim, yet at the same time as active in resistance: “movements of resistance against the communist dictatorship developed in every layer of society”. This statement is underpinned by statistics of 1,500 court rulings made on charges of resistance over a ten-year period, and 400 enforced executions. “Communism has made nearly everyone its

enemy,” the museum guide writes. Although it is true that the system was fought by all kinds of social groups, it must be noted that there was no nation-wide opposition movement just as there was not one in the times of fascist dictatorship either. The majority of people were not communists, nor a disciple of the system, but there were relatively few who actively did anything to rebel. From the point of view the museum has taken, it is important to raise the significance of resistance, as this supports the overall impression that the presented dictatorship was a result of external forces and a traitor minority, which was isolated from the entire population.

The museum allocated to 1956 its own space: this event, seen as a general uprising of the people as an answer to terror, was indeed the (single) act of rebellion by the majority of the population. In historic consciousness, the events of 1956 came to be known as the events leading to the 1989/90 democratic transition, the fall of the socialist regime. Again, this view is a little inaccurate: just as the reformist attempts of communism and the striving for democratic change had been overemphasised in the events of 1956, the present conception, lending itself to the other extreme, diminishes these factors. It is undeniable, though, that if the socialist regime had been in the same state of erosion as it was in 1990, the outcome could have been the same in 1956, and in this sense, the actors in the democratic changes rightly look to 1956 as a precedent.

The museum’s primary aim is to present terror, so when it comes to the events of 1956, the highlights include vengeance and the emigration wave following the revolution. Mass emigration was indeed a desperately tragic answer to the repression of the revolution and, as such, it is fully reasonable to include it in the criminal record of the suppressors: symbolically, it can be regarded as a violent miscarriage on a national scale, as the abortion of the present, that is, the future at the time. The feelings of a mass abortion are well represented by the wall covered with postcards sent by emigrants. The fact that the emigrants in Hungary were tagged “dissidents”, as the opposition voices of the later Soviet Union and other socialist countries were called, might be interesting to the foreign visitor, by way of capturing the essence of the passive resistance in the act of emigration.

In contrast to remembering victims, the *perpetrators* are named. Although the list is somewhat arbitrary, since many of the leaders of the (two) regime(s), the executors of terrorist acts and those responsible for them are left out, the Wall of Perpetrators meets its aim by the disclosure of names: that dictatorships are not merely the works of an impersonal machinery, but there is the liability of individuals to be considered as well, whether or not they choose to take part in the operation of that machinery. The museum guide defines perpetrators as anyone who, in an era of terror, „actively assisted in establishing or maintaining the two totalitarian terrorist systems under foreign occupation (the Arrow Cross and the Communist regimes), and who held a top position in any of the two regimes’ law enforcement bodies... without regard to their behaviour during their previous or subsequent careers, they cannot be relieved of responsibility”. (The definition is acceptable, though it does not outline clearly the scope of the responsibility: what can be regarded as a “top position”, “active assistance” – and by doing this, the overall image again fits the formula of external,

occupying forces (and the traitors as their allies). The warning concerning the irrelevance of the previous and subsequent behaviour of the person in question is a firm moral attitude – even if it is doubtful whether it has been applied in the case of every historical figure.

## CONCLUSION

All in all, the museum as a whole aims at arousing strong emotions against terror, the politics of dictatorships, inhumanity and violence. In order to meet this goal, it sometimes ignores the need for a precise, comprehensive relation of events (and especially the social processes behind those events). While it is justifiable to disregard the significant differences in the ideals and characteristics of the two terrorist regimes on account of humanistic considerations (both regimes used inhumane methods), it would be a gross simplification to represent four decades of the socialist era as one, essentially homogeneous period. It is only fair to emphasize the continuity in the different periods of socialism, but for the sake of historical factuality and understanding, the various steps leading to the transition (internal changes in both social and political transition) should also be presented. If politics is limited to party politics, then the reign of a single-party-system can be seen as essentially unchanged from the elimination of party pluralism to the reestablishment of the pluralist system. But if ideological changes and the social changes behind them are also taken into consideration, we are facing a far more complex process.

## REFERENCES

### Museum materials analysed:

- Fülep, Ferenc (ed) (1997). *A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum*, [The Hungarian National Museum] Budapest: Corvina.
- Fodor, István (ed) (1992). *Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum*. Budapest: Corvina.
- Pintér, János (ed) (2002). *A 200 éves Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Gyűjteményei* [Collections of the National Museum of Hungary celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary], Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum.
- Schmidt, Mária (ed) 2003. *Terror Háza*, Budapest: Közép-, és Kelet-európai Történelem és Társadalom Kutatásáért Közalapítvány [*The House of Terror*, Budapest: Public Foundation for Research on History and Society in Central and Eastern Europe].

### WORKS CITED:

- Anderson, B (1992). *Imagined Communities, Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London – New York – New Delhi: Verso.
- Armstrong, JA (1982). *Nations before Nationalism*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Barth, F (1994). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Oslo: Pensumtyenste.
- Berend T., I (1982). *Válságos évtizedek*, [Decades of Crisis] Budapest: Gondolat.
- Berlant, L (1997). *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*, Durham-London: Duke University Press.
- Billig, M (1995). *Banal Nationalism*, London etc: Sage.
- Breuss, S, Liebhart, K and Pribersky, A (1995). *Inszenierungen (Stichwörter zu Österreich)*, Wien: Sonderzahl.
- Cerulo, KA (1995), *Identity Design (The Sights and Sounds of a Nation)*, New Bismarck, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Cohen, A (1985). *The Symbolic Construction of Community. Key Ideas*. London – New York: Routledge.
- Cohen, A (ed) (1986). *Symbolising Boundaries (Identity and Diversity in British Cultures)*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Csepeli, Gy (2002) *A nagyvilágon kívül, [“You Don’t Have Any Other Place in the World”]* Budapest: Józsefvárosi Könyvtár (First edition: 1985).
- Douglas, M (1975). *Implicit Meanings. Essays in Anthropology*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Esterházy, P (2002). *Javított kiadás*, [Revised Edition] Budapest: Magvető.
- Gellner, E (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford – Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Gereben, F (ed) (2001). *Hungarian Minorities and Central Europe*, Piliscsaba: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem.
- Gereben, F and Tomka, M (2000). *Vallásosság és nemzettudat [Religiosity and National Self-Consciousness]*, Budapest: Kerkai Könyvek.

- Giddens, A (1984). *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- György, P and Turai, H (eds) (1992). *A művészet katonái. Sztálinizmus és kultúra*, [Soldiers of art – Stalinism and Culture], Budapest: Corvina.
- Herzfeld, M (1997). *Cultural Intimacy (Social Poetics in the Nation-State)*, New York – London: Routledge.
- Hobsbawm, EJ (1997). *A nacionalizmus kétszáz éve*, [200 Years of Nationalism], Budapest: Maecenas.
- Hosking, G and Schöpflin, G (eds) (1997). *Myths & Nationhood*, London: Hurst & Co.
- Jenkins, B and Sofos, SA (eds) (1996). *Nation & Identity in Contemporary Europe*, New York – London: Routledge.
- Kapitány, Á and Kapitány, G (2006). *Intézménymimika 2. [Visual Images of Institutions]*, Budapest: Új Mandátum.
- Kroeber, AL and Kluckhohn, C (1952). *Culture – A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Leersen, JT and Spiering, M (eds) (1991). *National Identity, Symbol and Representation*, Amsterdam – Atlanta: Rodopi.
- Link, J and Wülfing, W (eds) (1991). *Nationale Mythen und Symbole in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Martindale, D (1963). *Community, Character & Civilization*, London: Free Press of Glencoe, Collier-McMillan.
- Miller, D (1995). *On Nationality*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Radnóti, S (2003). "Mi a Terror Háza?" *Élet és Irodalom*, vol. 47, no 4.
- Ráday, M (2002). "A Terror Háza körüli gondokról", *Építész Fórum*, jan. 16.
- Samuel, RS (ed) (1989). *Patriotism. The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity I-III*. New York – London: Routledge.
- Smith, AD (1986). *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford – Cambridge: Blackwood.
- Smith, AD (1991). *National Identity*, Harmondsworth – Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Sugar, PF (ed) (1980). *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*, Santa Barbara: ARC Clio.
- Szűcs, J (1983). *Vázlat Európa három történelmi régiójáról*, [On the Three Historical Regions of Europe], Budapest: Magvető.
- Szűcs, J (1984). *Nemzet és történelem*, [Nation and History], Budapest: Gondolat.
- Tamás G. M. (2002) "A hangnem". *Élet és Irodalom*, vol. 46. no 9.

## SYMBOLS AND COMMUNICATION OF VALUES IN THE ACCESSION TO THE EU (HUNGARY)<sup>1</sup>

---

### INTRODUCTION

We have analysed the symbols and communication of values of the elections – mostly the campaign-clips, TV-spots, posters and slogans – of the parties competing in the general elections since the first free elections in Hungary. We have used the methods developed in this longitudinal research to examine the propaganda-materials of the 2004 (first) Hungarian EU-election, and the accession celebrations. We have used the methods of content analysis in analysing the main topics of the campaign, the central values, aims, human needs, and the most important symbols: the symbolic role of colours, sounds, music, lights, personalities (number, gender, social status, age of personalities presented, clothes and whole outlook of them), background, decorations, objects, other visual effects, language style, slogans, some dimensions of party-image: (potential social basis of the party, friends and enemies of the party, general image and changes of image of the party); and some dimensions of possible oppositions: left-right, past-present-future, nation-Europe-globalisation, the role of foreigners, religion and religious symbols. These symbolic elements may reflect to hidden aspect of the political culture and changes in the society.

We have also analysed the symbolic messages the EU-image reflected in the accession celebration. In this case, the most important symbolic aspects and most important association fields of the EU-image were in the focus of the analysis.

EU elections are not fundamentally different from Parliamentary elections for the parties: quite naturally all parties used the elections to judge their strength and steer local relationships in a direction favourable to them. At the same time, the election campaign was eminently suitable to analyse the way the relationship to Europe, and national and international issues are dealt with by the different parties. These issues are only some of many issues (and not the mostly emphasised ones) in the national general election campaigns. (Re-)joining Europe has been a political programme and value voiced often by almost all political parties since the first general elections, differences of emphasis were noted in two major issues:

1. The values and symbols attached to Europe, image of Europe, the programmes emphasised in connection with accession to the EU.
2. Doubts and fears voiced from the point of view of the (sovereign) interests of the country.

However, the discourse, which embraces the election campaign, must be examined so that these differences can be properly analysed: how did the issue of the EU and accession to the union appear in the Hungary of the turn of the millennium?

---

<sup>1</sup> The study was prepared as part of the OTKA T-038287 research, and the Cultural Patterns of the European Enlargement Process international research program. (Participant countries are Austria, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Slovakia, and Switzerland).

## IMAGE OF THE EU IN HUNGARY

What accession means became increasingly vague for the public, the more it was discussed. The majority accepted the necessity of accession, if for nothing else, but the fact that it is the West (and the Europe, which Hungary has now joined, has meant the “West” for Hungary, which spent the past decades “on the other side”). The associations of “the West”, are welfare, a good standard of living, a developed civilisation, a capitalist market-economy, a highly-urbanised society, democratic relations, cultural traditions, the protection of humanity, and other positive images, not only for Hungary but for the other countries of the “Eastern Block”. And although there are, naturally, negative associations with the West: dangerous crime, loose morals, exaggerated individualism, merciless competition, decline of vitality, etc., the more important the efforts of improving the quality of life in the Socialist countries, and the more implausible the efforts of humanising socialism became, the more obvious and widespread longing for the West became. And the majority accepted the necessity of accession, for the added reason, that they became used to the idea that the relations of the large powers decided in issues such as this, and while those in doubt regarded NATO membership as the lesser evil, there were even fewer reservations about joining the European Union (which does not even involve the dangers of unwanted military participation in conflicts).

On the eve of accession a daily quizzed a number of reference people. The question was “what will you take along to the EU, and what will you leave behind?” The answers given to the question effectively show the point of reference by which public opinion (and those who form it) judge expectations attached to Europe. The characteristics of the thus denied, non-European past (and present) primarily include political hatred, a bad atmosphere in politics, division, lack of union of purpose, national divide, poverty, defencelessness, unemployment, narrowness of mind, bad mood, pessimism, depression, discrimination, xenophobia, prejudices, weakness of national self-knowledge, the “small-country” view of life, provincialism, selfishness, envy, pettiness, unprincipled compromises and nepotism. In other words, the socialist past, underdevelopment, provinciality and its consequences on mentality, national identity wavering between lack of identity and the extreme of discrimination, the touch of the Balkans, and the “curse” of division, complained about for centuries in Hungarian political life. (In this indirect image, Europe or the Europe-ideal is cultured coexistence and co-operation, well-being, good feeling, confidence, democracy, the peaceful world of predictable and reasonable relations.)

Nonetheless it is certain, that members of the Hungarian society have very little knowledge, either practical or theoretical, of what it means to be a part of the European Union (and – precisely because of the above reasons – the majority show little interest in this). The campaign launched before the referendum on membership of the EU, aimed at providing information on the imminent changes, was a substantial failure and even at the time of accession, symbolic gestures (and the largely media-produced gaiety surrounding the accession) were dominant, and not a mass of information relevant to life within the European Union. (The most efficient symbolic gesture was that of ending the decades of enclosure – the Iron Curtain: the enjoyment of the fact that from now on Hungarians will be able to travel within Europe without a passport (with an ID), suggests more than anything else the fact of acceptance – not so apparent in other areas. As the ID is a tool of domestic identification, this fact for many symbolised that Hungarians will be “at home” in Europe.)

The idea of “Borderless Europe” became an important issue of the EU accession celebrations. The “Borderless”-event gained significance along the country’s borders: in this context, the *virtualisation of the borders* was the primary stress, and the celebration of this historic change. In order to symbolically experience the disappearance of borders, midnight border-crossings were organised (primarily on the Austrian border, the site of the former Iron Curtain), allowing the participants to enjoy the fresh feeling of travelling without a passport).

“Let’s run across to the EU” was a series of running and roller-skating competitions, and there was a relay race entitled “We’ve been waiting for Europe”. (The “Let’s run across to the EU” was also a reference to East Germans running across the border to Austria when the Iron Curtain fell, and that Hungary was the country that opened these floodgates in the final days of Socialism.)

The point of reference is of importance in this image. The starting reference point is the (undemocratic and poor) socialism, Eastern Europe as against Europe; in conjunction with opposition to the poverty-stricken Third World (in this distinction however, Hungary can be safely associated with Europe, although some regime-critical thinkers have been warning for years that Hungary can only share the fate of peripheral and semi-peripheral countries). A further point of reference is the opposition of Christian Europe and Islam (in this respect, based on its cultural and historical heritage, Hungary is firmly on the side of the West), and polarisation from the Far East as potential competitor in the economy (and here again, Hungary belongs to Europe for cultural ties, even if Asian origins and Eastern heritage are mentioned every now and again; Eastern cultures are foreign and therefore cause no doubt for the majority in the matter of belonging to Europe, and openness towards Eastern influences is no different from such attitude elsewhere in Europe: a ready-to-integrate interest in the other). Europe can be juxtaposed with the competitor and “patron” USA’s culture (and its political-economic might), but as the USA and Europe formed a single block when viewed from the other side of the Iron Curtain, this opposition has been rarely discussed in Hungary, although it does crop up in connection with some of the most unpopular foreign policy decisions of the USA. Primarily groups especially sensitive of national interests criticise American politics and mentality, and although some see a counterpoint to these in a United Europe, this Europe-America polarisation cannot work for the simple reason that those very people who hope to protect national interests from American influences, have doubts about the “selflessness” of the richer part of Europe.

This raises the issue of the “first- and second-class EU members”. It was depressing and disappointing for the Hungarian public, in view of the great expectations, (even if it caused no great surprise for those with a realistic view of global politics and economics, and after experiences of history) when it emerged that Europe was not granting new members all the rights enjoyed by the “old” members. Unhappiness was primarily caused by restrictions on the movement of labour, unequal treatment of agriculture causing unfair advantage to old members, and the generally unfair conditions for access to EU funds, and sometimes “preaching”, sometimes superior attitude of the western brothers. There were doubts about the real direction in which money was flowing: hopes and promises were about funding from West to East, aiming to help catch up, experiences, however, have often suggested that more profit is siphoned from the country and region, than the amount that comes in. (A typical manifestation of scepticism surrounding the free movement of labour was an ironic

essay in a leading Hungarian daily on the disappointed English and French prospective employees, who wanted to come to work in Hungary.)

(There is a very small, but significant sign of subjective non-equality: our Austrian colleagues collected posters, on which symbolic representation of Austria was one of the EU-stars or a piece of “Europe-cake”, and so on. It means that Austria feels itself as a real member, an organic part of United Europe; while in Hungary the flag with EU-stars, the EU-emblem always appears as a kind of *aim*, as a symbol of an other, desired world – also after the Hungarian accession).

Accession had become a central issue by 2004 in spite of the doubts and lack of information as, for the first time, at accession to the EU on May 1, and at the EP elections on June 13, 2004, the Hungarian people experienced through a series of political events a change in the organisational framework of their lives in a direct way.

### Front pages of newspapers



Accession was a central issue in the printed and electronic media. We cannot present a detailed discussion of this within the current article, we shall simply mention a few typical front pages as examples: in *Figure 1*, the liberal political-economic weekly (HVG) showed the EP election campaign as the “Siège of Strasbourg” (duelling knights in armour: the image that may have greeted the Magyars arriving from the East to Europe in the ninth century).

*Figure 1: “Siège of Strassbourg. The front page of HVG.*

Another front page of this weekly: Hungary becomes EU member. The ferry rests? *Figure 2* shows a strong rope tied around a mooring covered in the gold stars of the EU – a reference to an image created by Endre Ady, a great Hungarian poet from the turn of the



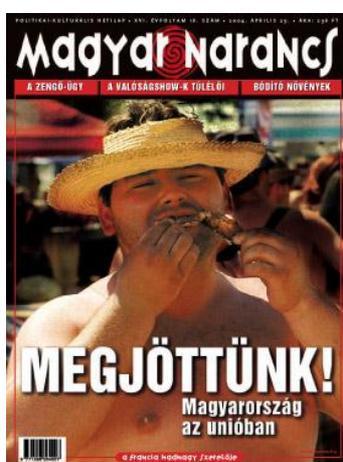
twentieth century, in which Hungary is presented as Ferry country, a country swinging to and fro between East and West, and which country finally ceases to swing, having attached itself once and for all to the West. Let it be noted that “The ferry rests?” headline allows for a number of sceptical associations. The “rests” expression suggests that the anchoring may not be permanent, and the line is a quote from another poet, this time Sándor Petőfi: the whole sentence conveys a less than euphoric message, “*The ferry rests, it has been moored, darkness is silent within*”. (In the present context it suggests that we cannot know how the future will be, the future is a “black hole”.)

*Figure 2. “The ferry rests?” The front page of HVG*



Figure 3 is from a satirical magazine (*Hócipő*): a picture of a “tshikosch” – as a djinn coming out from a Hungarian coloured bottle into the stars of the EU.

Figure 3. The front page of *Hócipő*



And finally (an other example of self-criticism) *Figure 4* shows the front page of a political weekly (*Magyar Narancs*) and presents a fat Hungarian man with an endless appetite in a concrete and symbolic sense. (The subtitle of the picture is: “We have arrived”)

Figure 4. The front page of *Magyar Narancs*

#### Accession show (EU-image reflected in the accession celebration)

The accession celebration events on offer are worth analysing from the point of view of the country’s relationship to Europe and membership of the union: what visions of Europe and Hungary were represented in these celebrations?



One of the typical celebration events was a presentation of the music and dances of accession countries, entitled “We go together”. Sitting places with music were placed on the main boulevard of Budapest where people could listen to the music of the other EU countries (see *Figure 5*). Music and dance appeared in this respect as the main tool of communication between different nations, and as the symbol of a *more peaceful, merrier world*, and it implied that Europe was the home of *cultural variety*.

Figure 5. A musical bench on the “boulevard of nations”

There were song and dance events called “Borderless Europe”, thus adding a new association to the Europe-image: the European Union, as the *dream of borders destroyed come true*.

◆ The next programme worthy of mention was the European *gastronomy* festival (of similar connotations). Gastronomy appeared as the “royal path” leading to acceptance of the culture of the other, whereby drinking and eating are cornerstones of consumer culture. Programmes showing the cuisine of accession and member countries was a major event of all celebrations in Hungarian cities (although the actual food and beverages on offer, as several news reports noted, was a selection of uniform sausage, burgers and beer instead of real variety).

● Redecorating the *bridges*. This type of programme was perhaps the most spectacular of the celebration events on offer in the national accession show. The three most central bridges of Budapest all took different appearances (See *Figures 6—11*):

a) Chain Bridge: birthday breakfast for children born on May 1, observation balcony;



*Figures 6 and 7.*

*Birthday breakfast on the Chain Bridge*

b) Elisabeth Bridge: waterfall (=Hungary as a country of waters – medical waters, the lake Balaton, the most successful national sport water polo);



*Figures 8 and 9.*

*The Elisabeth Bridge as the bridge of Waters*



- c) Liberty Bridge: covered in lawn, turned into a meadow. (People enjoyed lying on the green grass – other days it is forbidden to step on the grass in the parks of the city, but now, at the day of celebration we may use it everywhere, still on a bridge. And there is an other symbolic meaning of this performance: a technical element, a bridge is turned into a part of nature, green grass).



*Figures 10 and 11.  
Liberty Bridge  
as the bridge of  
the Green Peace*

Celebration events used the bridge metaphor profusely: Mentions of Hungary as a bridge-country (bridge between East and West, perhaps between North and South), similarly to ferry-country, symbolises the role of intermediary attributed to the country. The topical association was: “we cross to Europe over the bridge”. The bridges being taken into possession by the public symbolised this; in almost all Hungarian cities with bridges, there were bridge-related events, the bridge-metaphor played a key role. (Europe, the symbol of *crossing* and of “*arrival*”.)

- The introduction of twinned cities. The movement of twinning cities, launched to foster improved understanding of the other, better relations, “everyday diplomacy”, lay the mental and organisational foundations in several European countries for continental cultural and economic co-operation well before the EU was set up. In conjunction with the accession celebrations, the introduction of twinned cities underlined the concept of the EU as the opportunity of *brotherhood, peaceful coexistence and the alliance of peoples*.
- The “Dwellers of the Europe house” series of short films gave an introduction of EU members. In the light of these short films, but also in terms of the whole of the accession celebrations, the aforementioned lack of knowledge about the EU and the different member states was reconfirmed.
- “Week of European film”. The series of films shown together gave the image of Europe as the home of film culture, high culture. (But it must be added that only a fraction of the programmes dealt with European high culture, the majority of events were centered on music, dance and gastronomy.)
- “Europe for youth – youth for Europe”. In this approach the EU is the home of youth and future. In connection with accession to the EU many people – especially older people - have said that accession promises precious little for them (advantages will only be felt in the long-term), but perhaps (or probably) it promises a better and safer future for young people. An MSZP (=Hungarian Socialist Party: HSP) campaign film, to be discussed later, attempts to react to this belief, by showing an old lady, who tells the viewer that she too will benefit from the accession, but hopes her grandchild will have more benefits.)

- The Time Wheel. (See Figure 12).



Figure 12. *The Time Wheel*

In one of the most representative points of Budapest, in Heroes' Square renowned designers erected an 8-metre-tall wheel, in which one year's worth of sand started flowing exactly at midnight, the time of accession; in the image of a time wheel, to be turned upside-down after every year, accession to the European Union becomes a symbol of a new calendar.

- In many places the introduction of new technical “wonders” was connected to the celebration events: in this respect, Europe appeared as the symbol of *modernity*, of *technical and scientific development*. An international exhibition of inventions, industry and fine arts was staged, entitled “Genius Europe”: this afforded an opportunity for the representation of Hungarians as a talented people, and Europe appeared in this context as the *world allowing the blossoming of this talent*.
- Public Art events, apart from their aesthetic effect, also showed that Europe is the home of *urban culture*.
- “Messages to Europe” was a comprehensive “communication project”: the special stamping of mail, carrier pigeons, radio station and EU-NET-PACK online. The primary message was the simultaneous representation of old and new types of messaging (such as carrier pigeons and online messages) – joining the European flow of *information* – but it also suggested that the EU is the *possibility of a synthesis between tradition and modernity*.
- The “message”, (which, although it stresses absence, is an eternal symbol of connection) was a general a central theme of the celebrations. The EU message-wall was about safeguarding the values of our culture, and the “Send messages with a Trabant” event was a car-painting performance, with the involvement of respected artists. The Trabant (“Go Trabi, go”, etc.) has been the symbol of “bare-bottomed Socialism” for decades, and repainting the Trabant is a representation of *free and merry creativity* on the one hand, and of *changing, erasing the past, colouring in a drab, grey world* on the other. This was not the only DDR-cemetery and event representing Eastern European-ness through the symbolism of the car: in the “Farewell to the past – two-action engine cavalcade”, the Trabant- and Wartburg-symbolised Socialism was the yesterday that the Hungary entering Europe was bidding goodbye to.
- Part of this farewell was the aforementioned “We are not taking along... (EU junk-party)” poll. Collection spots were designated in the capital for objects people did not want to take along to the beautiful new world of the European Union. (See *Figures 13–18*) (The location itself, a run-down bus station, was also symbolic, it will be turned into a Design Centre in the near future.) The objects dropped off were primarily symbols of Socialist ideology, Soviet occupation and dictatorship or those of lack of development, poverty and provinciality, but some attempted to criticise today's political division (and governments). There were Molotov-cocktails, Russian machine gun, Stalin and (former Hungarian communist Premier) Rákosi busts, underground literary publications, police batons, foreign currency form (a memento of restriction on travel), doctor's “para solventia” (symbol of the everyday corruption in a non-market economy), wine in

plastic canisters, milk in bags, bread and fat (as a typical food of poor people), haphazard design from the 1950's and 1960's including coffee pots, ancient record players (symbols of the underdeveloped industry and low level of consumer culture), destroyed dust bins, salt (used in winter time to melt ice and connected with ecologic pollution) and objects of kitsch-culture, but there was also a tableau of the current government (as well as quotes from politicians of previous governments, and political "jokes" created by the owners of the "junk").



Figures 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. Some objects of EU junk-party

- Many events employed the customary elements of larger celebrations. The fireworks and other pyrotechnic displays underlined the idea that accession to the EU is a *special, festive event*.
- There were equestrian and Hussar shows in several places, and a parade of Hussars and horsemen entitled "2000 years on horseback". This type of programme, in keeping with the country's image projected for tourists, stresses Hungary's unique nature (within Europe) as a country of equestrian traditions, and refers to Hungary as a fighting nation (protector of Europe); and this is all in keeping with the recent resurgence in interest in the customs and traditions of the Hungarian nobility.
- Blessing the Europe bell stressed the idea that European culture is the *vessel of Christian tradition*.
- Part of the celebrations was the solemn raising of the EU flag and playing Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* (the EU anthem) and *Szózat* (a kind of second Hungarian national anthem) one after the other.
- The flag and anthem being the basic symbols of nationhood, the new flag and new anthem also unequivocally signalled that the country has become part of a new greater state, and of a "meta-nation"; and that the smaller and larger unit will, in the future, demand its citizens' identity simultaneously. The "all men will be brothers" and "to your country be immovably faithful, oh Magyar!" are both valid at the same time.

The usual confusion could be noted in relation with the flag: on the day after accession the Hungarian flags were covered up by the EU flags, and a few days later the national colours were put up again, above the new boards. Several motorists, intent on displaying the country's new EU membership began to plaster over the Hungarian colours with the "H" symbol surrounded by the EU stars on their licence plates, but the police attempting to enforce current regulation, and intolerant of arbitrary alterations to licence plates, tried to dissuade people from this practice by threatening these motorists with the immediate withdrawal of the licence plates and a 3-year prison sentence. Naturally, since May 1 new cars have been issued with licence plates featuring the EU-starred "H" symbol, and the owners of old cars can have their plates replaced with the new EU plates for a charge of HUF 30,000 (= 120 Euros)

To summarise the EU-image reflected in the accession celebration, we can see, that the European Union appears as:

- a peaceful, merry world
- a land without borders
- a world of tolerance
- a world of cultural diversity
- a land of modernity, technical and scientific development
- a new historical period
- an urban culture
- a land of brotherhood, an alliance of peoples
- home of youth and future
- a land of Christian traditions
- a synthesis between tradition and modernity
- a world of creativity
- the emergence of a new world (after the communist past of Eastern Europe)

Accession celebrations coincided with the EP-elections' campaign period. Although the celebration events only reflected the (cultural) peculiarities of the different parties in their style, and accession itself was represented as the joint action of the whole nation (apart from the opposing minority), during the preparation for the elections, the differences between the attitudes of the different parties emerged again, and we shall detail these differences below.

## THE CAMPAIGN

Naturally, as in every campaign, there were shared elements, typical of all or several parties. We shall discuss these first.

1. The campaign had features independent of the political parties, which dealt with what was at stake in the elections, and stressed its general significance. This was the motive behind the creation of posters (before the referendum about EU-accession, 2003), on which people symbolising subcultures were

displayed together, to show that they do have the same thoughts on Europe; and at the same time suggesting that the essence of Europe is the possibility of peaceful coexistence between the different cultures.



Figure 19. A well-known actress (of classical dramas and films) and a roma pop-singer, a “star” of a reality comedy



Figure 20. Football stars of two antagonist football teams

There were similar pictures of

- two comedians with different senses of humour
- two “personalities” of concurrent reality shows
- two TV-reporters, representatives of different generations and styles, representatives of the elite and mass-culture
- representatives of different TV-gameshows – rather sophisticated and a very simple one.

Somet of the posters tried to reflect to the everyday uncertainty of the people in connection with the EU. For example:



Figure 21. "May I open a coffee shop in Wien?"



Figure 22. "Is pig-killing EU-conform, or not?"



Figure 23. "Is Hungarian land property protected?"



24. "Can I study in Paris to become a graphic designer?"



Figure 25. "May we eat poppy-seed cake?"

The answer to the question posed in the figure is "yes" in each case.

Such propaganda-solutions include a TV-channel's interview with several known people on what European-ness means for them, shown in a news programme.

Although this time the elections were meant to decide who would be delegated to a joint European institution, the campaign was primarily about *domestic policy*: for the Government the issue was to see how much support it can work up, for the Opposition the issue was to determine to what extent they could profit from dissatisfaction of the public.

In words, all Parliamentary parties stressed that the 24 members of EP should not be "a group of feuding people," that there should be consensus between the delegates over the main national issues. This, however,

remained at the level of words, partly because the question of on which issues there should be a national consensus, was never properly addressed during the campaign.

What were the issues dealt with by the different parties?

In the primary issues espoused by the different parties the differences between the various parties (in terms of situation and type) were represented.

The ruling HSP was on the one hand, rather trivially stressing the continuation of the Government's work, and results it had achieved so far, and on the other hand, (by badgering away with the "there has to be action, not only talk" slogan), attempting to reinforce the image – employed in the previous general elections – that the largest Opposition party, FIDESZ's (= Alliance of Young Democrats, a member of European Popular Party) effective phrases were merely oratory exercises, that were in contradiction with the party's actions, and that by contrast, HSP is the party of active professionalism.

FIDESZ stressed the issues of working together, protection of national interests, and the general values of labour, home and security.

The issues addressed by the junior Government and Opposition parties were defined by this opposition, and both attempted to profit from it. MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum: HDF, a moderate conservative party) focused on issues, which were areas of loss of confidence for the large parties in their government-cycles (politics and corruption).

The other junior Parliamentary party, SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats, a liberal party) was also attempting to define itself as a "third way". The issues dealt with by the Liberals were dictated by the party's liberal politics and its representation: therefore Free Democrats addressed minority rights, the rights of the individual, freedom to make choices, demands of tax cuts, interests of large cities and cities in general, and stressed the consistent representation of liberal values directly.

*Styles, methods, emphases*

Free Democrats chose the strategy of opening the campaign early (launching their campaign as early as January). They led the field in terms of quantity of political broadcasts (as in all previous elections), and rivalled the large parties in terms of the number of giant billboards. Again, Free Democrats attempted to exploit the fact that today's image of Europe held many liberal associations, thus it was possible that a number of voters – in terms of domestic politics often not supporters of the party – felt that Free Democrats were more "suitable" than others. Free Democrats therefore stressed their own liberal nature more than usual, presenting a marked opposition between the conservative, socialist and liberal values in newspaper advertisements over several issues (healthcare, education, religion and Church, social issues, abortion, drugs, etc.), urging the voters to make a choice between the different attitudes. Separating the three positions also implied that in contrast with the quasi-two-party system that has developed in Hungary, Free Democrats were making an effort to break off from HSP, stressing that the two parties are different in essence, and this difference has not been abolished by

co-operation in government, not in terms of political-philosophy, values or strategy. Free Democrats – as in all previous elections – made an effort to use both rationality and emotions (intensively and markedly) to serve the goal of liberal values. They stressed the value of freedom and freedom to make choices in several areas of private life (freedom of faith, freedom to choose abortion; city life as the home of individual freedoms, tax cuts to provide greater individual freedoms and other issues emphasising freedom of choices, up to representing liberal approach to light drugs), and in the public sphere (smaller state, lower taxes). They addressed first-time voters through “personal letters”, in which they stressed the issues of the abolition of conscription and drug use (assuming that a large part of this age-group do not oppose the liberalisation of drugs), the issue of abortion, and insistence that the state should not interfere with the private lives of the people.

HSP never found its own specifics (apart from insisting on the “results” of distributive Government), this, in addition to the negative effects of governmental measures, could have played a part in the party’s weak performance. HSP attempted to dominate the campaign with what appeared to be rash ideas: such was the Prime Minister’s suggestion, which caused general surprise and a public polemic, that the different Hungarian party’s should set a joint list for the EP elections.

FIDESZ stressed the values of labour, home and security at its meetings. All of these carried a topical message as well as their general attractiveness: EU-accession may have made some people more afraid of unemployment, support for young people setting up first homes is natural from a party that attracts the most young voters; the issues of security in the cities and social security, there was the added meaning of national security, which has gained increased importance due to the Iraq war and the possible unpredictable consequences of US foreign policy.

#### Posters

The four Parliamentary parties managed to put up posters and billboards in the capital. One of the first to do so was HDF. One of their posters first appeared on the escalators of the Budapest underground, showing a portrait of party chairman Ibolya Dávid and the “Normal Hungary, Normal Budapest!” slogan. This was continued with symbolic images referring to corruption, pollution in Budapest and the desolate housing estates of the Socialist era, and over these pictures was printed the continuation of the slogan: “but not like this”. (The counterpoint to the desolate images was the pleasant and elegant lines of the Elisabeth Bridge and the adjacent statue of Queen Elisabeth /“Sissi”/.)

Another HDF poster showed a manicured female hand before a green background in the shape of the country (with a difficult, easily misinterpreted message of a woman’s hand taking care of the country? stroking the country?, but it could also bring to mind images of a hand pressing down on the country; although the images exuded a different feel: a feel of elegance and smoothness).

While out and about, one could quite frequently run into a particularly unflattering photo of Ms Dávid (head of the HDF party). On a fourth, somewhat better picture, Ms Dávid, dressed elegantly, smiled at the observer: with the “Nő az esély” (“greater chances”) slogan. (The phrase, literally “the chance is increasing” is a pun in Hungarian. “Nő”, the word for woman, is a homonym of “nő”, the third person singular version of the verb “to

increase". Thus the slogan had a double meaning. 1. the country and/or party's chances are getting better; 2. this is guaranteed by the fact that HDF – unlike any other Hungarian party – is headed by a woman. The pun – and this suggests that it was not such a good idea – was often the rivals' target for derision and not entirely without reason, because it is not a very good idea to stress the gender of an otherwise very popular politician rather than his/her abilities and personality. Furthermore, this wording suggests that those directing the HDF campaign are assuming that a woman will be given better chances in the EU, which is why she is heading the party list.)

On a FIDESZ poster, Pál Schmitt (a former Olympic champion and sports diplomat) stands wearing the Hungarian track-suit top behind a group of children. The image offers us the chance of examining the joint effects of several symbols: the child as symbol of the future, sport as the symbol of success, a group as the symbol of working together, the sports-wear bearing the Hungarian coat of arms, as the symbol of international representation of Hungary, and the known successes of the main figure, which are sports successes, but can always radiate through into the political arena, thereby confirming the party's promise of political success. This poster was also immediately criticised by the rival parties on the following grounds: 1. does a representative of the Hungarian Olympic Committee and of the whole of the country as a sportsman have the right to appropriate the symbol of the national sports uniform? 2. all of the children on the picture are boys. (One of HSP's favoured angles of attack is that FIDESZ's senior leadership has no women members, and that the party has become too patriarchal).

On another FIDESZ poster Mr Schmitt sits in an elegant office, before him an open book (often defaced on the posters displayed on the streets with the legend "communist", referring to the FIDESZ party leader's past as sports leader in Communist times). The image bears the slogan "Together we can make it!" (Exploiting the general attractiveness of the promise of "success", and stressing "unity" refers on the one hand to cooperation of the public and politics, and on the other hand to national – or majority – consensus, the importance of community values and teamwork.)

A third FIDESZ poster – similarly to HDF's aforementioned woman's hand poster – shows five hands (manicured, but different in terms of age, gender and colour) interlocked over the national colours, bearing the "Go Hungary, go Hungarians!" slogan, (this form echoes Berlusconi's well-known "Forza Italia" slogan) adding to the symbols employed by HDF those of teamwork, community spirit and the associations of sports.

### The slogans

We have mentioned the slogans of the different parties in relation with their posters.

FIDESZ based its campaign primarily on the "Together we can make it" and the "Labour, home, security" slogans, and we have already detailed the connotations of these. At the same time there has been a change in the logo of the party, which now includes the "European Popular Party" denomination (it showed that FIDESZ, a member of the conservative, international party alliance, stresses its nature as a "popular party", in other words that it is ready to integrate all sorts of values, and although the "European" adjective is due to every European party, in this context it stresses the European-ness of the given party as a positive characteristic).

HDF's "Normal Hungary, normal Budapest" slogan stressed the need for a restoration of the damaged ethical and other *norms*.

HSP's: "HSP again" slogan does not say much, perhaps it builds primarily on people's reluctance to have changes, and hangs on to the hope of repeating the success of the 2002 general elections. The "While others just talk" slogan, which refers to the FIDESZ, has already been discussed. The shrill aggression of the "Let's stop the FIDESZ lie-factory!" slogan sounds like a threat from a party in a position of power.

On the one hand Free Democrats say of themselves that their party is "The Hungarian liberal party" – a change is noted here compared to the legends of previous logos, when the Hungarian was not stressed (this means, that behind the party there is the international alliance of liberal parties, represented in Hungary by the Free Democrats). The other slogan is "Liberals to the EU". This, at the same time, shows the party's need to send MPs to the European Parliament, that the liberals belong in the EU, and the wording also suggests that the rivalry between the different parties is now to be understood in an EU-context.

A further Free Democrats's slogan: "Budapest: this is a village too, it's just full of people". One of the key elements of the campaign was referring to the interests of the City, and city dwellers (as opposed to the political right, which focused on the villages). This slogan of the Free Democrats refers to the fact that two-thirds of Hungary's population live in cities, and Europe represents an even more urbanised culture (80 per cent of Europeans live in cities). This approach successfully turned the capital--countryside dichotomy of earlier campaigns to an opposition of cities and villages (in keeping with the fact that one of the most dynamic social processes of the last decades has been the urbanisation of Hungary's villages).

The dream, the plan (Free Democrats), the chance (HDF), and the success (FIDESZ) were the key words of the campaign. This shows that (election) victory (and the success, emergence embodied by election victory) appears as a value in itself, which can mean either a good thing, or a bad thing. Its bad aspect is that there are no real programmes or true goals; the essence of political competition is the "competition itself". Its good aspect is that this is often the case when the whole of society is on an upward path, and it is not the desperate struggle between two different sets of ideologies that decides the possible way out from a given situation of crisis.

#### Mailbox-campaign

The Free Democrats were perhaps the most active mailer. Apart from addressing first-time voters, the use of postcards of different topics was noted. One of the topics was domestic abuse directed against women – the postcard showed a young woman's face marked by signs of battery. The related values: "Solidarity. Responsibility. Human rights. Tolerance. Our choice: Europe." Another postcard was entitled: "In what kind of Hungary do you want to live?". This postcard depicted conflicting images symbolising regulated order and free disorder. The answer given to the question raised was the most ideological of what the different parties offered the voters, this answer was born as part of a strategy to badger voters with the basic values of liberal ideology: "In a Hungary where not the state, but the people decide how they want to live". The next postcard: a crown of thorns against a blue background. "Faith is a personal matter. No-one can be forced to support a

faith in conflict with their conscience.” This postcard was meant to show the party’s commitment to religion as well as the religious tolerance of liberal ideology. The next postcard showed a sad dog (addressing the animal rights supporters): “Do not tolerate it. In Hungary several hundred thousand animals are killed every year out of negligence and cruelty. Think European.” The next: “Cities are the motors of Hungary. We bring EU grants to the cities. In Europe the cities are the motors of development. Do not allow Budapest to be left behind in the competition between the cities.” “The EU should spend the same time addressing the problems of city dwellers as it does on the length of cucumbers and a fat-content of milk.” (In contrast with the earlier focus on agricultural issues, here a concentration on urban problems can be noted – but the texts imply the criticism of a cucumber-length-measuring /i.e. over-regulating/ EU bureaucracy.) And finally: “We, the liberals, believe in humanity, not the state.” (This bon mot relies heavily on Hungarians’ disappointment in institutions, greater individualism and the anti-state interests of private enterprise.)

One of the HSP leaflets said “For a successful European Hungary”. (“Success” again!) The leaflet shows the HSP emblem and the EU-stars. “Hungary has returned to Europe, returned to the values she has held her own for a thousand years. The faith and future of our country are united with those of Europe.” “Since the beginnings HSP has taken a stance by a united Europe, without borders.” HSP’s Europe plan: motorways, roads, canals, modern state, better quality healthcare, education, lower taxes, rising employment rate, European welfare. All these were coupled with photos: the Prime Minister and the Foreign Affairs Minister signing Hungary’s accession contract. The Visegrad-four (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) reunite. The Prime Minister kisses an old lady (reference to the often-criticised photo of former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán getting his *hand* kissed by an old lady). Pictures of road building. An image of a laughing young family. HSP was attempting to underline its own achievements (emphasising the construction of roads and the relatively good approval of its foreign policy, supported by schematic representations of harmony).

### The campaign broadcasts: TV spots<sup>2</sup>

Relatively few party political broadcasts were made in this campaign. The differences of invested intellectual and financial assets were considerable in this area as well. Free Democrats conducted a relatively intensive campaign through television, and HDF campaigned through television slightly stronger than the rest. HSP was the one that inclined most towards the negative campaign. Even compared to earlier elections agriculture and the countryside were much less often addressed; there was a noticeable focus on the cities. The issue of ownership of the land was not raised (not even by radical right-wing parties), and what the union of European states meant was hardly dealt with at all in the broadcasts. (The Free Democrats party was the only one to note that the motor of development in the EU is the city.)

FIDESZ’s TV spots emphasise the importance of the team – coupled with the associations of private life, sport and politics. (Stressing community values in opposition to those propagating individualism: the “companion” word is central, creating a connection between the need for a companion in the private sphere, and the value of political partnership.) The spot begins with an image of idyllic family life, which is practically a spitting image

---

<sup>2</sup> We would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to AGB Hungary for their assistance in recording and collecting the campaign films.

of the opening sequence of Socialist Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy's party political broadcast at the time of the previous general elections (which, of course, simply adopted the cliché from somewhere else). The idyllic moment is transformed into a birthday-party, with many children (which harks back to a campaign broadcast used earlier by FIDESZ leader Viktor Orbán). The spot features sport (football), as the symbol of victory, fitness and team spirit. Finally, the film cuts to the familiar image of Mr Schmitt sitting in his well-furnished office – always suggesting the image of a responsible political/state leader.

One of the main issues addressed by HDF – focused on by one of its broadcasts – is anti-corruption. After a series of images describing the dark path that money takes, the hand-motif reappears, with a much more unequivocal message than on the poster: here the gesture is that of purposefully erasing the corrupt past and present. In the other section of the film, Ms Dávid addresses a large crowd – the film stresses support for the party, the leader's quality as a speaker, her ability to win people over (a relatively frequent topic in campaign broadcasts). The elegant clothes, stressing the gender of the party's leader (with references to a burgher, even noble background) are also characteristic of the film. The other campaign broadcast of the party – Budapest on the threshold of EU accession – evokes the image of a city disfigured by smoke and rubbish, dog excrement, holes in the tarmac, desolate housing estates and filled with beggars (these are the most frequently-voiced negative feelings about Budapest); these images are contrasted with the image of a street filled with green plants (and the film switches to colour from monochrome), and the film thus stresses the desire for a "more liveable Budapest". An evocative atmosphere and a rousing emotional message are typical of this film. At the end of the broadcast, the list-leader talks to some people (which shows that the party feels it is important to underline the teamwork of the party leadership).

HSP used the bland slogan, "because others just talk" an element of its negative campaign. (And the radical imperative, "Let's stop the FIDESZ lie-factory!" also puts in an appearance.) The party based its films on pronouncements of affiliation (by voter-types embodying the "man of the street"); this method was employed primarily by FIDESZ at the 2002 elections.

For Free Democrats, as discussed above, the emphasised key issues in the campaign film were freedom of the individual, tax cuts, cities, roads, education, standard of living and consistency. They were the party that produced the most colourful and abundant materials. The recurring question in their films – "What do we need for life?" – builds on the privacy-orientation of people sick of politics, which harmonises nicely with the party's very nature of focusing on the values of individualism. The type's features, with their individual peculiarities, the representation of unique life-styles suggested an emphatically individualistic nature, and yet the statements of the characters come across as pronouncements of deep personal conviction. In respect of both the issues addressed and the style employed, Free Democrats managed to find the least clichéd solutions. There is humour, surprising developments in several of their campaign films. (For example the connection of the "My girl-friend wants to have a baby" sentence with the party programme. Or one of party chairman Gábor Kuncze's usual witty or, if you like, aphoristic turns of phrase, such as "another reason I'll vote for this party, is that I am its chairman."). Direct dialogue between the party and the private life of the individual suggests that private life is sacred, but for whatever a political platform is required, the party is ready to be a partner: in this respect the personal and political help and strengthen each other. (The "you are voting for yourself" slogan is

in keeping with this idea.) The number of sexual references is notable: a young man who wants to go “dating,” the slightly older young adult whose “girl wants to have a baby,” the girl who weighs the possibility of “falling pregnant against my will” (in a train of thought arguing for freedom to chose abortion). The characters are mostly white-collar people and significantly mostly young (the whole of the party’s current campaign was aimed to addressing young people, especially those most disappointed in FIDESZ). The markedly urban vernacular (typical of the party from the beginnings) circumscribes the target group, and there are frequent references to the city in the campaign. Another original feature was the efficient use of visual symbols in the campaign discussed here – the bird soaring to the sky, which refers to the party’s emblem or “totem” in a new form; and the suggestive footage of Martin Luther King, the 1956 revolution and the solitary figure facing the tanks at Tienanmen square, which also carry the basic values of liberalism.

It is worth examining sound- and light-effects in the films: FIDESZ used modern, dynamic pop-music of a national feel. HDF underlined the opposition of negative and positive images with the use of music, the negatives are accompanied by sinister music, while positives are accompanied by a relaxed, rhythmical dance music and the merriment of Viennese waltzes. HSP’s choice of music was very similar: the dynamic classical dance music is here coupled with the Ode to Joy (the EU anthem). Free Democrats use a dynamic, but slightly upsetting syncopated Jazzy, English (English-language) music.

FIDESZ’s film starts with images of a bright morning; later it switches to the festive atmosphere of the candle-light and sparklers of a birthday, finally the green light of the office in the evening creates an atmosphere of solemnity. HDF uses contrasts: the negative images are shown in sinister dark and greys, replaced in one case by the spot-lit podium at a night-time meeting, in the other the bright light of an afternoon scene.

Finally, if we return to the question raised initially, the ways in which the differences in the relation of the parties to the European Union are presented, we can answer that all in all there were relatively few noticeable differences. The values expressed are either the same, generally demanded values (such as security, welfare, freedom, etc.), or European values, undoubted by any party, such as tolerance, democracy and a respect for cultural heritage. On the other hand it is quite obvious that the different parties stressed certain values more than the others, and when they defined the essence of “European-ness”, they emphasised these values and attached these to “Europe”. (Such was liberalism for Free Democrats, cultural heritage and cultured behaviour for HDF, /state-subsidised/ modernisation for HSP). There was, however, a notable difference between the parties in that the different small parties either did not address the issue of “European-ness” (Workers’ Party, MIÉP = Party of Hungarian Truth and Life) and thereby indirectly express their reservations about the alleged positive effects of accession, or like FIDESZ, stressed (or also stressed) that accession must not be implemented with self-subjection, the attitude of trying to catch up, but by relying on domestic resources where possible, and with the knowledge that Hungary can not only gain from accession, but also largely enrich the European community.

The results of the election: FIDESZ at 47 %, (a substantial surge compared to the previous elections) HSP at 34 %, (an even more substantial drop); the Free Democrats at 7.7 %, (a relatively large gain) and HDF at 5.2% (gain).

FIDESZ's success was certainly due to an extent to criticisms of the government, and the more dynamic representation of national interests. The Free Democrats's relatively large gain was due to the party's successful self-representation of a third way, and the assumption of many voters that liberal values are more compatible than others with European values, and perhaps the fact that they managed to establish the association of consistency in the minds of the voters. HDF succeeded in passing the 5 per cent mark thanks to its balanced, peaceful image and reasonable style.

As far as public opinion's relation with the elections and EU accession is concerned, we can establish that there remains a substantial lack of information; the majority of the people have little knowledge of what it means, and how their lives will be influenced by an international union of states. As a result, EU elections failed to elicit much interest (that the low turnout, much lower than that of the Parliamentary elections, did not sink below the EU-average, was largely due to the fact that many voters felt it was important to participate, if only to express their preference in domestic politics). There are optimistic and negative expectations of the EU; (accession celebrations highlighted the surviving, slightly messianic expectations, but the sober majority coupled these positive expectations with a scepticism fuelled by centuries of experiences). The most productive attitude was the slowly spreading (albeit not yet a majority)-opinion, which attempts to base expectations of the country's successful development primarily on the efficient and conscious use of the country's resources.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, B (1992). *Imagined Communities. /Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism/*, London – New York – New Delhi: Verso.
- Barthes, R (1964). “Éléments de sémiologie”. In: *Communications* 4. Paris: Seuil, pp. 91-135
- Basso, KH and Selby, HA (eds.). (1980). *Meaning in Anthropology*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico.
- Breuss, S, Liebhart, K and Pribersky, A (1995). *Inszenierungen*, Wien: Sonderzahl.
- Bruckmüller, E (1994). *Österreich-bewusstsein im Wandel*, Wien: Signum.
- Cerulo, KA (1995). *Identity Design /The Sights and Sounds of a Nation/* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Cohen, A (1969). “Political Anthropology”, *MAN* 1969/(4), pp. 215-235.
- Cohen, A (1985). *The Symbolic Construction of Community, Key Ideas*, London – New York: Routledge.
- Dolgin, J, Kemnitzer, DS and Schneider, DM (eds.) (1977). *Symbolic Anthropology: A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Douglas, M (1975). *Implicit Meanings. Essays in Anthropology*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Firth, R (1973). *Symbols – Public and Private*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Geertz, C (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, C (1983). *Local Knowledge, Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books.
- Gellner, E (1983). *Nation and Nationalism*, Oxford – Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Gerbner, G et al (1969). *The Analysis of Communication Content*, New York: John Wiley.
- Giddens, A (1984). *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Herzfeld, M (1997). *Cultural Intimacy (Social Poetics in the Nation-State)* New York – London: Routledge.
- Kapitány, Á and Kapitány, G. (1990) *Értékválasztás, 1990 (A választási pártműsorok elemzése)*, [Analysis of the Electoral Clips of Political Parties] Budapest: Művelődéskutató Intézet.
- Kapitány, Á and Kapitány, G (1994). *Értékválasztás, 1994 (A választási kampányműsorok szimbolikus és értéküzenetei)*, [Analysis of the Electoral Clips of Political Parties], Budapest: Friedrich Naumann Stiftung – Societas.
- Kapitány, Á and Kapitány, G (1996). “Changing World-Views in Hungary 1945-1980”, *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 29.2 Fall 1995 pp. 33-43.
- Kapitány, Á and Kapitány, G (1998a). *Értékválasztás, 1998 (A választási kampányműsorok szimbolikus és értéküzenetei)*, [Analysis of the Electoral Clips of Political Parties], Budapest: Új Mandátum.

- Kapitány, Á and Kapitány, G (1998b). "Systemwechsel und Symbolwechsel in Ungarn, 1989-1996". In: Pribersky, Andreas & Berthold Unfried (Hg) *Symbole und Rituale des Politischen: Ost- und Westeuropa im Vergleich* Serie: "Historisch-Antropologische Studien", Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang Verlag, pp. 159-174.
- Kapitány, Á and Kapitány, G (2002) *Értékválasztás 2002. [Analysis of the Electoral Clips of Political Parties]*, Budapest: Új Mandátum.
- Kapitány, Á and Kapitány, G (1999, 2002). *Magyarság-szimbólumok (Symbols of Hungarian National Identity)*, Budapest: European Folklore Center, (3 editions)
- Kapitány, Á and Kapitány, G (2001). "Wie wir moderne Mythen am Institut für Kulturanthropologie der ELTE Budapest analysieren" In: Bernard, J and Withalm, G (Hg). "Mythen, Riten, Simulakra. Semiotische Perspektiven – Myths Rites, Simulacra. Semiotic Viewpoints. I-II." *Angewandte Semiotik* 18/19. Wien: ÖGS (Österreichische Gesellschaft für Semiotik).
- Leach, E (1976). *Culture and Communication: the Logic by which Symbols are Connected*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leerssen, J and Spiering, M (eds) (1991). *National Identity, Symbol and Representation*, Amsterdam: Rodopi
- Lévi-Strauss, C (1963). *Structural Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books.
- Shütz, A (1962). *Collected papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, The Hague – Boston – London: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Smith, AD (1991). *National Identity*, London: Penguin Books.
- Smith, AD (1998). *Nationalism and Modernism, A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism*, London – New York: Routledge.
- Turner, V (1969). *The Ritual Process*, Chicago: Aldine.
- Turner, V (1974). *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Turner, V (1987). *The Forest of Symbols*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

### Introduction

We have analysed the symbols and communication of values of the parliamentary elections – mostly the campaign clips, TV spots, posters and slogans of the parties competing in the general elections – since the first free elections in Hungary (1990). We repeated this analysis in 1994, 1998, 2002 and 2006 (see Kapitány–Kapitány 1990, 1994, 1998, 2003, 2007). We have used the methods developed in this longitudinal research to examine the propaganda materials of the 2004 (first) Hungarian EP-election, and the accession celebrations (Kapitány and Kapitány 2005). We have used the method of content analysis in analysing the main topics of the campaign, the central values, aims, human needs, and the most important symbols: the symbolic role of colours, sounds, music, lights, personalities (number, gender, social status, age of the people presented, clothes and their entire physical appearance), backgrounds, decorations, objects, other visual effects, language style, slogans, some dimensions of party-image (potential social basis, friends and enemies of the party, general image and changes in the image of the party) and some dimensions of possible oppositions (left/right; past/present/future; nation/Europe/globalisation; the role of foreigners, religion and religious symbols). These symbolic elements may reflect hidden aspects of the political culture and changes in society.

In 2009 we analysed the propaganda materials of the second EP-election by the same methods.

In another research we have analysed the visual symbols of educational institutions (schools, high schools, and nurseries), cultural institutions (libraries, clubs, village halls, cinemas, and theatres), religious institutions (churches, parishes), institutions of power (local government buildings, council offices, party headquarters), catering establishments (restaurants, cafés, pubs). In this research we took approx. 30 000 photos of 3000 institutions in Hungarian cities and villages in the eighties, and approx. 20 000 photos of 500 institutions in Hungarian cities and villages in 2005 (Kapitány–Kapitány 1989, 2006b). On the basis of these researches we can demonstrate some elements of the symbolic representation of EU in Hungary.

### Visual symbols of EU in Hungarian institutions

There are very few visual symbols which represent the EU-image. The most frequent (almost the single) symbol is the EU flag with the stars. The EU flag can be seen on different state and local institution buildings over the gate and in the representative rooms of the institution. In general we can see them together with the national tricolour and the flag of the city, village or district. (*Figure 1*) It symbolises the (triple) spheres of territorial identity: the local, which is inside the national, which is inside the Union. (In Hungary the importance of the locality and regionality has also increased after the so-called system change, parallel with the EU-accession and globalisation process). There are some situations, where the flags have a double meaning: in nurseries and schools the EU-flags (and the national flags of other EU-member countries) have an educational function (they take part in the socialisation of children as citizens of the EU). (*Figure 2*) In restaurants the message of different national flags (on the table) is respect shown for guests from other countries, the EU-flags presume those

guests, who identify themselves as “Europeans”, or emphasise: “we are all Europeans”. (Figure 3) We can often see the stars of the EU-flag on car number plates, on the posters and flags of some political parties (who identify themselves as representatives of the EU – and globalisation -- in Hungary). We can meet EU-emblems and textual information on the EU on notice boards in council halls. (Figure 4) Another important symbol of the EU is the map which differentiates the EU-members from the others. (These maps are mainly in schools). (Figure 5) Sometimes we can meet other symbols of the EU. The motto: Unity in Diversity, the Ode to Joy as the anthem of the EU, 9<sup>th</sup> of May as Europe-day, or mentioning the “cultural capital” of the EU (in 2010 a Hungarian city, Pécs is also one of these “cultural capitals”). An interesting symbol was the so-called EU-tree: some Hungarian cities planted saplings on the day of accession (in 2004). (Figure 6) In the Hungarian capital, Budapest, a so-called “time-wheel” and a huge hourglass were put up, which started counting time at the exact time of the EU-accession, (but this machine broke some months later). And one of the main symbols is the “Euro” as an expected (or less expected) currency for Hungary.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

But we can summarise: there are very few real symbols, and the majority of them are mainly (and only) official symbols (and much rather signals, emblems, than real symbols). They don't have connections to real stories, to marks of history, joined with emotional associations; visual impressions of personal experiences.

The existing Pan-European spaces: Brussels, Strasbourg, etc. are not very meaningful. The Berlin Wall – and its fall – is relatively meaningful (in Hungary, too), in connection with the demolition of the Hungarian border in 1989. (“European picnic”). However the Hungarian Socialist Party tried to monopolise the glory of these events and for this reason this symbol doesn’t really exist for everybody.

The five years of Hungarian EU-membership has not been symbolically very suggestive for the majority of society. The EU means being able to travel without a passport, to get money (by tendering), to get jobs abroad, it means an exchange of students (Erasmus), but it doesn’t mean a real community, a real societal unit for the majority of Hungarians. The everyday work of the EU-parliament is “very far” and it doesn’t play a direct role in the everyday life of Hungarian people. The EU as a real societal “project” is not (or only a little bit) perceptible in everyday life.

So the associations, which encircled the EU at the minute of accession, were changed. In 2004 we could find mainly positive associations in connection with the EU, as: future, youth, Europe without borders, liberty of enterprises, cultural diversity and tolerance, etc. Europe was “the West” for Eastern European citizens (and it meant the “free world” and welfare societies). Most of the Eastern countries defined themselves as a bridge (between East and West, North and South) and as a country *inside* Europe. Hungarian people hoped to resolve their national problems (as the problems of Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries) although they were a little bit anxious for example about the future of Hungarian agriculture – as the traditionally core section of Hungarian economy. But Europe appeared at that time mainly as a cohesive force. In 2009 the problems became more visible, and the associations about the EU became more ambivalent. The migration of the young generation and intellectuals; (in general: the problems of migration); the crisis of western economy and society, the increasing presence of criminality, increasing intolerance and problems of cohesion were thematized. The inner problems seemed to be more serious: domestic political confrontations, increasing unemployment, the problems of the Hungarian gypsies (Roma), and the crisis of the Hungarian agriculture. (In this process the standards, norms and limits of EU frequently thematized as negative attributes). The metaphor “bridge” was followed by “Hungary as a passage-way” and the feeling “we are inside” was supplied by the experience to be on the *periphery*.

## EP ELECTIONS, HUNGARY, 2009

### The main topics

This atmosphere determined the setting of the agenda in connection with the EU before the 2009 elections. The main themes were in the media and in the communication by political parties on the one hand themes of domestic politics, and on the other hand “technical” questions of the EU. On the one hand questions, which are very important for the men in the street, and on the other hand questions, which are important for professional politicians. On the one hand there was the question of accession to the “Euro-zone”, the question of the position of the Hungarian agriculture in the EU, and questions such as How is the “social status” of Hungary developed compared to the other countries? Do we have to catch up with Europe or have we always been a part of Europe? Are we inside? Are we outside? Are we inside but as “second class” citizens of Europe? And on the other hand there are questions such as Who will be the Hungarian EU-commissioner? Which factions will adopt the different Hungarian parties?

The political parties used the campaign above all as a rehearsal for the 2010 Hungarian parliamentary elections.

What was thematized by the posters and campaign films in connection with the EU?

At first we present the special themes which were mentioned by different Hungarian parties in connection with the EU. {There were six parties which played a role in the campaign: MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party), SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats – Liberal Party); FIDESZ (Young Democrats, the member of the group of the European People’s Parties); MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum – a Conservative Party), Munkáspárt (Workers’ Party = old-fashioned communists); Jobbik (a Radical Right Wing Party); LMP (“Possibility for an Alternative Politics” – a Green Party).

#### **MSZP (Socialist Party):**

They emphasised a) the importance of the representation of Hungarian interests in the EU (as their own “mission”). b) equal opportunities for women (as a common European goal); c) the energy-problem as a common European /problem/ care.

They use very few visual symbols.

#### **SZDSZ (Liberal Party):**

They emphasised a) the importance of locality, regional and communal policy, local tasks by the help of the EU (some examples: “we make our district more secure by the adaptation of European norms”; “a new bridge over the Danube: we can build it with the help of the EU”); b) the importance of European security; c) “We are at home in Europe”; d) Hungary will be really “European” or it will be “Balkanised”: “Budapest is the face of Hungary, you can decide, which face of Budapest could be seen by Europe”.



On a poster (as on a visual illustration of the previous slogan) we can see a peaceful boy with a bike on Heroes Square of Budapest *versus* cars aflame in the street (set on fire by political demonstrators or football-hooligans); on another poster we can see the feet of a crowd starting to paint the town red *versus* a kissing young couple.

Another visual symbol (used by them): blue Hungary on a big map of Europe (Figure 7) = blue is the colour of this party, too – they suggest: the Liberal Party and Europe are the same (“this party is the main representative of Europe in Hungary”). But: the visual message is ambivalent. Its intended meaning is that Hungary is an interior part of Europe; but it has an unwanted meaning, too: the big EU swallows the small Hungary. Or: Hungary is a *hole* in the body of Europe.

#### **Munkáspárt (Communists):**

The implicit message of their texts is that the EU means the power of multinationals, and worse life-possibilities for the majority of people. b) They propose that Hungary should give up NATO membership.

They use very few visual symbols.

**Jobbik (Radical Right-wing Party)** (The meanings of the word “Jobbik” are: either “the Right” or “the Better”):

They emphasised, that a) Krisztina Morvai (the first person on the list of candidates of the party) is “the voice of Hungary in Europe”; b) “we shall conquer Europe again”.



The visual attachment to this slogan is an equestrian sculpture of Árpád, the first Hungarian prince (*Figure 8*) The text beside the picture is the following: “I’m Árpád, I am 1160 years old, they say I am extremist and a neo-nazi; make me proud of you again”.

Besides the party campaign there was an “official” campaign, too (to motivate people to vote). The official posters were completely uninteresting, sometimes they were not understandable.

As we mentioned above, the campaign was primarily about *domestic politics*: very few visual associations were presented in connection with the EU and there were only some visual elements in general; most of them were only *emblematic signs* or visual presentation of *binary oppositions* of domestic political frontlines.

The main domestic topics of EP-election campaign 2009

**MSZP (Socialist Party):**

1. “Why would property tax be right? Because richer people give more to the community”. “Why would the cutback of personal income-tax be right? Because working people can keep more money”. 2. Equal opportunities for (Hungarian) women! 3. We ensure the safety of energy-supply (for Hungarian homes) – (this was a reaction to the Russian – Ukrainian gas-crisis); 4. They showed some documents of the history since the so called system-change: taking down the barbed-wire fence (Iron Curtain), the accession to the EU, ribbon cutting ceremony of different objects, the emergence of extremist movements, the world crisis, political diversification – and a final summary of this campaign film: it is necessary to stand by the Left, and the Left will resolve the problems; 5. They suggested a policy supposedly on the side of the “People” – the majority of the public opinion asserts just the opposite –; they have a last straw: “*you must stand by us, vote for the Left*”...

Their campaign was a typical governmental party campaign.

**FIDESZ= (People’s Party):**

1. They emphasised the importance of family life; 2. They suggested: they were against lying, corruption, unemployment and rising taxes.

Their campaign was a typical opposition party campaign.

**SZDSZ (Liberal Party):**

1. Who may come to a decision about the future, about the economy, about laws? 2. The “excluders” deny the equality and freedom of 2 million people (gypsies, homosexuals and lesbians, Jews, drug-consumers,

alternative thinkers). But, as the text of the Liberal Party's TV-spot says: "They are not traitors, but they are men who like their own homeland; they are not born criminals, but they are Cathy, Steve, Pete; they are not perverted people, but they are each other's partners; they are not parasites of the nation, but they are compatriots with a common history; they are not drug consumers, but they are free people; they are not "others", but they are thinking in an alternative way; they are not enemies, but they are Hungarian citizens of the EU".

The main message of the SZDSZ' campaign was the protection and defence of minorities (their argument was built upon typical prejudices, and they suggest the opposite of these prejudices). But another trait of their campaign was the emphasised image of the enemies (extreme right movements).

#### **MDF (Conservative Party):**

They featured George von Habsburg, and Lajos Bokros (ex-finance minister of the *socialist* government 1994-1998, the father of the so called shock-therapy) emphasising their expertise, their professional competence. 2. This party brought economic questions into focus; the suggestion of this campaign was that *they were the representatives of the utilitarian, bourgeois thinking*. 3. They presented their candidates as "everyday men" (the candidates appear as sportsmen, as family men or as passers-by), they emphasized that these candidates are not different from other people, except for their professionalism.

#### **Jobbik (Radical Right):**

They claimed the protection of Hungarian land property, and Hungarian interests against the multinationals and strangers. 2. They emphasised the importance of public order, and they wanted to re-establish the gendarmerie (which committed itself during the right-wing era between the First and Second World War).

Their features are *traditionalist, protectionist, nationalist*; this is an *order-orientated party*.

#### **LMP (Green Party):**

1. Their campaign film focused on environmental protection; (they showed a horrific picture of pollution); they emphasised the importance of alternative energies, "green" workplaces, public transport, and sustainability; 2. They emphasised the importance of social justice, non-violence and other liberal values.

They are a *pacifist, left-wing green party*.

#### **Munkáspárt (Communists):**

1. They built on the nostalgia of Kadar's socialism (free medical service, free education, full employment). 2. They emphasized the protection of Hungarian workers and farmers against the multinationals.

This party is the representative of the old *state-socialist* regime.

FIDESZ, MDF, Munkáspárt, Jobbik and LMP (all of the *opposition* parties) emphasized their *struggle against corruption*.

## THE ROLE OF GENDER

It can be interesting to notice the proportion of male and female participants in a campaign.

*SZDSZ (Liberal Party)*: their candidates were only men.

*MSZP (Socialist Party)*: they had a lot of female candidates.

*MDF (Conservative Party)*: Mrs. Ibolya Dávid, the leader of the party was in the centre.

*LMP (Green Party)*: a young lady as a spokesperson was in the centre.

*Jobbik (Radical Right)*: Mrs. Krisztina Morvai, as the first person on the list of EP candidates was in the centre.



There is a tendency: the *proportion of female candidates is larger* than earlier, and larger than during the parliamentary election (although the majority of these women have an “Iron Lady” character, but this large proportion of women may suggest that the sphere of politics is not the space of the harsh struggle; the appearance of women can attenuate the hostility of the campaign; it can cover up the traditional leader cult, and

so on). *But*: on the posters behind the women there are always males as *supporters*. (Figures 9, 10, 11)



## SOCIAL IMAGE

All of the candidates are representatives of the *well-off middle class*. Both the physical appearance of the candidates and the social problems, respected by them, indicate their social position, and this position (and typical life situations connected with it) could be important from the voters' point of view, who want to find the possibility of identification. These well-off middle class candidates give only few possibilities of identification; wide social groups cannot see, cannot recognize “their man” among the candidates. The confidential “capital” of politicians became less and less; by the data of a new sociological research,<sup>i</sup> the politicians are at the bottom on the scale of confidence.

## THE MAIN FRONTIERS IN THE CAMPAIGN

Hungarian political culture is much divided; the opposition seems to be antagonistic. (The length of the present paper does not allow for an in depth analysis of the historical causes of this phenomenon). There is opposition between government and opposition all over the world, but this opposition has become severely polarised in Hungary during the last decade. The opposition appears in the campaign as a necessity of choice between two – “black” and “white” – possibilities. There are several different grounds for the bipolar opposition: “right” *versus* “left”; EU-sceptics *versus* EU-believers; national problems *versus* global questions; conservatives *versus* liberals; opposition parties *versus* governmental parties; people idealising the Horthy era (the regime before the Second World War) *versus* people idealising the Kadar era; small parties *versus* big parties; extreme right *versus* democratic parties; parties outside the Parliament *versus* parliamentary parties; countryside *versus* the capital (Budapest); civil society *versus* the political elite.

Different types of opposition appeared in the campaign materials of the parties. These materials were rather confrontational, the parties used the strategy of negative campaign.

### **MSZP (Socialists):** (“left” *versus* “right”)

“I won’t vote for the Right ... because they do not have a programme behind their rowdiness”. (Or: “...because they co-operate with the extremists”). “I will vote for the Left, because they represent my interest”. “I vote for the Left, because my value-system is unchangeable”.

Visual oppositions: (“democrats” *versus* “extreme right”). a) a glass of beer *versus* a Molotov cocktail (the text is: “tolerance” or “passion”). (It is not quite understandable why beer is the symbol of the tolerance...). b) Mother with her children *versus* a man in his extremist uniform (the text is: “love” *versus* “hatred”).

### **FIDESZ:** (opposition *versus* government)

“Stop! It’s enough”. (Reference to the activity of the present government).

Visual effect (in the TV-spot of the party): the face of the former unpopular prime-minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány, transforms to the face of the present prime minister, Gordon Bajnai (= “they are the same”).

### **SZDSZ (Liberals):** (small parties *versus* “big two”)

Who will be the “Third Force”? (The smaller parties were in a competition in the shadow of the two big parties, and SZDSZ wanted to win in this competition).

Visual oppositions: (“democrats” *versus* “extreme right”).



There was a series of posters; every poster based on an opposition; visually: an attractive and a repulsive person; and the text was: free and democratic or “árpádsávos” (the so called “Árpádsáv” – red and white stripes – were the family symbol of the first Hungarian dynasty, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Hungarian fascist party used this symbol again) (Figure 12). But in a counter campaign on the Internet the inversion of the SZDSZ posters were published: the repulsive persons went over to the side of the SZDSZ and vice versa, and the text became: “free democrat” or “free Hungarian” (Figure 13).

**MDF (Conservatives):** (small parties *versus* the “big two”)

“Listen to your mind” – it was an allusion; the FIDESZ former slogan was: “Listen to your heart”. They emphasised “honour” (*versus* corruption); and “honesty” (*versus* lies – as the “epitheton ornans” of governmental party, MSZP).

**Jobbik (Radical Right):** (Hungarians *versus* strangers)

“To leave Hungary for the Hungarians” (its implicit meaning is: “and not for the strangers”). In their TV-spot they used a persiflage of a children’s rhyme with the fingers of the hand: “this one went to learn, this one cultivated his land, this one founded a small-enterprise, this one worked 10 hours a day, and this teeny-weeny stole everything – now we will stop it”.)

**LMP (Greens):** (the “clear” youth *versus* the dark world of pollution and corruption)

They built up their campaign on the word “feel” (“I feel”, or “Do you feel?”).

There was a picture of a Gold Fish, and its text: “Do you feel, you can demand now...” In another picture we can see a baby with big eyes; and the text: “Do you feel, he/she would deserve better?” “Do you feel, you want the Good?” They used the tool of polar opposition, too. On a poster somebody gives soap (money for corruption) to another person; and the text: “Do you feel, you are paying me off, now?” On another poster we can see dark pictures of climate change *versus* joyful playing children.

**Munkáspárt (Communists):** (the “people” *versus* the “elite”)

“We didn’t steal, we didn’t swindle, we didn’t become corrupt – as all the other parties...”. “In the last 20 years the rich determined our fate, now we – the people – want to decide”.

The – communist – Past *versus* the – capitalist – Present. “Earlier (=it means: during the period of state-socialism) I knew: I have and I shall have a home; the medical service was free, I got education free of charge, I was in a youth camp every summer, I could buy good quality Hungarian products; my father spent his life in the

same factory and he retired on a pension from there – now I’m afraid of loosing my job, I can only buy the products of the multinationals, and everything is very unstable”.

*Almost all the parties accept bipolar thinking: a general trend is to look for “enemies”.*



The “man in the street” follows the battle of the parties with the help of graffiti. Some typical examples of graffiti were: On *MSZP* (Socialists) posters: a doodling “thief” and the Star of David; on the *FIDESZ* poster “It’s enough!” there was a graffiti: “I (=FIDESZ) bethink myself of Europe not too much”... On *SZDSZ* (Liberals) posters it said: Jew, henchmen of Jews, faggot, paedophile, druggies, traitor; on the poster: “Who will decide on our economy?” the graffiti was: “Simon Peresz”. On the posters of *Jobbik* it said: “Nazis”; on their poster of “The New Force” the graffiti said: “the old shit”; on another poster every person was given a toothbrush moustache like Hitler’s. Sometimes the leftists pasted a counter-poster onto their poster (Figure 14). Lastly, we could see a small sign of electricity works among the posters of *Jobbik*: “Pay attention! High voltage! Danger!” On the posters of *MDF* (Conservatives) Mrs. Ibolya David has got a toothbrush moustache, too; and all their candidates have got horns like those of the devil – as “traitors of the right wing”).

The simplification of political culture became a general tendency. The shortening of slogans expresses this process: in this campaign the slogans contained more and more simplified messages, too. *LMP* (Greens): “I feel...” “Do you feel, that...?” *FIDESZ* : 1. “Stop it!” (or: “It’s enough!”) 2. “Vote!” 3. “New direction”. *Jobbik* (Radical Right): 1. “The New Force”, 2. “To leave Hungary for the Hungarians”. *SZDSZ* (Liberals): “Who will be the third force?” *MDF* (Conservatives) : 1. “We know better” (as the party “Jobbik”, they also used the double meaning of the word “jobb”, (“Right” and “better”) . 2. “We want a new compromise/Ausgleich” (This is an allusion to the Hungarian-Austrian pact in 1867, which legalized the reign of the Habsburg monarchy in Hungary again). 3. “More brain (than brawn)”. (This poster has an unwanted message: the people on the poster point at their head, (they wanted to suggest the importance of the mind, but that gesture has another meaning: “You are stupid”). (Figure 15)



## TO THE DATA OF THE ELECTION

The proportion of voters decreased. 2004: **38,5%**; 2009: **36,3%**. The aim of the majority of the parties (*SZDSZ*, *MDF*, *Jobbik*, *LMP*) was to cross the 5 per cent threshold. *SZDSZ* had a series of posters with the number: 200 001. (Its message was: It can rest with a single person – in Hungary 200.001 votes were necessary to cross the threshold).

Finally four parties won mandates: *FIDESZ*: **14 (56%)**, *MSZP* (Socialists): **4 (17%)** *Jobbik* (Radical Right): **3 (14,7%)**, *MDF* (Conservatives): **1 (5,3%)**.

## CONCLUSIONS

The campaign did not deal with the most important questions of Hungary nowadays. What is thematized less than its real social importance? For example the problems of unemployment, poverty, the crisis of demography, the position of agriculture and the villages; the suffocation of small and medium-sized enterprises; the energy affairs; the role of multinationals (they were mentioned in the campaign of radical right and left parties, but nobody analysed their real role); the real nature of the constraints (and pressures) in the international economic policy; the economic crisis; the crisis of state services (public transport, infrastructure, health care, education); the crisis of public security; the positions of education and medical service, (and different interests of them); property taxes; the structural changes in society, (the weakening of the middle class, the increasing number of problems with the Roma question), and so on. And there is a marked absence of a vision of the future.

There are some tendencies, which may be general tendencies in Europe. (The decline of socialists; the credit crisis of the liberal market economy; the assault and the defence of the welfare state; the strengthening of the extreme right; the emergence of small, alternative parties against the two-pole party system; the domestic political questions got more emphasis as the common EU-questions; instability (of economy, of political democracy and of the whole countries); the political elite detaches itself from everyday life more and more; the absence of the visions of the future; decreasing confidence in politics, etc.) But some phenomena come from the special Hungarian situation, where a great sum of the most important questions are outside of the official discourses, and the biggest conflicts and tragedies of the Past (and the Present) are without public discussion and processing. (The free press and the Internet give publicity to every opinion, but real communication between different points of views is lacking). The relationship between Europe and Hungary is one of the questions, which are hushed up. While the “new” and small countries of Europe can feel like second class members, (and they have cause to feel this way) the project “Europe” won’t be a real important theme for them.

Budapest, 2009

## REFERENCES

- Bernhardt, P. – Hadj-Abdou, L. – Liebhart, K. – Pribersky, A. (2009) *Europäische Bildpolitiken*. Wien: Facultas WUV.
- Böhm, A. (2008) A politikai klíma változásai (Changes of the Political Climate). In Füstös, L. – Guba, L. – Szalma, I. *Társadalmi Regiszter 2008/1*. Budapest, MTA PTI – MTA SZKI.
- Cohen, A. (1976) *Two-Dimensional Man. An Essay on the Anthropology of Power and Symbolism in Complex Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Culture*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1998) Systemwechsel und Symbolwechsel in Ungarn, 1989-1996. In Pribersky, A. – Unfried, B. (eds) *Symbole und Rituale des Politischen: Ost- und Westeuropa im Vergleich*. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 159-174.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2006) Symbols and Communication of Values in the Accession to the EU (Hungary). *Semiotica, (La sémiotique politique/Political semiotics, Special issue., Mouton de Gruyter, 159, 1/4, 111–141.*
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2008) Cultural Patterns of a Museum Guide (House of Terror, Budapest). In Wahnich, S. – Lašticova, B. – Findor, A. (eds) *Politics of Collective Memory (Cultural Patterns of Commemorative Practices in Post-War Europe)* (Cultural Patterns of Politics, Vol. 1.), Wien – Berlin: LIT Verlag, 123–141.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2009) The Interiorization of Social Events and Facts by Means of Symbols. Visual Symbols of Political system-change in Hungary. In Taarasti, E. (ed) *Communication: Understanding/Misunderstanding* (Proceedings of the 9th Congress of the IASS/AIS – Helsinki-Imatra, 11–17 June, 2007). Imatra – Helsinki: International Semiotics Institute, Semiotic Society of Finland, II. 686–706.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1989, 2006) *Intézménymimika I-II. (The Mimic of Our Institutions)*. Budapest: VITA – Új Mandátum.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1990, 1994, 1998, 2002). *Értékválasztás (Analysis of the Electoral TV-spots of Political Parties)*. Budapest: Művelődéskutató Intézet, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung – Societas, Új Mandátum.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2007) Értékválasztás 2006 – A 2006-os parlamenti választási kampány szimbolikus és értéküzenetei. (Analysis of the Electoral Clips of Political Parties. 2006, Values and Symbols). In Sándor, P. – Vass, L. – Tolnai Á. (eds) *Magyarország Politikai Évkönyve I-II, [Political Yearbook of Hungary, 2006.]*. Budapest: Demokrácia Kutatások Magyar Központja Közhasznú Alapítvány, II. 1148–1187.
- Pribersky, A. (2006) Europe as a Symbol in Political Image Construction. *Semiotica, 159, 1/4, 143–150.*
- Turner, V. (1995) *The Ritual Process*. Hawthorne: Walter de Gruyter.
- Turner, V. (1967) *The Forest of Symbols*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
-

In 1996 we started to draw up the plan of a research dealing with the symbolic elements of the national identity in Hungary, focusing on those features of the everyday culture which are regarded by Hungarians as being their national characteristics. We published our hypothesis in Ágnes Kapitány – Gábor Kapitány: *Changes of the National and Political Symbols in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*.<sup>1</sup>

This hypothesis was validated by empirical data. In 1997, sponsored by the Austrian-Hungarian Scientific Action Foundation, we had our hypothesis tested empirically in co-operation with the Ost- und Südost-Europa Institut and the Sonda IPSOS Public Opinion Research Institute.

Due to financial limitations it was not possible to include all the questions of our questionnaire in this present survey but we hope that further surveys will allow its completion.

Our questionnaire consisted of two parts:

I. Questions dealing with the symbolic elements of the national identity of everyday life.

1.) Choose three of the following foods (dishes, meals) which are in your opinion typically Hungarian? (You can choose three.)

- fish soup
- bean soup
- “lebbencs” soup
- goulash
- potato stewed with paprika
- stuffed peppers
- paprika chicken
- breaded cutlet (wiener schnitzel)
- “disznótoros” (pork feast –traditional village meal eaten when a pig was slaughtered)
- stuffed cabbage
- strudel
- “lángos” (fried dough)
- pancake
- plum dumplings
- “túrós csusza” (small strips of boiled pasta with cottage cheese)
- none of them

---

<sup>1</sup> In: Balázs, G and Voigt, V (eds) (1998). *The Centuries of Hungarian Signs (Symbols)*, Budapest.

2.) Which in your opinion is the most typical Hungarian drink ?

- wine
- beer
- pálinka (brandy)

3.) Think of the Hungarian costume. Which are its most typical elements? (You can choose three.)

- braided jacket
- ornamented cloak (“cifraszűr”)
- wide sheepskin coat (“suba”, “guba”)
- short hussar’s fur-lined jacket
- white linen shepherd’s trousers (“bőgatya”)
- trousers made of “Halina” cloth (“székelyharisnya” – traditional Transylvanian cloth)
- embroidered shirt (bolero of Hungarian costume, smock)
- “Bocskai” cap (traditional cap worn by students before the Second World War – originally it was the cap of the leader of Hungarian Protestants in the 17th century)
- hat with needlegrass
- kerchief
- “párta” (Hungarian girls’ head-dress)
- bonnet
- boots
- spur
- none of them

4.) Which in your opinion is the most typical Hungarian landscape? (You can choose two.)

- Mátra – Tátra – Fátka (the so-called Three Hills)
- Bakony
- Tokaj Hegyalja
- Badacsony (Balaton highlands)
- the Carpathians
- Hargita
- the Danube Bend
- the Hungarian Great Plain
- the Pannonian hilly country
- Hortobágy
- none of them

5.) Which is in your opinion the most typical Hungarian river/lake? (You can choose two.)

- Danube
- Tisza
- The Four Rivers (Danube-Tisza-Drava-Szava)

- Maros and Körös Rivers
- Lake Balaton
- Lake St. Anne
- none of them

6.) Which in your opinion is the most typical Hungarian tree? (You can choose two.)

- acacia
- apple tree
- beech
- walnut tree
- oak
- mulberry tree
- apricot tree
- peach tree
- poplar
- weeping willow
- plum tree
- none of them

7.) Which is the most typical Hungarian flower? (You can choose three.)

- rose
- tulip
- carnation
- forget-me-not
- lily of the valley
- red poppy
- cornflower
- daisy
- sunflower
- geranium
- rosemary
- none of them

8.) Which is the most typical Hungarian cultivated plant? (You can choose three.)

- paprika
- maize
- onion
- sunflower
- poppy
- wheat
- rye, barley

- grapes
- lucerne
- none of them

9.) Which is the most typical Hungarian animal? (You can choose three.)

- horse
- “puli” (Hungarian sheep dog)
- “kuvasz”, “komondor” (Hungarian sheep dogs)
- Hungarian “vizsla” (gun dog)
- “racka” sheep
- long-horned Hungarian grey cattle
- deer
- falcon
- “turul”
- swallow
- lark
- stork
- crane
- heron, egret
- none of them

10.) What in your opinion does a typical Hungarian person look like? (Open-ended question)

11.) Which idea about the origin of the Hungarian people do you feel most comfortable with? (You can choose one.)

- Hun kinship
- Scythian kinship
- Finno-Ugrian kinship
- Turkish kinship
- Sumerian kinship
- mixed kinship
- none of them

12.) Which is the most typical Hungarian national holiday? (You can choose one.)

- 15th of March
- 4th of April
- 20th of August
- 23rd of October
- none of them

13.) Which is the most typical type of Hungarian music? (You can choose two.)

- composition by Franz Liszt
- composition by Ferenc Erkel
- composition by Zoltán Kodály
- Hungarian popular melodies
- Hungarian operettas
- Hungarian folk songs
- the music of the Hungarian dance hall
- the music of Szörényi, Illés, Tolcsvay (Hungarian beat groups)
- songs of Tamás Cseh (a Hungarian urban “bard”)
- none of them

14.) Which is the most typical Hungarian sport? (You can choose three.)

- football
- pentathlon
- fencing
- swimming, water polo
- wrestling
- boxing
- archery on horseback
- carriage driving
- kayaking, canoeing, rowing
- chess
- none of them

15.) Who are the most typical representatives of Hungarian sport? (Open-ended question)

16.) Which are the most typical Hungarian brands? (You can choose three.)

- Ikarus
- Ganz
- Rába
- Tungsram
- Chinoín
- Videoton
- Pick salami
- old Tokay wine
- Goose-liver
- paprika from Kalocsa, and Szeged
- Herend and Zsolnay porcelain
- Rubik cube
- Béres drops
- none of them

17.) What are your favourite foods? (You can choose three.) (Open-ended question)

18.) What is your favourite drink? (Open-ended question.)

These two questions are designed to test if the answers given by the respondent match his/her preferences. Does the respondent consider himself/herself a typical Hungarian by eating/drinking what he has selected as typically Hungarian foods and drinks?

19.) Who are the most typical representatives of Hungarian literature? (You can choose three.) (Open-ended question)

20.) Who are the most typical representatives of Hungarian history? (You can choose three.) (Open-ended question)

21.) Which members of current Hungarian political life could be seen as representative figures from Hungarian history? (You can choose three.) (Open-ended question)

22.) Which of the following Hungarian coats of arms do you prefer? (You can choose one.)

- the coat of arms with the crown
- the coat of arms of the Rákosi period
- the Kossuth coat of arms of
- the Kádár era coat of arms
- none of them

In Austria Ernst Bruckmüller published the results of a research which also dealt with national identity. In order to make a comparison possible we used some of his questions without making any alterations.

II.

1.) What are Hungarians like? (Rank them on a scale of 1 to 5.)

modern	old fashioned
clever	silly (dull, foolish, simple-minded)
loud	quiet
masculine	feminine
serious	cheerful
peace-loving	aggressive
purposive, resolute	without purpose
successful	unsuccessful
pessimistic	optimistic
slow	quick
friendly, sociable	unsociable, unfriendly
tolerant	intolerant
conservative	progressive
attractive, pleasant	unattractive, nasty

2.) What are Austrians like? Rank them on a scale of 1 to 5 (see above).

These two scales can be compared in two different ways:

- a.) the self-portrait of the Austrians can be compared with the opinion of the Hungarian respondents;
- b.) on the analogy of the Austrian-German comparison in the Austrian sample, an Austrian-Hungarian comparison can be done which reveals the similarities and differences in our relationship with our neighbours (the inhabitants of a modernised, better developed West European country. These similarities and differences in the first case are influenced by the common German language and in the second case by the common traditions of the Habsburg Monarchy.

3.) What do you think about the following statements? (Choose one of them.)

Aggressive nationalism is:

- only bad
- it has more negative elements than positive elements
- it has both positive and negative elements
- it has more positive elements than negative ones.

The original Bruckmüller questionnaire used the expression “national-socialism” – we used the expression “aggressive nationalism” because of the different connotation of these words. The differences between Hungarian and Austrian history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century justify the change of this expression.

4.) Which of the following statements characterises you?

- you are very proud of your Hungarian nationality
- you are moderately proud of your Hungarian nationality
- you are not very proud of your Hungarian nationality
- you are not at all proud of your Hungarian nationality

5.) If you are proud of the things achieved by Hungary, which things are these? (Open-ended question)

6.) Which nation do you feel you share a bond with? (Open-ended question)

7.) Please rank these two statements on a scale of 1 to 5. 5 means that you totally agree with the statement, 1 means you do not agree with it at all.

- a.) Foreigners are important for our country not only for economic reasons but their presence also makes everyday life of the country more interesting.
- b.) The presence of a lot of foreigners can cause many disadvantages for Hungarian employees and jeopardises our way of life and our culture.

8.) The presence and behaviour of which nationalities and ethnic groups are upsetting, unpleasant for you?

9.) Members of which nationalities and ethnic groups would you dislike as neighbours of your home/flat?

In addition to these questions we would like to have answers to the following questions: which a.) settlements; b. regions; c.) style periods; d.) dances; e.) musical instruments; f.) architectural styles; g.) public buildings; h.) famous squares; i.) institutions; j.) professions; k.) handicrafts; l.) actors; m.) historical periods ; n.) features of political culture are felt to be typical symbols of Hungarian national identity. What do respondents consider Hungary is part of: Eastern Europe, Central Europe, East-Central Europe, Europe without any restriction, Eurasia, people of the Danube Basin.

This time it was not possible (due to financial limitations) to ask these questions, next time – with a sample of intellectuals – we would like to check our hypothesis concerning these questions, too.

The questionnaire – presented above – was asked by Sonda IPSOS on a representative sample of the country (1000 persons) in May 1997. We have the following data about the respondents: gender, place of residence (region), birthplace (region), age, education, profession, political preference.

## RESULTS:

### Hungarian foods

goulash, fish soup and stuffed cabbage are in the first three places on the list of Hungarian foods.

### The order of Hungarian foods

• goulash	64.1%
• fish soup	43.6%
• stuffed cabbage	40.2%
• paprika chicken	34.3%
• potato stewed with paprika	25.4%
• “disznótoros”	23.7%
• bean soup	21.8%
• “túrós csusza” (small strips of boiled pasta with cottage cheese)	11.3%

The common characteristic feature of all these Hungarian foods is their juicy, succulence. The low rating of pastas is remarkable. It is interesting too that almost everybody answered this question: foods are such strong components of the national identity that everybody forms an opinion about the character of the national foods.

### Favourite foods

This question was an open-ended one; it limits the comparison we made in order to reduce some similar answers into the same category.

• stuffed cabbage	26.1%
• together with other cabbage foods	32.7%
• together with other vegetables	49.6%

• breaded cutlet (wiener schnitzel)	19.3%
• paprika chicken and stew made of chicken	16.0%
• together with other chicken foods	30.4%
• together with other poultry	33.3%
• meat soup	15.9%
• fish soup	12.7%
• goulash	10.8%
• bean soup	10.3%
• all kinds of soup together with goulash	59.6%
• stew	10.4%
• all kinds of meat together with poultry	97.6%
• all kinds of pasta	29.0%
• all kinds of potato foods	10.0%

The aggregate result is heterogeneous. Among the favourite foods are foods ranking in the second line of Hungarian foods, there are even some foods which, as their name indicates, are not of Hungarian origin, e.g. wiener schnitzel which today is a very important part of Hungarian cuisine. The most Hungarian food, goulash with its 11% per cent cannot be regarded as the most characteristic food of the present-day Hungarian cuisine. The high percentage of vegetables present on the list of preferences is a pleasant surprise but on the other hand all the other meat foods (and certainly stuffed cabbage is a meat food too) and soups mentioned are the real characteristics of traditional Hungarian cuisine. The different pastas proved to be less preferred, even the Hungarian “túrós csusza” (pasta with cottage cheese) and the most popular pasta “palacsinta” (pancake) have lost their position as favourites, the latter having a preference of only 8.2 per cent.

This proves the traditional statement about Hungarians, that they do not like sweets. We do not have to be afraid of the spread of the hot dog and hamburger culture in Hungary: only 0.5% chose these foods as their favourite ones, however the rate for fruits was similar, too.

Nevertheless a preference for Italian food can be observed, but only at a rate of 5 per cent.

#### Hungarian drinks

The order of Hungarian preference for drinks did not cause any surprise

• wine	74.2%
• pálinka (brandy)	14.9%
• beer	7.7%

#### Favourite drinks

• wine	21.5%
• beer	15.9%
• cola drinks	12.5%
• water	9.6%

• fruit juice	9.2%
• other soft drinks	8.6%
• mineral water	4.9%
• other kinds of brandy (except “pálinka”)	4.5%
• milk	3.1%
• tea	2.5%
• champagne	1.5%
• “pálinka”	1.5%
• coffee	0.5%

Wine is still in first place and beer in second place with quite a large percentage (15.9%). Though few people mentioned it as a preferred Hungarian drink, it is the favourite drink of many of them. Cola became a “national drink” with nearly the same percentage, and if we take into consideration all the other soft drinks as well, they have by far the highest preference (30.3% together with mineral water 35.2%). Water and fruit juice were chosen by 10 per cent in both cases and even mineral water has a higher preference than brandies. There are positive signs of healthy consumption habits.

#### Hungarian costumes

Nearly all types of costume received quite a lot of votes. The costumes mentioned in the questionnaire were regarded as components of typical Hungarian costumes with an equal distribution. It is very interesting that peasant and noble costume traditions were separated by the respondents.

• “bószárú gatya” (wide white shepherd’s trousers)	39.8%
• “suba”, “guba” (wide sheepskin coat)	32.4%
• boots	31.5%
• short hussar’s fur-lined jacket	30.6%
• embroidered shirt, “pruszlik”, smock-frock	28.0%
• “cifraszűr” (long embroidered Hungarian shepherd’s cloak)	24.9%
• braided jacket	23.3%
• kerchief	22.7%
• “Bocskai” cap	16.0%
• “párta” (Hungarian girls’ head-dress), bonnet	15.6%
• spurs	9.5%
• hat with needlegrass	9.2%

Boots, in contrast to the moccasin of some of our neighbours and the shoes of the imperial Austrian Monarchy, became the typical Hungarian footwear and the hussar also symbolises Hungarian identity versus other nations.

The image of a typical Hungarian peasant wearing loose white linen trousers is the characteristic element of the romantic puszta image which was made popular by a great number of paintings and illustrations. Similarly to the “suba” (sheepskin coat), “szűr” (ornamented cloak), women’s embroidered shirt and the smock-frock, it is a very distinctive element of the folk costume worn occasionally on public holidays nowadays.

### Landscapes and parts of relief

References to the lost part of “Greater Hungary” (parts belonging to Hungary before Trianon) were less mentioned than it was hypothesised; most of the respondents chose different parts of present-day Hungary.

1. Hortobágy	38.4%
2. Tokaj Hegyalja	32.5%
3. Great Hungarian Plain	28.8%
4. Danube Bend	23.2%
5. Badacsony	22.1%
6. Bakony	18.1%
7. Carpathians	13.1% (together with Hargita 16.6%)
8. The Three Hills (Mátra-Fátra-Tátra, elements of the old arms of the nation)	11.5%
9. Pannonian hilly county	4.6%

Analysing the results of our questionnaire we find that beside the traditional image of Hungary with the Pusztas, the image of Hungary with mountains, mainly wine-growing regions, was quite strong.

### Rivers and Lakes

1. Danube	73.1%
2. Tisza	63.6%
3. Lake Balaton	49.1%
4. The Four Rivers (Danube, Tisza, Drava, Sava, elements of the old arms of the nation)	7.0%
5. Maros, Kőrös	3.5%
6. Lake St. Anne (in Transylvania – a cultic meeting point of Hungarians)	1.7%

References to Transylvanian rivers and lakes or to historical Hungary are rarer than in connection with landscapes. The “blonde Tisza”, contrary to our hypothesis, is not the first on the list but this is not surprising because the Danube running through the middle of the country evokes a more personal impression and experience and has become the symbol of Hungary, similarly to the Tisza. Although Lake Balaton gives a personal water experience for more people than the Tisza, it is the Tisza rather than Lake Balaton that is the preferred national symbol.

### Trees

1. Acacia	62.9%
2. Oak	25.2%
3. Apple tree	20.6%
4. Walnut tree	20.5%
5. Beech	16.8%
6. Weeping willow	14.4%
7. Poplar	12.7%
8. Plum tree	9.7%
9. Peach, apricot tree	7.6%
10. Mulberry tree	6.9%

The first place of the acacia is not surprising, but the degree of choice is very interesting. The great value of some of the trees (oak, beech, apple) and deep sentiment (emotion) associated with other trees (weeping

willow, walnut tree, acacia) influenced the order of trees. The oak is one of the “kings” of trees and associated with the cult of the Virgin Mary, the walnut is a tree planted for grandchildren, the weeping willow is associated by its name and appearance with romantic emotions.

### Flowers

1. Rose	44.6%
2. Cornflower	42.6%
3. Geranium	40.9%
4. Red poppy	37.8%
5. Tulip	25.5%
6. Carnation	22.6%
7. Lily of the valley	21.1%
8. Sunflower	15.7%
9. Forget-me-not	15.2%
10. Daisy	14.9%
11. Rosemary	11.8%

Even though the rose is very popular and frequently used in Hungarian folk art – the rose’s first place was surprising to a lot of people. The choice of red poppy and cornflower was mainly influenced by emotions associated with wheat and the idea of wheat fields coloured with beautiful wildflowers. The geranium – as the Hungarian name of this flower (“muskátli”) shows – came from German-speaking countries but it became as popular a decoration of Hungarian rural and city windows as it is in the Alpine regions.

### Plants

1. Paprika	63.3%
2. Wheat	60.1%
3. Onion	58.5%
4. Grapes	42.4%
5. Maize	38.1%
6. Sunflower	15.8%
7. Rye, barley	8.2%

The importance of paprika as a symbolic image of Hungary was hypothesised, however there are very deep emotions in connection with wheat, too. The onion is a frequently used popular ingredient of Hungarian cuisine and in some parts of the country a very important source of income, but its third place and its close competition with wheat and paprika and the great difference from grapes was surprising.

### Animals

1. Horse	60.7%
2. Hungarian long-horn cattle	59.0%
3. Puli (Hungarian sheep dog)	53.0%
4. Vizsla (Hungarian gun dog)	30.1%
5. Kuvasz, komondor (Hungarian sheep dogs)	22.6%
6. Stork	18.4%
7. Swallow	15.0%

8. Racka sheep	14.2%
9. Lark	7.0%
10. Turul (Hungarian mythological bird)	6.7%

The stag of Hungarian origin-mythology, the crane, heron and falcon were mentioned by only a few respondents. The reason for the first place of the horse was not merely that there are many horses in the country but also their association with traditional imagery: Hungarians as horse-riding people. Because of this image there are strong feelings for horses. Horses frequently appear in folk songs and poems. The Hungarian long-horned cattle is a very common animal nowadays, too and its name – as a specifically “Hungarian” animal – as in the case of the Hungarian vizsla helped place these animals. The stork, swallow and lark are birds of the Hungarian avifauna which are associated with many folk songs and folk customs. The turul become a “national bird” as a figure in the mythology about the origin of Hungarians.

#### What does a typical Hungarian look like?

Whichever way this question was asked, some of the respondents chose to give inner personality features.

1. Corpulent, muscular, stocky	20.6%
2. Dark hair	20.0%
3. Average figure (physique)	18.5%
4. Moustachioed	13.7%
5. Large	7.2%
6. Dark eyes	6.4%
7. Other features in connection with appearance	15.9%
8. References to dressing and divined standard	12.2%
9. References to negative or ambivalent inner personal characteristics	7.7%

The typical appearance of a Hungarian as it was supposed: dark hair and eyes, moustache, corpulent figure. There are certainly more positive personal characteristics stressing sociability, open mindedness, strong character, working capacity of Hungarians rather than negative ones emphasising mainly the pessimistic, inconsiderate, negativistic temperament of Hungarians. It is important too that a third of respondents did not want or did not know how to characterise Hungarians even though we look very different to other peoples.

#### The origin of Hungarians

1. Finno-Ugrian	56.8%
2. Hun origin	20.8%
together with Scythian	22.5%
3. Mixed origin	11.4%
4. Turkish origin	1.6%
5. Sumerian origin	1.0%

Decades of educational practice are the reason for the hegemony of Finno-Ugrian origin; what is interesting is that a quarter of the respondents chose Hun (Turkish, Scythian) origin, earlier considered to be a romantic notion.

### The most typical red-letters days of Hungarians

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. 15 <sup>th</sup> of March (day of 1848 revolution)                     | 52.7% |
| 2. 20 <sup>th</sup> of August (day of Saint Stephen and the Constitution) | 38.7% |
| 3. 23rd of October (day of 1956 revolution)                               | 4.4%  |
| 4. 4 <sup>th</sup> of April (the last day of World War II in Hungary)     | 1.2%  |

The order of answers corresponded to our hypothesis (it was the same as was supposed) and official opinion, too. After the political changes of 1989, the 4<sup>th</sup> of April lost its role. But it was a little surprising that after it was rehabilitated by political changes, the 23rd of October did not become a typical national holiday.

### Music

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. Hungarian popular melody (magyar nóta)   | 54.9% |
| 2. Hungarian folk song  | 39.8% |
| 3. Composition by Zoltán Kodály   | 36.9% |
| 4. Composition by Béla Bartók   | 21.0% |
| 5. Composition by Franz Liszt   | 13.5% |
| 6. Composition by Ferenc Erkel  | 13.5% |
| 7. Hungarian operetta   | 10.3% |
| 8. Hungarian pop music hallmarked by the names of Szörényi, Illés, Tolcsvay (who used folk motives) | 3.2%  |

Kodály's influence on music education and the importance of folk music is the reason for his position at No. 3. in the music list. The result of the so-called Kodály school and Kodály method used during the last few decades is that Bartók has quite a good position on the list; what is surprising is that the great figures of 19<sup>th</sup> century romantic music have a smaller percentage than modern composers.

### Sports

- |                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Football                   | 55.7% |
| 2. Swimming, water-polo       | 53.1% |
| 3. Carriage driving           | 45.5% |
| 4. Pentathlon                 | 31.5% |
| 5. Kayaking, canoeing, rowing | 21.2% |
| 6. Fencing                    | 19.3% |
| 7. Archery on horseback       | 18.0% |
| 8. Boxing                     | 15.0% |
| 9. Wrestling                  | 13.1% |
| 10. Chess                     | 8.6%  |

Those branches sport which have been very successful or are connected with the traditional way of life of Hungarians were given many votes. The first place of football was due to its popularity and its former success which brought international respect and recognition for Hungary.

### Heroes of sports life

Those sportsmen and women who scored less than 4 per cent in the open-ended question were analysed in contracted categories

1. Krisztina Egerszegi (swimmer, 5 times Olympic champion)	44.7%
2. Ferenc “Öcsi” Puskás (the most legendary football player)	25.1%
3. László Papp (boxer, 3 times Olympic champion)	24.0%
4. Other former Olympic champions together	17.8%
5. Tamás Darnyi (swimmer, Olympic champion)	15.2%
6. Other Olympic champions together	11.9%
7. István “Kokó” Kovács (contemporary boxer)	9.8%
8. András Balczó (pentathlon)	6.9%
9. Football players of FTC (the most popular football club)	4.6%
10. Polgár sisters (chess players)	4.2%

The question was: “Who is the typical Hungarian sportsman/woman?” and not “Who is the most successful one?” The result that typical and successful sportman/woman are the same clearly shows the role of sport in national identity: reinforcing national identity by success: members of a nation identify themselves with those sportsmen/women who give them this feeling.

#### Trade marks

1. Old Tokay wine	54.3%
2. Pick salami	42.6%
3. IKARUS	41.3%
4. Porcelain of Herend and Zsolnay	35.0%
5. Paprika	32.2%
6. Videoton	18.8%
7. Tungsram	14.4%
8. Raba	14.0%
9. Goose liver	12.2%
10. Béres drops	9.9%
11. Ganz	9.4%
12. Rubik toys (Rubik Cube, etc.)	5.1%
13. Chinoin	4.9%

At the top of the list are foods and drinks. They are ranked higher than industrial products showing that an agricultural style dominates the image of typical products of Hungary. Among the products of industry IKARUS is the most outstanding – IKARUS has received great publicity and was regarded as a brand name of Hungary exported all over the world.

#### Writers and poets

1. Sándor Petőfi (a great poet and 1848 revolutionary)	70.7%
2. János Arany (a great poet, 19th c.)	32.0%
3. Endre Ady (poet of modernism, beginning of 20th c.)	25.8%
4. Attila József (a great working-class poet, 20th c.)	23.2%
5. Mór Jókai (novelist, 19th c.: the Hungarian Scott or V. Hugo)	21.7%
6. Zsigmond Móricz (a “realist” novelist, 20th c.)	12.7%
7. Kálmán Mikszáth (a novelist, 19th c. ironic realism)	10.7%
8. Ferenc Kölcsey (poet of the Hungarian anthem, early 19th c.)	6.1%
9. Miklós Radnóti (poet, 20th c. died in the Holocaust)	5.8%

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 10. Ferenc Móra (writer of popular books for younger generations)              | 4.7% |
| 11. Mihály Vörösmarty (poet, 19th c., he wrote the “second anthem” of Hungary) | 4.0% |

The list shows the centrality of poetry in Hungarian literature – four outstanding poets are at the top of the list – other writers, even Jókai, only follow them. However the “untranslatable character” of Hungarian literature is especially true for poetry. Writers or poets after 1945 have less than 10 per cent mentions.

#### Personality of Hungarian history

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. Lajos Kossuth (leader of the 1848 Hungarian revolution)   | 44.7% |
| 2. István Széchenyi (reformer, 19th c., the father of modern Hungary)  | 35.5% |
| 3. King St. Stephen (the first Christian king)   | 28.1% |
| 4. King Matthias (the most popular king, hero of fairy-tales)  | 26.0% |
| 5. Ferenc Rákóczi II (leader of the war of independence, 1703-11)  | 20.5% |
| 6. Prince Árpád (the conqueror of Hungary)   | 7.1%  |
| 7. György Dózsa (leader of the biggest peasant revolt, 16th c.)  | 6.4%  |
| 8. Ferenc Deák (politician, 19th c.)<br>(the father of the Compromise between Austria and Hungary, 1867)   | 6.1%  |
| 9. Miklós Zrínyi   | 5.4%  |
| In this case it is possible that respondents were referring to two different persons who have the same name: a) the hero of Szigetvár (battle against Suleiman II, 1566); b) the great poet/general of 17th c. |       |
| 10. Sándor Petőfi  | 5.2%  |

Kossuth is at the top of list but not by such a big margin as Petőfi at the top of the writers’ list. The debate over the relative merits of Kossuth and Széchenyi which was such an important theme of historians in the last few decades can be seen here again. The place of the two great kings, Stephen and Matthias and the prince struggling for freedom (Ferenc Rákóczi II) are understandable. The important role of 1848 and its precedents, the so-called “period of reforms” in national identity, are so strong that Kossuth and Széchenyi outstrip Stephen, the founder of the state who was made a saint by the Church and Matthias who became a hero of folk tales well known to all from childhood.

#### Coats of arms of the nation

- |                                   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Coat of arms with crown        | 70.5% |
| 2. Coat of arms of Kossuth        | 12.1% |
| 3. Coat of arms of Kádár period   | 10.9% |
| 4. Coat of arms of Rákóczi period | 2.0%  |

Because it is unambiguous which are the official arms, the measure of identification with these arms is not so high in spite of their outstanding first place. The choice of the Kossuth arms might be due to historical associations with 1956 and 1848 and a type of obstinate republican tradition; the choice of the Kádár arms could be motivated by nostalgia attached to the Kádár era or in other cases it is just a matter of habit.

### What are Hungarian people like?

With this question we used a 5 grade scale similarly to the Austrian questionnaire. Two results are listed: the first one is the percentage of the answer “it is very characteristic of a Hungarian person”, the second one is the result for “it is quite characteristic”.

friendly (41%, 26.7%)  
attractive, pleasant (35.3%, 28.6%)  
clever (25%, 32.8%)  
peace-loving (32%, 23.9%)  
rather loud than quiet (21.8%, 30.9%)  
resolute (23.3%, 26.8%)

Friendly, attractive and peace-loving are the features which were chosen above all to underline national identity, centring it around a pleasant, sociable character.

Among the unambiguously negative features pessimistic (15.4%, 18,6%), intolerant, impatient (6.7%, 16%), slow (5.7%, 14,4%) aggressive (5%, 13.6%), unsuccessful (5.2%, 12.6%) were ranked in first place.

This result coincides with the negative aspect of Hungarian self-identity, namely that quarrelsomeness, irritability, irascibility are the fallible features of this nation.

### What are the Austrians like?

There were certainly fewer answers to this question than to the previous one. Five per cent of the respondents could not answer the question “What are Hungarians like” and 27% did not answer the question referring to Austrian people.

The results of the question:

successful (36.6%, 24.9%)  
resolute (37.3%, 22.6%)  
modern (27.1%, 22.7%)  
peace-loving (23.6%, 24.8%)  
clever (20.8%, 24.2%)  
optimistic (22%, 21.8%)  
friendly (19%, 22.3%)

The most outstanding features of the Austrians are the most doubtful elements of the Hungarian national identity, or are for the most part not mentioned by the respondents as national characteristics: successful, optimistic and modern. On the other hand the same positive features of the Hungarian national identity are chosen as characteristic features of the Austrian image too (peace-loving, friendly, clever) but evaluated with a lower percentage than in the case of the Hungarians. It is interesting that aggressiveness and intolerance are stronger in the Hungarian national identity than in the case of the Austrian image: the traditional image of conquerors was replaced by the political neutrality of the last decades and the so-called joviality (*Gemütlichkeit*) of the Austrian people.

Modernity in connection with the Austrian image was chosen mainly because the Austrian villages are more modernised than the Hungarian ones, on the other hand many modern products come from Austria.

If we compare the results of the 5-grade scale, we find important differences in seven cases:

(The lower the number the higher the quality.)

successful:	Austrian:	1.71%
	Hungarian:	2.75% (this is the biggest difference)
pessimistic:	Hungarian:	2.87%
	Austrian:	3.8%
resolute:	Austrian:	1.74%
	Hungarian:	2.42%
modern:	Austrian:	2.09%
	Hungarian:	2.67%
friendly:	Hungarian:	1.96%
	Austrian:	2.33%
attractive:	Hungarian:	2.01%
	Austrian:	2.38%
slow:	Hungarian:	3.15%
	Austrian:	3.48%

What is your opinion of aggressive nationalism?

The original questionnaire used the expression national-socialism, but we used “aggressive nationalism” because of the different connotations of these words. This change was justified by the differences between Hungarian and Austrian history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “Aggressive nationalism” had in our opinion a similar connotation to national socialism.

The results:

- aggressive nationalism is only bad: 23.2%
- it has more negative elements than positive elements: 25.6%
- it has both positive and negative elements: 26.2%
- it has more positive elements than negative ones: 5%

The distribution of answers is not symmetrical: the majority of the respondents were against this type of nationalism. Rather negative than positive 48.7% in contrast to the 5% who chose “rather positive than negative”. This result can reassure those who are afraid of the danger of nationalism. But there will be those who think 31.2%, i.e. a third of the respondents, who found something positive in “aggressive nationalism” is a rather high percentage. The proportion of those respondents who did not know or did not want to answer this question was quite high, 20%.

#### Are you proud of your Hungarian nationality?

Nearly everybody answered this question. Most of the respondents chose the moderate, balanced opinion “moderately proud of my Hungarian nationality”; it seems that this is the most typical attitude in Hungary today. More than half of the respondents (50.8%) gave this answer. The result of “very proud” is 32.9%, “not very proud” 10.3% and “not proud at all” 3.3%. The presuppositions that Hungarians have lost their national identity were not justified by the data of our research; 13.6% of the respondents (only one eighth) could be regarded as belonging in this category.

#### Which of the achievements of the country are you proud of?

When the respondents have to specify the sources of their pride they become more uncertain. Contrary to the previous answer, 26.8% of them answered that “there is nothing to be proud of” and 17.7% could not answer the question. So only half of the respondents specified something as the object of their pride:

Hungarians became established in Europe and have the necessary abilities for this establishment (14.8%)

scientific results, inventions, talented people	(13%)
sport	(12.5%)
values connected to the system change of 1989	(11%)
glorious periods of history and their values	(6.8%)
arts	(4.1%)
efforts to establish peace	(4%)
results of the socialist period	(1.6%)
traditions	(1.2%)
regional possibilities	(1.1%)

The first place of Hungary's role in Europe might be due to the propaganda of the mille-centenary and linked to Hungary's membership of the European Union. Hungarian science and sport as an object of national pride are well known but their quite low percentage is surprising. The proportion of arts is much smaller than that of science and sport. The data of this survey did not reflect nostalgia for the Kádár era.

Which nations are the most attractive for you?

1. Germans	26.1%
2. Austrians	17.6%
3. Italians	12.6%
4. English	11%
5. French	9.5%
6. Americans	8.5%
7. Poles	7.5%
8. Scandinavians	1%

No other nation scored more than 5%. If we analyse the other votes we find:

– other West European and the Anglo-Saxons	26.5%
– East Europeans: people of the former socialist countries	10.1%
– other non-European coloured people	3.7%
– “there is no such nation” and “only Hungarians are attractive”	18.1%
– “attractiveness does not depend on a person’s nationality”	7.4%

The Germans’ first place might be surprising but in our opinion the reason for this result is mainly the prosperity of Germany, its high standard of civilisation and the image of high German work ethic and cleanliness. During Hungarian history German culture was several times a reference, or model for Hungarian culture.

The Austrians’ second place might be explained by similar reasons and certainly by its closeness and by the common imperial tradition.

The position of Poland, the traditional fraternal nation, on this attractiveness list is quite surprising but they received the greatest number of votes among the eastern block. The whole attractiveness list indicates that attractive nations are ones which represent a higher civilisation standard, living standard, practical culture, and who might serve as a model. Peoples who were our second neighbours precede the immediate neighbours: Czechs and Bulgarians got twice as many votes as Serbs, Russians and Slovaks.

Is the presence of foreigners advantageous or disadvantageous?

It is interesting that in the case of both answers, the result of the scale tends to the “agreement” part of the scale, however not in the same measure. This might be explained by two main reasons: first of all it is an old social-psychological truth that it is easier to agree with something than to oppose something, on the other

hand in this case it is not meaningless if somebody agrees with both previous statements which are in principle contradictory but practically do not exclude each other.

Foreigners by their presence enrich our culture – 46% of the respondents agreed with this statement (23.5% agreed completely), 15.5% rejected this statement (7.1% completely). This result shows the cultural open-mindedness of the majority of the Hungarian population.

“The presence of a lot of foreigners causes disadvantages for Hungarian employees and jeopardises the normal activity of our way of life and culture” – this statement does not mean complete rejection either; 37.3% agreed with this statement and 23.3% rejected it.

The distribution of supporters and opponents is more balanced, but fewer people are afraid of the negative effects of foreigners than those who see the positive aspects of it. It is certain that because of different personal experiences one third of the population worry about the presence of foreigners. Perhaps some respondents agreed with both statements at the same time – they are open-minded about the presence of foreigners but they also see the dangers and disadvantages of this social phenomenon.

#### Which nations do you find unattractive?

1. Gypsies	28.9%
2. Romanians	24.5%
3. Turks	12.5%
4. Russians	7.3%
5. Serbs, Yugoslavs, Bosnians	7.2%
6. Arabs, Muslims	6.3%
7. Chinese	5.3%
other East Europeans	8.7%
other West Europeans	3.1%
other non-Europeans	1.9%

These results show the prejudices and conflicts of coexistence in Hungary today. Perhaps the quite high percentage of mentions of Turkish people might be surprising; the literary and historical memories of struggles against the Turks could not be the reason for this phenomenon, because there is no similar manifestation in connection with Austrians. The influence of German opinion about the Turks and the transit of Turkish guest workers through Hungary might cause a kind of tension. It might be surprising that neither Jews nor Slovaks received enough votes to be on the list. (In the case of Jews it is quite remarkable that there is still a taboo, people do not like to speak about this question after the Holocaust.)

Representatives of which nation would you dislike as next door neighbours?

1. Gypsies	42.5%
2. Romanians	17.1%
3. Ukrainians	9.5%
4. Arabs, Moslems	5.6%
5. Serbs, Yugoslavians, Bosnians	5.3%
6. Chinese people	4.6%
7. Russians	4.2 %

There are no big differences between the two lists. It is remarkable that political prejudices in connection with the Russians are weaker when choosing a neighbour (a similar but not so strong tendency can be observed in connection with Romanians, too). But in the case of Gypsies cultural prejudices became much stronger. The respondents mentioned Ukrainians more frequently as disliked neighbours; this might be motivated by the fear of the so-called “Ukrainian mafia” as a frequent topic of media and criminal news. “I do not choose my neighbours” – “there is nobody I do not want as my neighbour” – “it does not depend on the nationality of a neighbour” – types of answers, similarly to the previous question, got 34.4%.

Factors

Because of the small number of variables, the divergence of results and other reasons it was not possible and reasonable to use factor analysis for every question. Finally there were eight questions where we obtained factors. In the following we analyse those which were also used in the research of Bruckmüller.

1. What are Hungarians like?

Answers to this question were arranged into 4 factors (with 52.3% explanatory value). The first factor (25.7% of the answers) might be explained by an attitude which uses nearly all the features (except the serious-cheerful, loud-quiet, masculine-feminine dichotomies) for characterising the Hungarians. The second factor, the so-called “respondents by an atmosphere” – in this case the loud-quiet and the serious-cheerful features are the most determining elements. The answers of the third factor were organised by a kind of “dynamism-vitality” dimension: pessimistic-optimistic, masculine-feminine and the serious-cheerful, conservative-progressive dichotomies were in the centre of this factor. In the case of the fourth factor: sociability is the central aspect, friendly-unfriendly, serious-cheerful and attractive-unattractive are the most important categories of this factor.

2. What are Austrians like?

In the case of the opinion about Austrian people, five factors could be distinguished (with 63.4% explanatory value); it seems to be easier to value others than ourselves. In the first factor most of the features can be

found, similarly to the judgement of Hungarians. In the second factor sociability is the most dominant value: joviality (*Gemütlichkeit*) is an important element of the image of Austrian people in Hungary. In the third factor serious-cheerful and pessimistic-optimistic are outstanding. In contrast to the Hungarian self-image in this case a cheerful, positive attitude to life are more determining aspects than atmosphere. In the fourth factor masculine-feminine and loud-quiet aspects are connected; this means that dynamic is more important than dominance. The fifth factor shows a kind of attitude based on the value of development.

### 3. If you are proud of your Hungarian nationality what is the object of it?

In the first factor there are three successful spheres (science, art, sport) which could be measured. The second factor is dominated by “natural treasures”, the third by the value of political changes and tradition. We can clearly distinguish three types of national pride:

- a.) those who are proud of our achievements
- b.) those who are proud of our “natural treasures”
- c.) those who are proud of our historical-political role.

### 4. Which nations do you find attractive?

We obtained two factors which explain 33.2% of the answers. In the first factor there are those who sympathise with the Germans and the Austrians. In the centre of the second factor are the Italians. The Germans and the Austrians are rejected as well as the East Europeans.

### 5. Which nations do you find unattractive?

We have obtained three meaningful factors. In the centre of the first factor is dislike of Romanians. Turks, Yugoslavs and other East Europeans are rejected, too in this factor. Another factor is composed by those who reject the Gypsies and Arabs. And finally in the third factor are those who reject non-Europeans (blacks and Chinese). These three factors separate from each other those who reject the people of the Balkans, the Gypsies and “coloured” people – forming different groups.

### 6. Who are rejected as neighbours?

Results are similar to the previous question, but in this case the three factors could explain 54.6% of the answers while earlier this percentage was only 39%. In the first factor Romanians, Ukrainians and other East Europeans are rejected, in the second factor coloured people and Gypsies and in the third factor coloured people and Russians are rejected: the first group is based on a kind of cultural supremacy, the second on an ethnic segregation and the third one on political reasons.

We tried to analyse the results of the data from different aspects. First of all we had a hypothesis according to which there might be a connection between specific answers. We collected the answers which were supposed to be characteristic features of a special type of Hungarian image. We hypothesise three different blocks:

1. called stereotype Hungarian image and characterised by the choice of the puszta, Tisza, goulash, wide linen trousers, horse, football, Petőfi, Kossuth, King Matthias (the best-known persons of Hungarian history), Hungarian popular songs, dark hair and eyes, moustache as possible answers.

2. the second one was a kind of conservative-literate type of the Hungarian image based on sentiments – stressing the association of Greater Hungary and Transylvania.

3. the third was hypothesised as a kind of cosmopolitan anti-nationalist kind of image, denying the specific features of the Hungarian image. The result is important: these three hypothesised images were not confirmed at all.

### Hungarian-Austrian similarities and differences

As we mentioned in the preface of our paper, we adopted nine questions of Bruckmüller so that a comparison of the results of the Austrian and Hungarian sample population was possible.

#### What are the Austrians like?

In the case of the Austrian respondents it is a question of self-definition, in the case of the Hungarians it reflects the image of their neighbours. The differences between the self-image and neighbour-image are very interesting.

On the scale of *modernity* Hungarians value Austrians a whole number higher (that means more modern) than themselves. On the five-degree scale, this represents quite a big difference, and if the objective state of development of the Austrian economy might explain this result, the measure of the difference in scaling is quite surprising.

On the scale of *cleverness* the difference between the two judgements is not so great. The Hungarians have a better opinion of the Austrians than of themselves.

On the *loud–quiet* scale the difference is similar: Hungarians rate Austrians louder than Austrian themselves.

On the *masculine–feminine* scale the two judgements coincide with each other (however the judgement of this scale seems to be quite equal).

On the *serious–cheerful* scale the differences are very big again: Hungarians think Austrians are more serious.

On the *peace-loving–aggressive* scale the two judgements coincide. Hungarians consider Austrians a little bit more peace-loving, than the Austrians think about themselves. But the difference is not significant, it is more important that both the Hungarians and the Austrians consider themselves to be peace-loving nations.

On the *resoluteness* scale the difference is big again. Hungarians think Austrians are more resolute than they are themselves. The results and achievements of the Austrian economy, the high standard of Austrian life and the steady increase in the differences during the last thirty years are reflected in this image.

The result is nearly the same as on the scale of *successfulness*.

*Pessimism–optimism* does not result in great differences: both Hungarians and Austrians regard Austrians as being optimistic.

On the *slow-fast* scale the difference is very big again, more than 1 point. The difference comes from the advantage of the Austrians in progress: the better developed is considered to be also more successful, more modern, more purposeful, faster at the same time.

The difference in the judgement about *friendliness* is smaller but could be interpreted. This is one of the few exceptions where the image given by Hungarian respondents is more unfavourable than the self-image of the Austrians. Hungarians consider Austrians to be more unfriendly than the Austrians judge themselves.

The result is the same in connection with the *tolerance–intolerance* dimension. Hungarians consider Austrians to be more intolerant than the Austrians do about themselves but in this case the difference is not so big.

On the dimension *conservative–progressive* the difference is big again; it means that Hungarians think Austrians are more progressive. Hungarians consider Austrians more attractive on the attractiveness scale (however the difference is not significant).

To summarise the results: by most of the scales Hungarians rate Austrians higher than they do themselves; this is true only for the features concerning progress. In the case of interpersonal relations, the self-image, the internal judgement is more positive than the judgement of an “outsider”, and the dimensions where there are no differences are significant too: the external and internal view coincides in the judgement about masculinity-femininity, optimism, the attractive, tolerant and peaceful character of the Austrians.

#### What are we like and what are they like?

In most of the cases – and it might be surprising – the self-ranking of the Hungarians is more favourable than that of the Austrians. Hungarians consider themselves more modern, cleverer, louder, more serious, more progressive, a little bit more aggressive but more attractive, less successful, more intolerant, more pessimistic and slower than the Austrians – but equally masculine, resolute, and friendly. Friendliness, resoluteness and masculinity are those values where the self-definition of the two nations coincides. Development is a key value and very important for Hungarians – they think themselves more progressive than the average. For the Austrians cheerfulness, optimism, quickness, and peacefulness seem to be more important and more characteristic than for the Hungarians. At the same time, it is characteristic for both nations that they set their western neighbours above themselves, and regard them as a model in many dimensions. While the Hungarians think Austrians are more resolute, the Austrians think Germans are more resolute with nearly the same measure. The tendency is nearly the same in other aspects but not with the same proportion. The Austrians consider Germans to be more successful, more serious, more progressive and quicker than Hungarians do about Austrians.

Modernity, progress, resoluteness, seriousness, successfulness, quickness are the key-values of goal/aim rationality, achievement orientation and (technical) progress where both nations considered their western neighbour more developed than themselves. At the same time both of them think they are more friendly and attractive than their western neighbour – the ability for personal contact is not in direct connection with progress – or might be in inverse ratio to it. Certainly there are differences, too. In the opinion of Austrians

cleverness is a component of aim rationality and progress while for Hungarians cleverness is a separate independent ability or capacity and they value themselves quite high in this respect. There are characteristics which seem not to be compared but “objective” judgements, e.g. the national character of the Austrians is more silent, tolerant and peace-loving than that of their neighbours both by external and internal judgement. For example, optimism is an “objective” component of the Austrian national identity, while pessimism is similarly a rather stressed component of the Hungarian national identity. In this respect the two national identities are in contradiction.

#### How proud are we of our national identity?

The measure of the Austrian national identity is higher than that of the Hungarian one. The answer “not proud at all” might be negligible – its proportion is very low in both countries – however in Hungary it is three times higher – 3% – than in Austria. On the other side, while only 33% of Hungarians are “very proud of their country” the same answer was given by 61 % of the Austrians. More than half of the population chose the identified but critical national identity, while unconditional emotional identification got an absolute majority in the case of the Austrians.

#### Attractive nations

The Germans are on the top of the list in both cases, but not with the same motives. The judgement of the Italians is similar too. The Austrians seem to be more closed to other cultural influences than the Hungarians. English and Scandinavian people are five times, French three times, Americans and Australians two times more popular for the Hungarians than for the Austrians but the other so-called “small” West European nations, Swiss, Dutch, Belgian are chosen by the Austrians in a much higher proportion.

This last result shows that the Hungarians prefer great cultures with adoptable, integratable models, while the Austrians, feeling themselves closer to Europe, know all about it, and as a so-called small nation sympathise with those who have similar conditions. Polish people do not figure on the attractiveness list of the Austrians, while they got 8% from the Hungarian respondents and this is a big difference. Other East European nations are mentioned with a higher percentage by the Hungarians too than by the Austrians: Hungarians (9%) and Austrians (3%) which shows that though the Hungarian orientation turned dominantly to the West, the East European common fate is still stronger in Hungary than in Austria. It is interesting too that in both countries the inhabitants of the neighbouring regions sympathise with each other: in Austria the inhabitants of Burgenland, in Hungary the north and west of Transdanubia show a higher mutual, reciprocal sympathy.

#### Are foreigners useful for us, or not?

The open, tolerant type of answer (foreigners are important for our country not only because of economic reasons but their existence makes the everyday life of the country more colourful) was chosen by 25% of the Austrians and 27.5% of the Hungarians (46% of those who quite agree with this statement), the intolerant, closed type of answer (the presence of a lot of foreigners causes many disadvantages for Hungarian employees and jeopardises the normal activity of our way of life and culture) was chosen by 42% of the Austrians and 22.5% of the Hungarians (37.3% with those who quite agree with this statement). The proportion of the tolerant and intolerant attitude in the two countries is the inverse. The Austrian rejection is higher and refers

to more nations than the Hungarian rejection in the case of the questions about “unattractive peoples” and “disliked neighbours”.

According to these results we can state the following:

Because of the different experiences in the recent historical past, national pride, unconditioned national identity is lower in Hungary. It is not substituted by national nihilism but by a more critical, modest identification.

The lower proportion of ethnocentrism and isolation in Hungary can also be attributed to this modest identification.

## CROSS-TABULATION

### Hungarian foods

One of the main facts causing differences between the social groups is the **conventional and non-conventional attitude**. There are so-called conventional foods like breaded cutlet (wiener schnitzel), paprika chicken, stuffed cabbage on the one hand, and on the other hand these foods are neglected and non-traditional components of the Hungarian kitchen, e.g. Italian foods are chosen among the favourite ones. Non-conventionality characterises mostly the young generation, the more educated (with secondary schooling and university degrees) white-collar workers.

The separation of Hungarian foods is connected to status symbols in two respects: on the one hand we can see a hierarchy of different foods, on the other hand the symbolic prestige foods of the different social groups are quite different. This means that different prestige foods function as holiday food for the different social groups. Three groups might be distinguished: breaded cutlet (wiener schnitzel) and “disznótoros” (pork feast) for the lower middle class, paprika chicken and stuffed cabbage for the middle class and fish soup for the upper classes are these symbolic prestige foods.

In a comparison of the Hungarian regions, among other factors, fish soup and “rétés” (strudel) divide the country exactly like the Danube into two parts: Transdanubians prefer them above the average and people in the east of the country below the average.

### Favourite foods

The preference of foods by different age groups shows certain trends; the changes in values, orientation, life-style, way of life can be analysed by these trends. Italian foods, pastas, poultry and cabbage foods are chosen above the average by the youngest people. The choice of the oldest is nearly inverse: stew, meat soup and goulash are preferred above the average and Italian foods, poultry and fish foods below the average.

There are two poles according to education, too: on the one side those with less than 8 years primary school prefer goulash and meat soup above the average, and breaded cutlet, pork, poultry, fish foods, Italian foods, cakes below the average. As we can see there are a lot of preferences below the average. This is a sign of a kind of deprivation, narrowed, one-sided possibility of choice and in their case a “poor” cuisine culture; the

preferred foods are merely components of a traditional cuisine while the foods of a healthier nutrition are missing. On the other hand at the other end of the educational scale there are those with a diploma.

Occupational prestige is connected with the choice of different foods. The preference for bean soup and stew is more frequent in the case of lower occupational prestige, while fish foods are less frequently chosen – and on the contrary the higher the occupational prestige is the more frequently are fish foods preferred and less frequently bean soup and stew.

#### Typical Hungarian drinks

The three drinks divide the population into three parts according to occupation, too. Skilled workers, semi-skilled workers and managers prefer wine above the average. Beer is the drink of lower occupational prestige groups, e.g. unskilled workers. (The higher occupational prestige groups choose it below the average.) Pálinka is chosen by craftsmen-tradesmen, professionals and students above the average.

Respondents are divided by the choice of wine and beer according to their place of residence. Wine is chosen above the average and beer is chosen below the average in Transdanubia, and beer is chosen above the average and wine is below the average in the northern part of Hungary and in the Great Plain as a Hungarian-like drink.

#### Favourite drinks

Among the three alcoholic drinks (wine, beer, pálinka), wine proved to be the favourite but not as an outstandingly Hungarian-like drink.

There are great differences according to the gender of the respondents: it is not surprising that wine is chosen nearly two times more, beer four times more by men than by women. Women prefer non-alcoholic drinks (except champagne).

According to age groups, the youngest and oldest age groups have the two extreme values. The difference between the youngest and oldest age group is determined by the choice of six drinks: wine, water, mineral water on the one hand and cola, other non-alcoholic drinks and fruit juice on the other hand.

These drinks divide respondents according to their education, too. Wine is the favourite drink of the highest educated groups, on the other hand there are the skilled workers with beer as their favourite drink. Cola is their favourite drink, too while cola is rejected by the degree-holding group either for health or ideological reasons. Drinks have their symbolic meaning according to education, too. Beer and cola instead of wine and water are the prestige-drinks of the upper middle class, and instead of cola the higher educated respondents choose fruit juice as being a healthier drink.

According to place of residence, wine is the favourite drink of the Transdanubians.

## National costumes

The choice of costumes definitely differs according to the gender of the respondents: the typical Hungarian women's costume is chosen rather by women and the masculine costume rather by men.

It is quite surprising that there are no significant differences according to the age of the respondents; these costumes seem to be historical, museum-like pieces for older and younger respondents alike. The only exception is the kerchief – it is chosen above the average by the older generation and below the average by the younger generation, showing that the kerchief is still a living, usual article which today is losing its function as a symbolic identity sign during the generation-change.

Though there are no significant differences concerning the age groups, the differences among the social groups are substantial. The kerchief is a symbolic sign for the lower social-status groups and the braided military jacket is a symbolic costume for the upper social groups when they have to define the typical Hungarian national costume. According to the social status (defined both by education and occupation), we can distinguish three main groups: the lower status groups prefer kerchief and boots above the average, the middle class groups prefer wide white linen shepherd trousers, boots and the Bocskai cap, and for the upper classes the short fur-lined hussar's jacket, the braided jacket, the bonnet, the ornamented cloak and the hat with needlegrass function as elements of a typical symbolical Hungarian costume.

Two types of traditions – the peasant and noble traditions – are the main distinctive aspects of the costume preference. These two traditions divide the answers and although there is hardly anybody nowadays wearing wide sheepskin coat or bonnet, the choice of the typical Hungarian costume shows extremely explicitly the different affinities to a peasant or noble image of Hungary. The choice of the kerchief and boot above the average on the one side and that of the braided jacket, hussar's jacket and bonnet on the other side.

There are however some museum-like elements of the peasant costume (e.g. wide sheepskin coat, embroidered shirt) and other usual elements of everyday life (e.g. boots, kerchief). The latter are the symbols of the peasant tradition.

## Landscapes

Local patriotism is an important factor of decision: when choosing a typical Hungarian landscape the inhabitants of each region tend to regard their own region as being a typical Hungarian landscape. This type of partiality is least characteristic of the inhabitants of the Hungarian Great Plain.

In addition to locality, another decisive aspect of choosing a typical landscape is its *economic utilisation*. Wine regions are chosen because of this economic reason, too, e.g. Tokaj-Hegyalja is chosen above the average by north and west Transdanubians.

There is an interesting difference between the preferences according to genders. The Danube Bend was preferred rather by women while men mentioned the mountains and the Great Plain more often than women.

According to the educational level of the respondents, the Carpathians have a symbolic role: those with a primary school qualification mentioned them below the average while degree-holders above the average. The

reason for this phenomenon might be the definition of Hungary situated in the Carpathian Basin involving a more abstract, global political mental map.

According to occupations, the deviations from the average are also very interesting. The preferences of craftsmen and tradesmen were influenced by the practical utility of the region, e.g. Tokaj-Hegyalja and the most important Hungarian agricultural region, the Great Plain.

### Water

According to age, the choice of the Tisza polarises the respondents: the Tisza as a typical Hungarian river has a preference above the average by those older than 60.

According to education, there are two main groups: the Danube and the Tisza are mentioned above the average by those with less than 8 years of primary school, while Lake Balaton and the “four rivers” involving historical knowledge appear below the average in their answers. Those with a secondary school certificate or a university degree behaved in the opposite way: they chose the “four rivers” and Lake Balaton above the average and the Danube and Tisza below the average.

### Trees

Some of the trees have quite strong emotional associations: like the walnut tree, the oak, the apple tree and the acacia. In some of the cases the utility of the given tree, in other cases the dense crown and long life of the tree was the base of the symbolic meaning of the tree. Sometimes the symbolic meaning of the tree is in connection with the turning points of human life and these emotions, beliefs and associations are intertwined with these trees.

The distribution of answers is characteristic according to gender, too. Women chose the apple tree and men the oak and beech in higher proportion: this can be explained by the division of labour – fruits are utilised merely in the kitchen while beech and oak, as we mentioned before, are important for wood-working.

If we analyse the distribution of the population according to age differences – the two extreme poles are again complementary. Young people (18-30 years) chose the beech and the oak above the average and mentioned the acacia, walnut tree and mulberry tree below the average. The result is precisely the contrary in the case of the oldest respondents (over 60): they mentioned the acacia, mulberry tree and walnut tree above the average.

Differences are bigger according to regions. The Great Plain behaved contrary to the more industrialised northern and western Transdanubia: the acacia and walnut tree were chosen above the average by the inhabitants of the Great Plain, while the “industrially” utilised trees – beech and oak – are mentioned above the average by the Transdanubians.

### Flowers

The main distribution of answers might be explained by the difference of the urbanised and traditional attitude to nature. From this point of view the main significant categories are red poppies and sunflowers *versus* roses.

Women chose in high proportion the forget-me-not which is associated with strong emotional feelings; they chose geranium, too, used as a decoration of houses, while men chose roses, tulips, and carnations in a higher proportion.

According to age, the dividing line is at the age of 45. Those who are younger chose red poppies and sunflowers above the average and roses, carnations, tulips and geraniums below the average. The preference was the opposite in the case of those older than 60: they chose roses, carnations, tulips and they hardly mentioned red poppies and sunflowers, because red poppies are a kind of weed for them and the sunflower is considered to be just a plant and not a flower.

According to education, there are two blocks – the dividing line is the vocational training school. Those with less than 8 years primary school chose roses, tulips, carnations, geraniums above the average and red poppies, cornflowers, sunflowers below the average. Those with a secondary school certificate or a university degree mention roses, tulips, carnations above the average.

According to regions, Budapest and north and west Transdanubia stand out from the average. In Budapest red poppies, cornflowers, sunflowers are preferred above the average according to an urbanised attitude, and roses, carnations, geraniums are chosen below the average: the choice of north and west Transdanubians is quite special: they preferred red poppies and at the same time geraniums and daisies. The influence of an urbanised attitude can be seen here but is due to the alpine influence (the preference of geraniums).

### Cultivated plants

In the case of cultivated plants differences can be analysed not only according to the rural-urbanised aspect but to a modernised and traditional agricultural attitude, too. On the one hand there are the products of an extensive, big field agriculture and on the other hand the products of a market garden.

Those who are over 60 chose the products of big fields: maize and wheat above the average and the products of an intensive type of agriculture: onions, grapes below the average. On the contrary those who are under 45 chose onions and grapes above the average.

According to education, there are two groups: those with less than 8 years of primary school have a significant attitude towards traditional agriculture (maize, wheat above the average, onions below the average), those who attended a secondary school or have a university degree chose paprika, onions, grapes and wheat above the average and maize and rye-barley below the average.

According to occupation, there are three groups: 1. unskilled and semi-skilled workers preferred maize and sunflower, 2. craftsmen and tradesmen onions and grapes, and 3. degree-holders chose paprika, onions and grapes above the average.

If we analyse our data according to the place of residence of the respondents; we can see clearly that the modernisation of agriculture explains the differences of attitudes. In this case the regional traditions of different plant cultures could have had an important role. But in Budapest the two spice plants: paprika and onions are preferred above the average, in the Great Plain maize is above the average while paprika and onion, which are important products of this region (Kalocsa, Szeged, Makó) are below the average.

## Animals

The borderlines between the preferences for the different animals are more interesting. Even a thousand years after the settlement of the Hungarians these borderlines show the symbols of two types of cultures: the symbols of a nomadic way of life (horses, swallows, larks) or the symbols of a settled way of life (Hungarian long-horned cattle, “puli” dog). These two models show the separation of two animal-keeping attitudes.

The only exception is the stork. There is no significant difference in the preference for this bird. Though the stork is not the most typical Hungarian bird, it was similarly mentioned by the different social groups, thus the stork is an “all-Hungarian” bird.

The great difference according to gender is quite interesting: birds (swallows, larks, storks) are mentioned mainly by women, and sheep dogs (“puli”, “komondor”, “kuvasz”) and the “turu!” are mentioned mostly by men.

According to age groups, the two models can be seen too: the nomad horseman and the rejection of this symbol. Those aged between 18-29 are characterised by the settlement-type model. (They mentioned the “puli” and the Hungarian long-horned cattle above the average.) Over 60 the choice is the opposite: the horse, swallow and lark are preferred above the average and Hungarian long-horned cattle, “puli”, “kuvasz”, “komondor” sheep dogs and the Hungarian “vizsla” gun dog below the average.

According to education, the nomadic model dominates in the case of those with less than 8 years of primary school; higher educated respondents preferred the settled-type model.

## What does a typical Hungarian look like?

The emphasis on the eyes is unambiguously a sign of intellectual interest, it means that when the respondents have to define the typical appearance of a Hungarian, those with higher education showed more interest in the expression and symbolic meaning of the eyes.

The moustache is a symbol mainly for the older generation, those who are over 60 mention it more often than the average.

The critical, ambivalent self-identity in the case of those who mention inner characteristics depends not only on education but also on the generation they belong to. The judgement of the age groups between 30-45 is the most negative one, while pensioners represent the other extreme: they chose pessimism as a typical national characteristic below the average and they abstained from choosing other negative judgements, too.

The ambivalent image of Hungary is characteristic for Budapest and south-east Transdanubia, too: the respondents in Budapest mention sociability and other inner positive characteristics below the average; the respondents of south and east Transdanubia choose honesty and other inner positive characteristics below the average. Those in northern Hungary chose the opposite: they mentioned honesty and other positive characteristics as typical characteristics of Hungarians.

In the case of the question “what does a typical Hungarian look like”, for the younger generation and the higher educated the moustache becomes less important and dark hair and eyes as characteristic features

become more important. The inner characteristics as signs of the appearance are more important: pessimism, the absence of sociability and other positive inner features are stressed by those who are more educated, more urbanised and belong to upper social groups.

### The origin of the Hungarians

Most of the respondents chose the Finno-Ugrian origin of the Hungarians. This knowledge becomes dominant in direct proportion to the younger generations.

The knowledge of the Finno-Ugrian kinship increases in direct proportion with higher qualification; the mixed origin of the Hungarians is mentioned mainly by those who have a university degree and among the different social groups, by craftsmen and tradesmen.

The Finno-Ugrian origin was mentioned above the average by the north and west Transdanubians, while south and east Transdanubians prefer the Hun origin in the same proportion.

### The Red-letters days

The 15<sup>th</sup> of March – as always – seems to be the symbolic national holiday for the young generation; 20<sup>th</sup> of August – connected to Hungarian statehood – is preferred by the generation (45-59 years) whose life was determined by the decades of the so-called state socialism as we can see in the case of other questions, too. 20<sup>th</sup> of August was mentioned by young respondents below the average. The 23<sup>rd</sup> of October was accepted as a national holiday by the generation that was most closely connected with the system change (30-44 years).

According to regions, the polarisation of Transdanubia and the Great Plain can be seen. The 15<sup>th</sup> of March is chosen mainly by Transdanubians and below the average by the respondents of the Great Plain. In contrast the 20<sup>th</sup> of August was chosen above the average by the Great Plain and below the average by south and east Transdanubia. This polarisation signals a type of difference, one is the symbol of a civil, citizen development and the other is the symbol of an authoritarian state stability.

### Music

According to gender, there is no significant difference in the choice of typical Hungarian music. The only exception is Bartók, whose more tragic, dramatic music was chosen mainly by men, while Kodály was chosen mainly by women.

According to age, the choice of original folk-songs and the negative judgement of the operetta is characteristic for the 18-29 years age group. Original folk-songs were chosen below the average by the 45-59 years age group, while Kodály was mentioned above the average. A third type of musical taste characterises the age group over 60, above the average preference for the so-called “Hungarian popular melody”.

According to educational qualification, there are three groups. Those with less than 8 years primary school chose the Hungarian popular melody and Hungarian folk song above the average. (It is supposed that these two music genres are confused in their opinion.) Those with 8 years of primary school still prefer the Hungarian popular melody above the average but they mention Liszt, Bartók and Kodály at the average. The third group is

represented by those who have attended secondary school or have university qualification; they mention Bartók, Kodály, Erkel above the average and the Hungarian popular melody and operetta below the average.

According to place of residence, Erkel and Bartók were chosen above the average in Budapest and the Hungarian popular melody below the average. South and east Transdanubia mentioned the Hungarian popular melody above the average and the Hungarian folk-song and Bartók below the average.

### Sport

In connection with sport the aspect of elite sport and mass sport divides the answers. According to gender, the only difference is in connection with boxing; it is chosen mainly by men, but there is no similar difference in connection with other so-called “men’s sports” like football and wrestling, and these answers signal a type of emancipation.

According to age groups, pentathlon, swimming, water-polo and kayak-canoe are preferred mainly by the age group between 18-29 years: the common feature of these sports, though some of them are team sports, is the role of individual achievement, and their need for equipment. Those over 60 have opposite preferences; they chose swimming, pentathlon, kayak-canoe below the average.

According to educational qualification, different sports have special social symbolic meanings: those with less than 8 years primary school chose football above the average and kayak-canoe below the average; on the other side the group with a secondary school or university qualification mentioned pentathlon, fencing, kayak-canoe above the average and football, boxing, wrestling below the average.

According to different social groups, those who are in direct connection with (material) production (unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled workers and lower-level managers of production) mention football above the average while other social groups chose football below the average. Degree-holders, brain-workers on the contrary chose pentathlon, swimming, water-polo, kayaking-canoeing, fencing and carriage driving above the average, and football and wrestling below the average.

According to regional differences, Budapest is outstanding in the preference of pentathlon and fencing and in rejecting football and boxing.

Summarising the result, we can outline the social symbols of different sports separated like different “castes”: football and boxing belong to a lower social prestige, while pentathlon, fencing, kayak-canoe belong to the “upper” world, though we know that these are not real “elite” sports like golf, yachting, tennis, squash and so on, but those elite sports were not on the list of the questionnaire.

### Sportsmen, sportswomen

Women who by their choice proved to be quite emancipated gave many “I do not know” answers when they had to mention names of sportsmen/women. In the choice of boxing, FTC (the most popular Hungarian sports club with political connotation) and football (fans of previous times) the male dominance was characteristic.

According to age groups, the choice of sportsmen/women has two main types: those aged between 18-29 mention Krisztina Egerszegi, swimmer (Olympic champion, in 1988, 1992, 1996) Tamás Darnyi swimmer

(Olympic champion in 1992, 1996), István Kovács boxer (Olympic champion in 1996). Respondents over 60 Egerszegi, Darnyi, Kovács; other Olympic champions of the recent past and FTC football players are mentioned below the average. For the age group between 45-59 years sports have other “heroes”: László Papp, boxer (Olympic champion of the fifties), András Balczó (Olympic champion in pentathlon of the sixties), and Olympic champions of previous times. According to educational qualification, there are two types: those with less than 8 years primary school mention every figure of sports life below the average, the only exception is László Papp, the boxing hero (1950s), a symbol of a career starting from a low social stratum. Those with a university qualification mentioned above the average the stars of different periods and branches of sport: Puskás, Darnyi, Egerszegi, Papp, Balczó, the Polgar sisters, “other Olympic champions” of previous times; great international success is the common characteristic of these names. This group of respondents make one quite meaningful negative exception: the low preference for FTC football players.

### Brand names

The difference between the social groups is very well revealed by the results of national brand names, too. These differences are due to the different images of the typical production of Hungary. There are four main models. One is the traditional image of Hungary as an agricultural country. The main signs of this image are the choice of Pick salami and goose-liver. The second model is the image of “socialist industry”. Rába and Ikarus are the main symbols of this image (although these firms already had a reputation before the socialist period). The symbols of the third model are the products associated with creativity, innovation (e.g. Rubik, Herendi-Zsolnay). There is a fourth model, too: industry based on qualified work – like the electronic industry. Videoton and Tunsgam are symbols of this fourth model.

The preference of a certain model expresses the attitude of the given social group to a special period of Hungary’s recent past and an attitude to a kind of modernisation strategy, too.

We can find differences according to gender too – women chose important kitchen and household products, like Pick salami, goose-liver, paprika, Herendi and Zsolnay porcelain.

According to ages, there are three groups: in the case of the 18-29 years age group the image of a modernised Hungarian production and consumption is dominant (Videoton and Herendi-Zsolnay are mentioned above the average, Pick salami and goose-liver below the average), the image of agricultural Hungary is quite obviously rejected by this generation. In the case of the 30-45 years age group Herendi and Zsolnay are preferred above the average while the symbols of socialist industry (Ikarus, Rába) are rejected. Another characteristic group is that of respondents aged between 45-59 years. In contrast to the 30-45 years group, they prefer the symbols of socialist industry (Ikarus, Rába) and reject the symbols of a so-called “culture of consumption” (Herendi-Zsolnay and paprika). In the case of the group over 60 the traditional image of agricultural Hungary dominates: they mention goose-liver, paprika above the average and Ikarus, Videoton, Herendi-Zsolnay and Rubik below the average.

According to educational qualification, in the case of those with less than 8 years of primary school the traditional image of an agricultural Hungary is dominant (goose-liver, paprika are mentioned above the average). The other group with 8 years of primary school or a vocational training school (they are mainly workers) expresses the image of an industrialised Hungary (Ikarus and Videoton are mentioned above the average, and goose-liver, paprika below the average). The third group is the group with secondary school or

university qualifications. For them the symbols of creativity and high quality consumption are important: the Rubik cube, Herendi-Zsolnay, old Tokaj wine and paprika.

According to regions, we can find the influence of local patriotism. Rába is chosen mainly by the respondents of north and west Transdanubia (where their firms are located), while Ganz is mentioned above the average in Budapest (the cause is the same).

The symbolic meaning of brand names shows very important distinctions. It expresses different degrees of the modernised production model: from the agricultural model through a model of engineering industry and precision engineering and electronic industry to the information-innovation based society with a high standard of consumption.

These symbols express different degrees of the so-called socialism: from the industry of the previous period through the heavy industries of the fifties, the consumption-oriented industry of the Kádár era, to the attitude nowadays of denigrating the socialist period. There are other aspects of these symbols, too: the prestige hierarchy of consumption (e.g. goose-liver, old Tokaj wine), the contrast of rationalism and belief in miracles, the two poles of technicism and housing.

Through their combinations quite different value and taste structures can be expressed. Beside the ancient symbols of the trees, and animals, the symbols of production of the modern era are excellent signs of different mentalities.

### Writers and poets

Knowledge is a strong limit in choosing writers and poets: knowledge of different writers, poets and especially knowledge of their works, compositions is quite diverse in different social groups.

The comparison of genders gives a very interesting result: Ady and Petőfi (the great representatives of the Hungarian poetry of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) are mentioned mainly by women (this shows women's greater affinity to poetry), while Móricz (one of the greatest novelists, who represents "prose", prosaic life and rough reality) is chosen by men above the average.

According to ages, there are two characteristic taste structures: Ady, Attila József (the greatest poets of modern literature), Kölcsey (the author of the national anthem) and Petőfi are mentioned above the average by the younger age groups (18-29 years); for them Mikszáth and Jókai (romantic novel writers) are less important. This signals that the calm and long narrative style of the last century is quite strange for the accelerated way of life of this generation. The other group is represented by those who are over 60: in their case there are many negative deviations from the average. In the case of the middle-aged the two paradigms are separated by the preference for Attila József and Endre Ady.

According to educational qualification, the distribution is similar: those with less than 8 years of primary school mention Ady, Jókai, Attila József, Kölcsey, Radnóti (a 20<sup>th</sup> century urban poet), Petőfi below the average; in this qualification group literature does not function as a symbolic role. (This result stresses again the importance of the 8-year primary school!) There is a great qualitative change among those with 8 years of primary school: Ady and Radnóti are the only poets who are mentioned below the average. The other extreme is represented by

the university-qualified respondents: in their case Ady, Attila József, Móricz, Radnóti, Jókai are chosen above the average – Petőfi is the only exception, mentioned below the average.

According to regions, there are many negative deviations from the average results in the Great Plain and in northern Hungary; the symbolic role of literature is not so important in the attitude of these respondents. Writers of the journal Nyugat (“West” = western-oriented literary journal of intellectuals at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) are mentioned above the average in Transdanubia (this result indicates a more modernised, urbanised reading taste). Ady, Jókai, Attila József, writers of the Nyugat and “other classical writers” are chosen above the average in Budapest.

### Historical figures

The answers to this question show which historical events and who are the historical reference points.

According to age, there are three groups: one of them is the group of those between 18-29 years. For them Saint Stephen is more important than for the average. Those aged between 45-59 chose Deák above the average – Deák became the symbol of compromise in Hungarian history.

According to educational qualification, there are two groups. In the case of those with less than 8 years of primary school we can find only negative deviations from the average; these deviations refer to different historical periods which means that the cause of these deviations is historical knowledge and not the preference or rejection of one or another historical period. The other extreme is the group of the secondary or university-qualified respondents; different historical periods and their representatives are mentioned above the average in their case (the kings of the Árpád house, king Matthias, Saint Stephen, Deák, Kossuth, Széchenyi).

Among regional differences we can find two important results: in Budapest there are many positive deviations from the average, in the centre of power, history is a stronger reference. While in the case of the Great Plain and northern Hungary, all deviations from the average are negative regardless of the origin and places of activity of certain historical personalities.

In the case of historical personalities the main borderlines are based on knowledge rather than in the case of writers and poets.

The other distinctive meaning of these historical symbols is the separation of heroes who struggled for independence or the power of reprisals (the attitude to the insurrectionist movement of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century divides the answers quite obviously) and certainly the attitude to the politicians after the Second World War results in different answers, too.

### Coats of arms

The coat of arms of the Kádár era was chosen by more women than men. According to age groups, the Kádár arms were chosen mainly by the generation socialised during this period. According to educational qualification, while the lowest and highest qualified groups hardly chose the Kádár arms, those who have

attended a primary school or a vocational training school chose the Kádár coat of arms above the average – which shows that the Kádár era has had a strong influence on these groups.

#### The characteristic features of the Hungarians

The high proportion of the answer “I do not know” is quite remarkable – the use of the scale was quite strange for many respondents (mainly for low educated and old persons).

The older the respondents the more optimistic was the judgement about Hungarians. Another important distinction among the different age groups is the judgement of quickness: those over 60 value Hungarians as quicker above the average while the age group between 18-29 years appreciates Hungarians as being slower more than the average.

As a result the group over 60 appreciates Hungarians more positively than the average (and than for the younger groups); for this old group Hungarians are more developed, more optimistic, more friendly, and quicker. The age groups between 18-29 years miss resoluteness, successfulness, optimism and quickness, mainly the values of modernisation.

Women consider the Hungarians more attractive than men do, while men think Hungarians are more resolute.

According to educational qualification, those with less than 8 years of primary school are the most satisfied with the Hungarians, while the group with secondary school qualification are the most unsatisfied. One of the biggest differences in judgement is on the scale of optimism-pessimism: those with less than or 8 years primary school or vocational training school consider Hungarians to be more optimistic, while the group of secondary school and university-qualified declare Hungarians to be rather pessimistic. The higher qualified groups are rather unsatisfied with the Hungarians: in their opinion Hungarians are less modern, more pessimistic, slower, less tolerant, more conservative. The different Hungarian characteristic features are related to the different educational attainment groups (to themselves, similarly to age groups) and to social situation.

According to occupation groups, unskilled workers do not form definite opinions about the characteristic features of the Hungarians – the only exception is friendliness which is regarded as an important feature of our nation. Skilled workers appreciate Hungarians as a modern, developed (as managers do), masculine and resolute nation – these are the ideas of an industrialised and rational modernisation. The lower managers (together with other managers) rate the Hungarians as more successful, more friendly, more attractive than others; these values show that personal contacts are quite important for the managers and the results justify their activity. The university-qualified respondents consider Hungarians less resolute, more pessimistic, more intolerant, more aggressive and at the same time more old-fashioned, more conservative and unsuccessful than the average; they miss – in keeping with a more critical, reflective mentality of intellectuals – both the sociability and the modernisation abilities of the Hungarians.

According to place of residence, the opinion of the respondents in Budapest is more critical and negative than in north and west Transdanubia, where the image of the Hungarians shows acceptance.

### The characteristic features of the Austrians

The opinion of the older generation is more positive about the Austrians, too, except two values, cheerfulness and progressiveness, the youngest age group (18-29 years) appreciates Austrians better than the older generation.

Women value Austrians a little more positively than men: the differences concern quickness, cheerfulness, progressiveness, successfulness, and peace-lovingness.

Those with a lower education appreciate Austrians more positively than the average. The group of degree-holders deviates above the average in two aspects: they say Austrians are more cheerful and conservative than the others, but less friendly, less tolerant and less attractive. Those with vocational school training appreciate technical abilities, but they appreciate the humanistic abilities of the Austrians, too, considering Austrians more friendly, more attractive than the others.

According to occupational groups, the most characteristic judgements were made by the group of small entrepreneurs; they have lively, intensive economic contacts with the Austrians and perhaps the most personal good and bad experience with the “neighbours”. In the opinion of semi-skilled and skilled workers Austrians are more modern, clever and serious – perhaps they acknowledge the higher standard of Austrian production. Skilled workers and lower managers appreciate other abilities, too, which are important for qualified work: resoluteness, progressiveness, optimism and successfulness. The judgement of managers and qualified white-collar workers is similar in this respect: both say Austrians are more resolute, more progressive – expressing the benefits of modernisation – and at the same time more old-fashioned, more conservative and less friendly.

According to regional differences, the respondents of Budapest have a more critical opinion about Austrians, but not so critical as in the case of the Hungarians. They consider Austrians to be less clever, less modern, and less resolute than the average, but more cheerful than the others. The respondents in the north and west Hungary are more critical in three respects; they regard Austrians as less modern and clever but louder than the others (due perhaps to the experience of the so-called shopping tourism in the border region), but this does not mean – as we see above – that they do not consider them attractive.

The view in northern Hungary of the Austrians is more aggressive: they consider Austrians to be more masculine and less peace-loving. The respondents of the Great Plain and south and east Transdanubia appreciate Austrians more positively; they stress two values: Austrians are more clever and more modern.

### Aggressive nationalism

There are quite big differences according to gender. A great proportion of the women refuse to answer this question (answering: I do not know).

According to age, the oldest respondents answered: “I do not know”. At the same time they are the ones who reject nationalism the least. People aged between 30-44 are the most critical concerning nationalism.

According to education, answers like: “nationalism is unambiguously negative” and “it is more negative than positive” are more frequent in direct ratio with a higher education.

### Are you proud of your Hungarian nationality?

Summarising the results we can say that the self-identity of the middle classes is the weakest.

The pride of national identity is related to a quite acceptable living standard (or rather to the satisfaction with this living standard) and the possibility of social activity. The role of political culture is an important but not a primary factor of this pride.

### What are you proud of ?

The result of this question can show the symbols of identification and self-confidence. Which of the symbolic elements determine the identity of the different social groups?

According to age, we find three main groups: the group of people between 18-29 years is proud of our historical tradition and political processes below the average, but they are proud of sports achievements above the average. The group over 60 lays stress on historical tradition above the average and on sports achievement below the average. Sport is if no less importance as well as openness for the young. Political processes as the basis of national pride are mentioned by the group between 30-45 years (the so-called system-changing generation) above the average.

According to gender differences, in connection with different political interests men mention political results and sport more often than women, while women often answered “I do not know” or “There is no such reason for pride”, their identification with these social results is weaker than that of men.

According to educational attainment, there are four groups. In the case of those with less than 8 years of primary school we find only negative deviations from the average. The other characteristic group is that of degree-holders; they, on the contrary, mention above the average achievements in science and the arts, political processes and historical traditions. (These are all important factors of their identity.) The answers of those who have attended a secondary school are ambiguous; they chose scientific achievements above the average but they also mention sport, similarly to the group of skilled workers. This is the fourth group (those who attended a vocational training school); they chose scientific achievements below the average and sport above the average. Sport became a very important factor of national identity in the case of this group.

The measure and type of national pride is a good sign of social status and satisfaction. The content of pride is quite hierarchized: the upper social groups mention achievements in science and the arts, political changes and historical tradition as the source of national pride.

### Attractive nations

The list of attractive nations shows the cultural models of a social group, cultural models which are examples to be followed or similar to their own.

Analysing the data we can distinguish four main models according to age, educational attainment, occupation group and party sub-cultures: the American, European, German-Austrian, and East European models.

According to age, the group between 18-29 years mentions North Americans, Italians, other Europeans as attractive nations above the average and East Europeans below the average.

Quite characteristic is the positive American image of the youngest group and their attraction toward the South of Europe (against the Northern part) and the rejection of Eastern Europe. In the case of the oldest group, the affection for East Europeans and the distrust of US and Latin cultures is still remarkable. The third group is represented by those between 45-59 years. They mention the Polish nation above the average.

According to educational qualification, those with less than 8 years of primary school deviate negatively from the average: they mention the East Europeans above the average. In the case of degree-holders many nations are mentioned above the average: e.g. French, Italian, Scandinavian, and other European. This is the sign of a quite obvious kind of European orientation, toward both parts of Europe – the North and the South. It is significant, too that they emphasise the Latin civilisations as symbols of culture and the Scandinavian welfare-state model. Those with vocational school training chose above the average the Austrian-German model – as a symbol of technical virtue e.g. exactness, accuracy, correctness.

What is your opinion about the presence of foreigners?

“Foreigners enrich our everyday-life by their presence” – professional classes agree with this statement above the average, they are the most tolerant in this respect. The group of small entrepreneurs behaves similarly. The semi-skilled workers are the least tolerant in connection with this question.

According to age groups, the youngest are the most tolerant and the oldest are the least tolerant. According to educational qualification, the acceptance of the role of foreigners (as enriching the country) increases in direct ratio with higher qualification. The biggest difference is after primary school. According to place of residence, north and west Transdanubia is the most tolerant again and the most intolerant is northern Hungary.

“Foreigners jeopardise jobs” – those between 45-59 years reject this statement most of all. According to educational qualification the rejection of this statement increases in direct ratio to higher qualification (the neutral answer is chosen above the average by professionals).

Unattractive nations

Concerning this question, we can distinguish four types of rejections: the rejection of East Europeans, non-Europeans, Gypsies, and Russians. The basis of these rejections might be of a political nature (as in the case of the Romanians or Gypsies) or it might have religious, cultural, ethnic reasons (Arabs, Gypsies, non-European nations).

According to age, the rejection of Gypsies is above the average in the case of the group between 18-29 years. The group of 45-59 years is the most tolerant in this case, they answer above the average that “there is no such unattractive nation” and they reject Gypsies and other East Europeans below the average.

According to educational qualification, there are three groups. One is the group of those who have not finished primary school: they mention Gypsies, Arabs, Romanians, Serbs and Turks more than the average and they answer above the average that there is no unattractive nation. The second group is represented by those with

secondary school and by professionals: they reject Gypsies, Turks (secondary school), non-Europeans (professionals) above the average. The third group is the group of skilled workers: they reject Romanians above the average (the effect of competition on the labour market might cause this result).

#### Disliked neighbours

Similar to the previous question the oldest persons are the most tolerant. The two age-groups over 45 chose above the average the answer “there is no such nation”, while the youngest (18-29 years) mention above the average Romanians, Gypsies and coloured people as disliked neighbours.

According to educational qualification, there are two extreme poles: those who have not finished primary school mention above the average Romanians, Ukrainians and other East Europeans as disliked neighbours and below the average “there is no such nation”. Professionals are less intolerant in this respect than respondents with secondary school certificate, but they reject above the average Gypsies, Russians and other coloured people – and are less intolerant of Romanians (as potential neighbours).

The results concerning the sub-cultures of certain political parties are summarised in a separate paper. We are publishing the detailed results, cross tabulations and their analyses in a book.

The results of this research can be analysed from other aspects, too. This individual and collective research experiences, practical and theoretical knowledge, many facts of cultural history – the analysis of these symbolic meanings is very fruitful for discovering characteristics of values and mentality. Not only the symbolic meanings represent the present Hungarian identity of the different social groups but the answers also divide the population to such an extent that we can use these questions approximately like a test – to discover characteristics of the different social groups. The results show that different parts of the questions symbolise quite different aspects of national identity (e.g. urbanisation differences, economic preferences, the degree of individualisation). We hope that the results of our survey can be useful for other social research, too.

Budapest-Velem, 1997–1998

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, B. (1992) *Imagined Communities, Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, London-New York-New Delhi.
- Armstrong, J. A. (1982) *Nations before Nationalism*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- Barth, F. (1994) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Pensumtyenste, Oslo.
- Berend, T. I. (1982) *Válságos évtizedek (Decades of Crisis)*. Gondolat, Budapest.
- Berlant, L. (1997) *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*. Duke University Press, Durham-London.
- Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism*. Sage, London-etc.
- Breuss, S. – Liebhart, K. – Pribersky, A. (1995) *Inszenierungen (Stihwörter zu Österreich)*. Sonderzahl, Wien.
- Cerulo, K. A. (1995) *Identity Design (The Sights and Sounds of a Nation)*. Rutgers University Press, New Bismarck, New Jersey.
- Cohen, A. (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. Key Ideas. Routledge, London-New York.
- Cohen, A. (eds.) (1986) *Symbolising Boundaries (Identity and Diversity in British Cultures)*. Manchester Univ. Press, Manchester.
- Colls, Robert—Dodd, Philip (eds.): *Englishness, Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, Croom-Helm, London-New York-Sidney, 1986
- Csepeli, Gy. (1992) *Nemzet által homályosan (Nation as a Mirror Obscure)*. Századvég, Budapest.
- Csepeli, Gy. (1985) *A nagyvilágon kívül ("You Don't Have Any Other Place on the World")*. Józsoveg, Budapest, 2002.
- Douglas, M. (1975) *Implicit Meanings. Essays in Anthropology*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Gellner, E. (1983) *Nation and Nationalism*. Blackwell, Oxford-Cambridge.
- Gereben, F. (ed.) (2001) *Hungarian Minorities and Central Europe*. Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem, Piliscsaba.
- Gereben, F. (1999) *Identitás, kultúra, kisebbség [Identity, Culture, Minorities]*. Osiris, Budapest.
- Gereben, F.—Tomka, M. (2000) *Vallásosság és nemzettudat [Religiosity and National Self-Consciousness]*. Kerkai Könyvek, Budapest.
- Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- György, P. —Turai H. (eds.) (1992) *A művészet katonái (Sztálinizmus és kultúra) [Soldiers of Art – Stalinism and Culture]*. Corvina, Budapest.
- Herzfeld, M. (1997) *Cultural Intimacy (Social Poetics in the Nation-State)*. Routledge, New York-London.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (1997) *A nacionalizmus kétszáz éve [200 Years of Nationalism]*, Maecenas, Budapest.
- Hofer, T. – Niedermüller, P. (eds.) (1988) *Nemzeti kultúrák antropológiai nézetben [National Cultures from an Anthropological Point of View]*, MTA–OSZK, Budapest.
- Hofer, Tamás – Niedermüller, Péter (eds.): *Hagyomány és hagyományalkotás [Tradition and Creation of Traditions]*, MTA-OSZK, Budapest, 1987.

- Hoppál, M. – Niedermüller, P. (eds.) (1983) *Jelképek, kommunikáció, társadalmi gyakorlat* [Symbols, Communication, Social Practice], TK, Budapest.
- Hosking, G. — Schöpflin, G. (eds.) (1997) *Myths & Nationhood*. Hurst & Co. London.
- Hunyady, Gy. (1996) *Sztereotípiák a változó közgondolkodásban* [Stereotypes in the Changing Public Opinion]. Akadémiai, Budapest.
- Jenkins, B. – Sofos, S. A. (eds.) (1996) *Nation & Identity in Contemporary Europe*. Routledge, London-New York.
- Leersen, J. T. — Spiering, M. (eds.) (1991) *National Identity, Symbol and Representation*. Rodopi, Amsterdam-Atlanta.
- Link, J. — Wülfing, W. (Hrsg.) (eds.) (1991) *Nationale Mythen und Symbole in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart.
- Martindale, D. (1963) *Community, Character & Civilization*. Free Press of Glencoe, Collier-McMillan, London.
- Miller, D. (1995) *On Nationality*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Pataki, F. (2001) *Élettörténet és indentitás* [Life-history and Identity]. Osiris, Budapest.
- Samuel, R. (ed.) (1989) *Patriotism. The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity I-III*. Routledge, London-New York.
- Smith, A. D. (1991) *National Identity*. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth-Middlesex.
- Smith, A. D. (1986) *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Blackwood, Oxford-Cambridge U.S.A.
- Sugar, P. F. (ed.) (1980) *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*. ARC Clio, Santa Barbara, Col. Oxford.
- Szűcs, J. (1984) *Nemzet és történelem* [Nation and History]. Gondolat, Budapest.
- Szűcs, J. (1983) *Vázlat Európa három történelmi régiójáról* [On the Three Historical Regions of Europe]. Magvető, Budapest.

The subject of our examination is what sort of life problems are caused by the East European changes from the point of view of individualization. The political, economic and institutional sides of the East European transformations have been analyzed by many and from many points of view; however, much less attention is directed at the individual side – how all these changes affect the everyday life and habits of individuals.

From these points of view we can speak on the one hand about a slow process of individualization, which, after its beginning in the last century, and its repeated increasingly unambiguous impetuses after the turn of the century, has become a mass phenomenon in Hungary from the 1960s, and at the same time, on the other hand about the change of the value system, shocking for many people – and very radical, measured on a historical scale – that accompanies the process of (political-social) system change; and about the individualization that is occurring on a world-scale, with a rising tendency as we progress from the peripheries to the centres.

Individualization shows a close connection with modernization and with the development of bourgeois relations; it gained strength in East European state socialism, when the state began to withdraw (gradually, leaving a scope to individual initiatives) from fields where it had previously been present in a dominant, directing way. It is well known that in Hungary from the sixties with the second economy gaining ground, the household plot, with a part of the intelligentsia becoming free-lance workers, increasingly wider groups were affected by one of the foundations of individualization: becoming independent (of course, until quite recently, always independent only in a limited way) in an economic-existential sense.

This was related to the fact that the ideological offensive of politics also decreased, indeed it increasingly made efforts to depolarize the society, as many observers have shown: it reached agreement and made a compromise with the private sphere. The next important root of individualization was the urbanization that accelerated in the same period (the destruction of the traditional rural society) that, of course, has more quickly entailed the difficult problems of modern urbanization than all of its advantages, yet it was in this period that it crossed the limits of proportion which are characteristic of urbanized societies. Similarly, in that period radical changes occurred in the structure of the family: the nuclear family (also determining from the point of view of individualization) became typical. The cultural impacts also helped this tendency: cultural policy allowed Western culture to gain ground in a differentiating way (which communicated a more individualized system of values) and gave scope to the native (bourgeois) cultural traditions, representing similar values. These impacts also strengthened each other.

This individualization of course was very contradictory, and many things were missing from it that were in connection with these tendencies in the western societies (perhaps most strikingly the freedom of self-organizing civil society). Because of this lack, the analysis made by Elemer Hankiss originating from this period, makes direct use of the concept of negative modernization to characterize the shift of values in Hungary. What were the peculiarities of this process, and in what sense can the above be regarded also as typical ways of individualization, remains a further question, but it is perhaps indisputable, that – in some sense – the last three decades in Hungary were characterized by a powerful individualization.

Because these processes occurred slowly, over decades it was only gradually that they became perceptible and even then not in every field. But the system change made it obvious for all that from now on “everything is otherwise”, and one important element of this “otherwise” is that in the field of values the “self-asserting” of the individual takes over the place of the “community” (this is so even if more emphasis is given – primarily by the governing parties – to the communality although of course not in its abstract socialist, but in the traditional – national-religious – sense). What has changed spectacularly is the decrease in the paternalist functions of the state, and this suggests very dramatically for many people the view that: “You can count only on yourself”. While the individualization of recent decades has proceeded in the eclectic world view of a society with an eclectic system of values, the system change often requires of individuals a total change in their system of values and world view: indeed we can say it requires a change of culture, in the sense used by cultural anthropology.

Since in the final analysis both of the two naturally inseparable processes are parts of the development of individualization within the world system, their most essential features –also within the individual countries – can be grasped when and where cultures with a different degree of individualization meet. When we chose the subject of our examination, we believed that we could examine individualization most effectively in the state of mind of individuals who experience directly and in a manifold way such a meeting with a culture having a different degree of individualization compared to their own experiences.

We chose life situations in which the change of cultures or the relation of cultures to each other is striking from the point of view of individualization. In Hungary three groups in particular appeared to be the best subjects for such an examination. 1. Intellectuals who had spent at least one year in the United States, with a scholarship, as temporary lecturers or as researchers, and subsequently returned, so they twice confront the differences of cultures. 2. Intellectuals who moved to Hungary from Transylvania (that is, from Romanian society, which has not passed through the processes which occurred in Hungary in the sixties, and which has, moreover, very different traditions), and who have lived here for at least one year (so they have sufficient experience of the reality here, too). 3. Intellectuals who, leaving the nomenclature post they held in the party apparatus, have become (involuntarily or voluntarily) economic entrepreneurs (since in their minds there has been an encounter and changing of two cultures – requiring very different degrees of individualization: the culture of the “state socialist” bureaucracy, and the culture of the capitalist enterprise).

As for the method of examination we conducted in-depth interviews (5-6 hours in length per person, which were arranged in 2-3 details). Thirty interviews of each type were made. Our questions were directed at the main differences between the cultures. Of course we did not want to explore what the American or Hungarian society is like, but rather, which differences stand out in the minds of people who experienced in themselves the meeting of the cultures. What changes did they have to go through, what were their most striking, most unusual, most testing, or even most shocking experiences and observations?

The main fields touched on in the interviews were the following: work, the relation to work, working circumstances, methods of management, working methods, working style; the customs of leisure time, travel, holidays, the time budget; the forms of human relations, the family, friendship, kinship, neighbourhood, relations at the place of work; the customs of child-raising; the division of labour in the family, the peculiarities of the genders, sexual ideals, conflicts and ways of handling them; the home, way of life, use of the home; shopping habits, services; the media, TV, broadcasting, newspapers; what can be seen of the world “here” and

“there”, the segments of the view of the world; politics, the relation to politics; the degree of hierarchization of society and the way it is treated, the extent and forms of wealth and poverty, the ambitions, figures of fashion, successful people, the “models”; socialization (impacts in the school and outside of it); the habits of conversation, topics of conversation, taboo themes, mode of communication, symbolic signs; the measure and forms of independence and dependence, the individuality-uniformity of people, etc.

In the following, because the change from party bureaucrat to entrepreneur is a special form of the change of culture that differs in many respects from the experiences of the other two groups allowing other sorts of conclusions, we have selected some cases from the experiences of the interviews which were made with the first two groups.

The life situation, which was the common experience of the subjects of our interviews, has many determining peculiarities. The differences of the culture in which they grew up, and which they recognized recently, affect individuals to an amazing degree. The cultural shock produced by the differences, the globally alien environment often causes a state of depression, leading in turn to escape or slow adaptation. Several of the people interviewed reported that the alienation has caused in them an inability to create because they did not find anything in the alien conditions which could motivate them. Besides alienation, the mental state of the individual is determined by the absence of a net of connections: the individual feels himself in a void, in a vacuum situation.

All this together also results in the destruction of the self-identity: the subjects of the interview talk about becoming nothing, about the annihilation of the individual, under the new circumstances all their previous results, experiences, the connections they have built are invalid, void; they feel that they have to recreate the foundations of their lives, rebuild their personality itself.

Individuals can give various responses to these challenges. These solutions are placed on the scale between the extremes of resistance and surrender of themselves. On the one hand we find overcompensation, the unconditional acceptance of the recipient culture, which is accompanied by undervaluing of the self and the overappreciation of the recipient culture. In such cases people strive to ignore all critical elements in themselves, they downplay, indeed in some cases exclude from their perception any impressions which are negative features of the recipient culture. On the other hand there are techniques of exclusion: on the one side the overvaluing of the individual's original culture (or the undervaluing of the recipient one), a kind of strengthening cultural nationalism; on the other side the defence of the sovereignty of the individual, an increase in personal self-awareness. Defences against the pressure of the absence of connections can also be on a scale between two extremes: on the one hand there is the typical excessive toughness, on the basis of the principle “I can account only on myself”; on the other hand the search, the protection of the ardour lacking in the new environment: the effort to form as soon as possible connections and communities which ensure that defence. This can be ensured by special subcultures, by groups of the same origin finding each other, quick marriages between people in a similar situation, etc.).

However, the positive outcome of the life situation examined is, in any case, the particular situation of the observer and the emergence of the capacities connected with this. They become aware of many phenomena which they would not otherwise perceive (for example not even from among the peculiarities of their own, sending culture).

There are also some other determining factors in perceiving the differences between the cultures.

I. People realize especially those differences which

1.) in our own, sending culture are completely unusual phenomena (different customs, norms, especially: taboos) ( the differences of “quiddity”); 2.) are strikingly different in standards or in measures (the differences of “quantity”); 3. are the appearances of the same things with a totally different content (differences of “quality”).

II. In perceiving the differences, the heightened attention of the individual is directed mainly to the following areas: a.) the role and appreciation of the individual; b.) the peculiarities of the world of objects; c.) the forms of initiating and maintaining contacts; d.) what can be regarded as the key element, which holds together the order of the world, the given culture; e.) divergences in the use of language, the systems of signs (namely those peculiarities which draw the attention of the observer already at the moment of meeting).

All this thus influences the perception and realization of the differences between the cultures. But what is observed ultimately by those who experience the meeting between the two examined cultures? We shall examine first the common tendencies, those which it seems generally accompany the move from a society with a lower degree of individualization to a more individualized one. Then we take one by one those specificities which can be regarded as the peculiar and typical experiences of moving from Hungarian society to the USA. (Naturally there are peculiarities of moving from Transylvania to Hungary too: but the discussion of related questions would be beyond the framework of this study (we would like to deal with these in a separate study).

## GENERAL TENDENCIES

1. The first great field where the differences can be registered is the observation of the peculiarities of social relations.

1.1. It is natural to perceive the difference between living standards, and, generally, the differences in the importance of material goods. Since in both cases people from a poorer society look to the richer one, the comparison is, naturally, decided to the advantage of the recipient society. But this relation can be viewed critically, emphasizing the disadvantages of wealth, as well as with an uncritical admiration. This also depends on the extent to which prosperity is regarded as a value in the sending society, or the strength of other values (possibly prevailing more weakly in the recipient society). From this point of view the two groups examined differ. In Hungary, for several decades the (partially officially also helped) progress towards the values of material prosperity continued, existing almost as absolutely dominant. This increases the positive predisposition towards the society of the USA. Among the Hungarians of Transylvania communal values are stronger; this principle diminishes the unambiguously positive value attached to material prosperity: many report their amazement that in the recipient society “only money gives the value of man”. But in both groups, however, important modifying effects are at work. For the Transylvanians the extreme economy of shortage, immeasurably ruining human possibilities, has – necessarily – overvalued the non-prosperity-type values, but when they break away from their original environment, the abundance experienced affects them in an unambiguously positive, “paradise”-like manner. On the other hand it is a not insignificant circumstance that they meet with this in the “Motherland”, in Hungary, and so the value of communal identification also strengthens the affirmation of the prosperity model. (They regard this as a Hungarian result which overvalues

their domestic, Romanian social state). At the same time (not least due to the lack of communal identification of this sort), the compensatory effect often strengthens in Hungarians going to America: searching for the negative aspects of prosperity. Many people who went to the USA with a positive prejudice, overvalued the values of culture, solidarity, hence non-material values, during their stay there. After all, the balance in the judgement of prosperity, welfare advantages of the recipient societies is a positive one; and we must not forget here also that the increased prosperity of the individual is the essential concomitant and condition of individualization: for societies which have stepped on the path of individualization this is always a positive value. Observers suggest the differences in prosperity primarily by stressing such phenomena as emphasizing the pleasantness of shopping, the recording of shopping as a separate ritual, the dizzying variety of goods, the comfort provided by the services, the recognition of the possibility of a quieter life, the propaganda, the priority given in the mass media to material goods and their acquisition, the greater possibilities for enterprise; the materialism, the rationality of the utility principle, which prevails in people's mentality.

1.2. The perception and interpretation of the differences (in prosperity) within the recipient society is in connection with the above. These differences in the recipient societies examined are more extreme, more striking, than in the sending societies. This is recorded (with some astonishment) by almost everybody. The importance of that question is strengthened by the fact that the observers at the beginning have a lower social status in the recipient societies than they had at home. In interpreting the social differences, in the final analysis, what divides the reactions into two types is whether the observer regards his stay here as temporary or he wants to adapt himself permanently to this society. In the first case the perception of the extremes strengthens him in his decision to withdraw from the recipient society, and he criticizes it, in what could be called the manner of a "class-struggle". In the second case his striving for adaptation makes him susceptible to the view that he himself also regards poverty (as the self-propaganda of the recipient society) as a deviancy, as the fault of the poor, and he places the emphasis in his attention on the charitable efforts of the recipient societies which are striving to reduce the social differences. (Taking note of the institutional protection of minorities, which is strengthened in the case of people who moved from Transylvania to Hungary in contrast with the experiences at home, and in the case of people going from Hungary to the USA by the experiences refuting the one-sidedness of the earlier counter-propaganda, also belong to this category.) The "critics", however, observe with scepticism the self-propaganda of the recipient society, the techniques by which these societies want to conceal the facts and injustices of social inequalities.

1.3. Many report how they observed a very subtle stratification in the recipient society: in the way a.) residence, social status, and consumption habits, or other sorts of behaviour are connected with each other; b.) (in connection with the individualization), again: how wide and how internally stratified the middle-class is and c.) how the recipient society forms some sort of subtle caste system. (The newcomers may necessarily be more sensitive to perception of those barriers in the path and therefore of the mobility of newcomers). At the same time many report that they are less able to notice (in the signs of dressing, of behaviour) the differences than they are at home, and they ascribe this to the greater degree of equality. There is no contradiction between the two observations: in the more individualized society the differences are greater, but also more gradual, more subtle, and they are less perceptible because of the more sophisticated character of the differences, and if we regard the "middle class" as one social group, then the process of the rise of more and more groups into the middle class with the parallel increase of individualization can be seen (from the level of a society with a less differentiated middle strata) also as a homogenization.

2. There is an equally emphasized difference in the divergence of values. The higher degree of individualization is directly perceptible in the divergence of the system of values, in the presence of the more individualistic order of the recipient society's values. Individuals, however, can least disregard such direct collisions of the value systems: the tendency that observers receive the phenomena of the recipient society with aversion is most observable in precisely these cases.

2.1. The members of both groups examined rank the recipient society as a colder one than their sending culture. The coldness in family relations is especially striking: the less bodily-physical contact with children, less expression of emotions, the relation to children becomes more outward, the spread of the nuclear family (the disappearance of grandparents, of kinship relations), the "exaggerated rationalism", pragmatism of human relations.

2.2. While they report the more civilized, more polite forms of contact of the recipient societies, they almost unambiguously state that these forms of contact are superficial, that they lack real, intimate conversations (the observers of American culture also add that the lack of both theoretical and personal topics in everyday conversations is striking) and the intimate forms of communal life within which men "understand each other without words".

2.3. Some observers also mention that people have less endurance in the recipient societies than in their sending society. They are less able to adapt to difficulties. (In the Transylvanian-Hungarian relation it is also mentioned that "they live better than we do, and yet they complain more".) Here, their opinion is likely to be inseparably affected by the subjective judgement that they, who would be happy with the living standards of the recipient society, are less sensitive to the troubles level above the people of that society and the objective fact that the harder conditions of life necessarily make people tougher.

In both groups examined, all these differences of values originate directly from the fact that in the sending societies the communal dependence of the individual, and in connection with this, the emphasis on communal values is stronger than in the recipient society; and while in the case of differences in living standards the advantages of the higher living standards, in any case, are more unambiguous than the disadvantages, the indubitable advantages of the spreading individualistic value system are in fact accompanied by many losses, as a consequence of the retreat of communal values more characteristic of the less individualized societies.

3. On the other hand the more individualized societies are emphasized unambiguously in those observations which are related to self-esteem and the higher degree of independence of the people of the recipient societies.

This is observed primarily in the process of its evolution, and both groups find that even the children are more sure of themselves, they communicate more easily, and their means of expression are also more developed. All this is explained by the prosperity, providing security (in the case of America by letting the child stand on his own feet earlier) and not least by the techniques of socialization which serve to strengthen the child in his individuality, to indicate to him that he is a value in himself.

The only negative judgement so far linked to the recipient society, perceived as unambiguously better in this respect, is that because of these contrast effects they, the outsiders, feel themselves to be too little, dwarfed, compressed, in this society of people who are sure of themselves.

## PECULIARITIES: AMERICA

1. Several of the observed peculiarities of the more individualized society were mentioned only in the case of Hungary-USA. Most of these were related to the differences in “mentality”.

These mentions paint a picture of the self-asserting mentality of the atomized individuals of a highly organized, enterprise-based society, the mentality of modern individualization. What they judge as positive in it is what carries them closer to this, what they judge as negative is what carries the negative features, the disadvantages of this.

1.1. The most determining feature of mentality observed is pragmatism. This pragmatism is observed when they speak about the fact that here everything can be bought at any time, when they emphasize the priority of the purposive rationality, from organizing the use of time, through the purposefulness applied in the forming of friendships, to the meticulous specialization of jobs; when the role of speed is noted in information processing and in the whole way of life, from the spread of the disposable object to McDonalds and similar chains, and other homogenizing mechanisms; when they mention that in America nothing is important that has primarily symbolic-cultural significance compared to what determines everyday practice, etc. All this, according to observers, means a mentality that indubitably ensures a much smoother and quieter life, but allows much less scope for sensitive creativity than the prevailing mentality of the sending society.

1.2. Another often-mentioned characteristic feature of the mentality is the “keep smiling” attitude, which is related to the – also very often mentioned – very negative valuing of failures, with the attitude that you must not admit failure even in yourself (far from recounting, complaining about it to others, which would show weakness), you must emphasize the successfulness in everything, the individual must stand his own in a harsh, competitive situation, rely only on himself (as the figure of the lonely western hero who is the model of this mentality). All this can positively affect the individual: the smile gives him energy, the feeling of “all right”, the permanent emphasizing of successes gives self-assurance. At the same time, the price of the competitive harshness, the ability to win, according to the judgement of the observers, is a sort of mental dullness, the continuous pressure to prove how good you are, and the definitiveness of the failure of those who cannot stand up from defeat. (Here one can’t expect help, if somebody falls, everybody turns away from him, it is regarded as natural that he himself must struggle to his feet. The agelessness in connection with competition – also observed by many: old-age is a sort of failure and so it should be hidden).

This is again the source of the successful preservation of physical condition and at the same time the psychological burdens of fear of failure. If the inhumanity of the competition is on one side of the balance, on the other, we must not leave out the observation that competition is regarded at the same time not merely as a struggle, as in Europe, but, so to say, as a parlour game, a challenge to the individual, and so the less help is balanced by the more general spirit of “fair play”.

1.3. The concomitant of both, competition and pragmatism is hard work – accompanied by the necessary ability to manage, to sell oneself. The individual himself must estimate his ability, and if his efforts are justified, he can count on recognition. Since success is the highest measure of values, its achievement as a reward is a very great mobilizing force, it can bring a strong pressure to perform. Here it should be noted that several observers perceive that despite certain phenomena, referring to the absence of the authority principle (for example the teacher has no right automatically in face of the student, but must prove his right), the principle of

authority, however prevails here too, only here it does not follow primarily from the role, but depends on the degree of successes achieved. In relation to this mentality, observers call attention to the great degree of productiveness and democratism it ensures; on the other hand successfulness can become entirely independent from the real value of performance.

1.4. Another striking element of the mentality is also connected with the competitive view, the atomized state of society, the emphasis on “privacy”. The point is not merely that the individual can count only on himself, but that his “private sphere” is a value which must be ensured by as many means as possible (because of this, the school report is secret, it is the child’s and its parents’ business only; because of this, the result of the examination at university is signalled only by a code number; because of this, it is important that the individual has a connection with his bank, his drugstore, etc. by a channel as closed as possible. (The privacy ensured in most fields of life on the one hand increases the refinement in forms of contact; on the other hand it atomizes the individual excessively, it not only protects, but also isolates him.

Thus East Europeans, confronted with the American way of life, value primarily the practicality, the successfulness of this culture, and at the same, however, they record losses in respect to the ideal of humanity and cultural wealth.

2. There are more negative value judgements in the area of “cultural values” although an effort is often made to try to understand, from within, the peculiarities of American culture, differing so much from their sending culture.

2.1. The tastelessness of American culture – proclaimed by many – is almost a truism. However, many bring this into connection with the other fundamental peculiarity of this culture, the absence of the past. European culture, and its norms of taste have been built up over centuries, in many fields, from human relations to the arts, and this cannot be compared with a “present time” culture (and that culture necessarily is a “present” one, where two-generations-ago is already enveloped in the fog of history). Moreover, the value judgement of European people has a great importance precisely from the point of view of individualization: the individualization of a culture may not be effective if it is not built on the antecedents of this culture. For this the American model, in its present form, seems to be a much less attractive model for individualization for the European cultures.

2.2. The very high degree of technology – in the spirit of the prevailing pragmatism – can be made totally independent from the cultural expectations (a very good example for this is that children learn to write and read by computer, but the rate of functional illiteracy is rising steadily), the possession of (cultural) education in the European sense is not required even from intellectuals: apart from a narrow elite intelligentsia, only effective practice in the respective special field is required from the intellectual. (A part of the higher culture – for example classical music is attainable practically only for a well-to-do middle-class, so it is not only a matter of culture, but also of financial welfare). The higher culture is less built into the structure of society: as it was remarked by an observer: while in Europe the cities settled around the universities, in America the campus left the cities, it withdrew into its own world.

2.3. However, a striking peculiarity – but one that follows logically from the above – is the cult of health which is general in society. Here illness carries within itself the dangers of falling behind in competition, and where the costs of the health service are so high, great importance is attached to body culture and sports.

Most of the cultural peculiarities – with the exception of the physical culture – are experienced by Europeans as an absence, they tolerate its peculiarities, but – as we have mentioned above – they do not recognize them in this regard as a model of individualization for themselves.

3. The peculiarities of the forms of establishing and maintaining contacts follow from both the mentality and the cultural customs.

3.1. In interpersonal communication – in keeping with the general pragmatism – agreement or (business) information has a great role. The seemingly informal, purposeless conversations are preparations for important decisions; they touch the surface of different standpoints, the establishment of possible alliances. In American conversations – whether official or informal – the establishment of consensus has a very important value: much time and energy is spent on this, but this is an indispensable necessity in that – in many respects pluralist – society. However, Europeans require a fairly long period of learning to adapt to the fact that information in America serves an entirely different purpose and has a different meaning, and so has a totally other construction than in the sending society.

3.2. The other – often-mentioned – feature of human relations is the absence of their stability. This comes from the peculiarity of the pragmatic life-style, it shapes the world of objects around itself into a disposable, substitutable, changeable one, so the individual can change his place in the world without serious shocks, even surmounting great distances, depending on where he finds the most favourable conditions for himself. These frequent moves, in turn, make the long-lasting embedding of the individual impossible: it is a general phenomenon that the individual quickly establishes, and also quickly terminates relationships. (Relations in the neighbourhood are very important for practical reasons, but due to the moves, naturally these are also re-established.) Families are also fragile, there are many divorces, children stay now here, now there – provisionality is one of the most important characteristics of the contacts. An East European sometimes values this as easiness, but more often he qualifies it (based on his culture, emphasizing the more communal values) as superficiality, as the absence of roots.

After all, the forms of establishing contacts are not among the attractive components of the American model of individualization either; they cannot explain the impact, the appeal (for Europeans, too) of that model.

But it is natural that many regard the key to the more advanced level of individualization to be precisely that mood, as the society brings up the individuals to itself.

4.1. There is a striking difference in the spirit of the primary school. As it was pointed out by an observer, the European school constantly directs the attention of the child to what he/she does not know but the American points out what he/she already knows – suggesting in this way that everybody is outstanding in something, thereby establishing a lasting self-esteem. This is also helped by the more direct contact and interaction between the school and family (the initiation of the parents, the role of practical household tasks among the school subjects). The requirements increase suddenly on the higher levels, but by then the child has already developed the ability to accept responsibility for him/herself.

4.2. Socialization in the family is also directed towards this. Money has a very direct role, which begins at birth: in the wide middle strata a bank account for the child is already opened at its birth (to accumulate the costs of its future education) and the child itself learns as early as possible to sell and to take a job, to be able by the time he becomes eighteen, to support himself independently, away from his family (it is generally a custom).

4.3. The best universities are places of elite education in more than one sense: the relations established here can be converted later into a political or business career, and the university years are the schools of power too, from the point of view that it is the student who – because of the money he has to pay for higher tuition – can make demands of the – providing – teacher (while, of course, very hard work is demanded of him, and he has to meet this).

Thus the East European recognizes in the field of socialization primarily those features which –contrary to his own bureaucratic-centralized model of society – prepare individuals for a life of competition. This model of socialization generally attracts or at least interests him (besides the mentioning of the absence of ardour in the family); it is most likely that the impact of the pattern of individualization is realized primarily, to a great extent, by the adaptation of the elements of this model.

5. The political model is viewed by observers as a factor which has a very different weight, and plays a totally different role in everyday life from the model to which they are accustomed, but they often mention with recognition the sober pragmatism which prevails also in this field.

5.1. They state that high politics or membership of a party are far less important in America from the point of view of the individual, but the local politics where the decisions influencing people's lives are made, have a very great importance. (The strong appreciation of this expressed again its lack in the sending society, the underdevelopment of civil society there.)

5.2. They stressed the integrating force, the ideology of the "land of opportunity" as the essence of the strong American patriotism, which is strengthened by continuous immigration: some speak about this with recognition, others with criticism of the hypocrisy which maintains this attitude. Many observers' attention is extremely sensitive to the question of "racial conflicts" (stressed by the counterpropaganda of recent decades). For some, the positive discrimination of the minorities is striking, but many emphasize that this is often largely formal (for example good care is taken to have coloured people among the positive heroes of films, but it is at least as important that they remain in their own social medium, we do not very often meet with mixed race couples in these films).

5.3. The intensity of American mass information is also a truism among European observers: the absence or the schematized, prejudiced nature of knowledge of the world beyond America. This obviously makes it more difficult for observers to identify with the recipient culture.

All these differences observed in American society are really peculiarities, specificities, but if we dismantle their formal contingency, we find there the generally valid tendencies too. The pragmatism, the success orientation, the isolation, as well as the fragmentation of the culture, emerging parallel with the development of mass culture, are phenomena which became characteristic in the society with the increase of individualization.

At the same time we must beware of over-generalizations. Although from a certain point of view this trend of individualization exists among the individual cultures, most of the phenomena cannot be interpreted at all as a linear growth or impoverishment.

We can enumerate at length phenomena which in the Hungarian society are in the "middle" between the USA, Hungary and Transylvania from the point of view of individualization, are the most common, or on the contrary

the most rare. Yet we can draw some cautious conclusions about the peculiarities of the meeting with a society having a higher degree of individualization.

## SOME CONCLUSIONS

The meeting with a culture having a higher degree of individualization always produces mixed feelings. On the one hand people are attracted by many features (greater opportunities ensured by the prosperity, the strengthening of self-esteem, the higher degree of efficiency, the smoother organization of life) but on the other hand they dislike some peculiarities which they felt to be impoverishing (the increase of social differences, the coolness, isolation, the competition threatening the safety of personality, the community, the culture). Value systems collide, and the individual feels that if he gives up his previous value system, he will win from it but can lose, too.

What can be won by the changing the value system is not quite unambiguous. It seems to be clear that the higher degree of individuality, of individual freedom, autonomy also means the enrichment of the individual. At the same time, the more individualized world seems to be more homogenized, the individual in it more endangered from many points of view. In addition to this, the collision of the value system in the case examined has two sides: the traditionalist values of the pre-capitalist East European traditions collide with the value system of the developed bourgeois world (indeed it is more complex, since a Hungarian entering the American conditions can perceive the differences from his peculiarly European, his particularly East-European, or just from his particularly Hungarian point of view), but this is coloured by another sort of collision between the value systems too: the system of “collective” values, propagated in the state socialist system, which is mixed with the traditionalist values but which is different from them in many respects, also collides with the same bourgeois world.

(Nevertheless, this confrontation can be better understood now than previously. While in the ideology of state socialism the features of the traditional value systems were declared to be more primitive, and the “socialist” features to be more “progressive” than bourgeois ones, today it is clear that the East European development, together with the market economy-type modernization, is moving towards increased individualization.)

The individual can react in many ways to a meeting with a culture having a higher degree of individualization than his own culture. That variant of the responses which rejects the model of individualization is irrelevant for of our examination. But acceptance also takes many forms. a.) One response is when the individual gives up the different points of view of his sending culture and he resolves the ambivalence in favour of total acceptance. b.) Another, perhaps the most common, type of adaptation is when he does not adopt the whole of the other culture, but strives to adapt, to incorporate into his own practice only some parts of it. In this case, of course, the most important question is, which part of it? As reflected by the standpoints described above, in the case of American culture, the cultural or political model acts as such an example at a lower degree, and many people try to adapt, to incorporate into their own previous relations the key elements of the mentality (pragmatism, success orientation, strong competition, or the model of childhood socialization).

It can perhaps be said that in the case of a cultural shift generally these (or these among others) are the key elements through which successful adaptation takes place.

Probably cultural shift within a society, and hence individualization within the society (mentioned in the introduction), also proceeds primarily through this same process.

The adaptation can be regarded as effective from the moment when a transition occurs from one cultural model or value system to the other, when the key element of the world-view to be taken over is adopted.

6. Finally, it must also be mentioned that the process of individualization presented here is not predetermined. A third ("c") type of adoption (or the solution of the ambivalence) is possible in which the ultimate result is not the adoption of the other (in our case the more individualized) culture, but the creation of a new culture, or value system, synthesized from the values of the sending culture (or value system) and from those of the new culture (or value system). But the analysis of the possibilities of such a synthesis would greatly exceed the framework of this study.

Budapest, 1996

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Bakalian, A. P. (1992) *Armenian-Americans: from being to feeling American*. New Brunswick, Transaction Publ.
- Bauman, Z. (1990) Modernity and Ambivalence. In Featherstone, M. (ed.) (1990) *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globality and Modernity*. London: Sage.
- Beals, A. R. – Siegel, B. J. (1966) *Diversiveness and Social Conflict. An Anthropological Approach*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bíró, A. Z. (1994) *Adalékok a vándorló ember ikonográfiájához. Migrációs folyamatok a Székelyföldön 1985-1989* [On the iconography of the migrant. Migration processes in the Székely region 1985-1989]. Csíkszereda: Antropológiai Műhely.
- Bíró, A. Z. – Bodó, J. (1993) *Kizárási és bekebelezési technikák interetnikus kapcsolatokban* [Techniques of exclusion and inclusion in interethnic relations]. Csíkszereda: Antropológiai Műhely.
- Bíró, A. Z. – Gagyi, J. (1993) *Román-magyar interetnikus kapcsolatok Csíkszeredában. Az előzmények és a mai helyzet* [Romanian-Hungarian interethnic relations in Miercurea-Ciuc. The background and the present situation]. Csíkszereda: Antropológiai Műhely.
- Bourdieu, P. (1985) The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups. *Theory and Society* 14, 723–744.
- Citrin, J. – Reingold, B. – Green, D. P. (1990) American Identity and the Politics of Ethnic Change. *Journal of Politics*, 52, 1124–1154.
- Cohen, Y. (1974) *Man in Adaptation: The Cultural Present*. Chicago: Aldne.
- Daniel, N. (1975) *The Cultural Behavior. Problems in the Exchange of Ideas*. Edingburgh: University Press of Edinburgh.
- De Vos, G. – Romanucci-Ross, L. (eds.) (1975) *Ethnic Identity, Cultural Continuities and Change*. Palo Alto: Mayfield.
- Duncan, J. S. (ed.) (1982) *Housing and Identity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. New York: Holmes & Meier.
- Emmer, P. C. – Mörner, M. (eds) (1992) *European Expansion and Migration. Essays on the International Migration from Africa, Asia and Europe*. New York: Berg.

- Godelier, M. et al (1987) The Processes of Transition (Anthropological Case Studies). *International Social Science Journal* 114. 447–617.
- Hoppál, M. (1995) Etnikus jelképek egy amerikai magyar közösségben [Ethnic symbols in a Hungarian community in America]. In Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (eds.) (1995) *„Jelbeszéd az életünk”*. Budapest: Osiris-Századvég.
- Huttmann, E. D. (ed.) (1991) *Urban Housing Segregation of Minorities in Western Europe and the United States*. Durham – London: Duke University Press.
- Kiefer, C. W. (1974) *Changing Cultures, Changing Lives* (An Ethnographic Study of Three Generations of Japanese Americans). San Francisco – Washington – London: Jossey-Bass.
- Kosinski, L. – Prothero, L. M. (eds) (1975) *People on the Move. Studies on Internal Migration*. London: Methuen.
- Knepler, H. – Knepler, M. (1983) *Crossing Cultures, Readings for Composition*. New York: Macmillan.
- Leach, E. R. (1976) *Culture and Communication. The Logic by which Symbols Are Connected*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maldonado, L. – Moore, J. (eds) (1985) *New Immigrants and Old Minorities*. Bondy Hills – London – New Delhi: Sage.
- Palmer, H. (ed) (1977) *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism*. Toronto: Clark.
- Richmond, A. H. (1987) *Immigration and Ethnic Conflict*. London: Macmillan.
- Sík, E. (ed.) (1995) *Refugees and Migrants: Hungary at a Crossroads*. Budapest: Institute of Political Sciences.
- Thomas, E. – Znaniecki, F. (1927) *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. New York: Knopf.

In the “Eastern parts” of Europe, globalisation trends are inseparable from the phenomena of modernisation, individualisation, urbanisation and (re)capitalisation. The transition to democracy in 1989 accelerated these trends radically, although their roots are to be found earlier. The “present age” in a historical sense offers perfect material for studying these trends. Changes are analysed by taking cross-sections along the lines of value system and lifestyle (individualisation, urbanisation); development/underdevelopment (modernisation); transition to democracy (re-capitalisation); and global system/small nation (globalisation). As all these factors are present at the same time and equally determine people’s way of life in the region; all of these cross-section views are useful and necessary, and are only applicable as a whole to grasp real-life processes.

There are many studies in sociology, cultural anthropology and political science which examine these questions and the problems encountered with them. Our study looks at the changes in the modes of living – with the aim of revealing some signs of the above-mentioned changes in this area. The expressive features of the everyday use of objects and space are represented (literally, in the shape they take), and with an essential knowledge of history these forms of expression are rather well clearly distinguishable. The area of home use is one where we can find fine examples of individualisation (as homes are lived in by individuals who go through an upgrading of the individual in their value system, and through this in their home-shaping), as well as of modernisation (as household objects are forever changing, often showing an openness to all kinds of developments), and of the effects of urbanisation (as homes are primarily defined by their rural or urban environment).

Even the start of re-capitalisation in Hungary can be traced back to the economic reforms of the 1960s: to the so-called “reformed thinking” which stood in opposition to the dogmas then dominant in the socialist world and which urged many economists and social scientists to slowly, step-by-step say yes to a market economy and to modern democracy. This intellectual process, permeating the years from the 1960s to the 1980s, whereby some rudimentary elements of a market economy appeared in the system, was logically followed by the democratic transition (it could not have been foreseen in such a form; it was still a sharp turn).

The ideals of modernisation were already present in socialist ideology (pro-development and industrialisation), although let it be said that socialist ideology often excluded the Western success of modernism from its own world, treating it as an enemy. However, this value more or less gained a right of existence in the Hungary of the 1960s, and the intelligentsia’s adoption of an ideologically “detoxicated” version of the modernist ideologies and fashions prevalent in the West was tolerated. The transition to democracy intensified the conception that the countries of the former socialist bloc were less developed than those in the West, and that bridging the gap with a modernisation policy was what should be done, with the modernist values of progress and development in focus.

Individualisation in Hungary began in the late Middle Ages, like everywhere in Europe, but its dissemination and permeation of all aspects of life came much later compared to Western societies, because a civil society at first only developed in a rudimentary form. The first really large wave of individualisation was only detected at the end of the nineteenth century, but a wide-ranging individualisation that reached every segment of society, again, only began in the 1960s: this is the time when some influences which had become salient in the seventeenth century in the Netherlands or Britain were adopted en masse in Hungary. The socialist era, which

subordinated the individual to the powers of bureaucracy, did not help globalisation and mode of habitation in Hungary individualism come to full bloom. Instead, a distorted, “negative individualisation”, to use Elemér Hankiss’s expression, came about; one lacking the basic foundations of social (democratic) mechanisms intended to support the individual. The transition to democracy then accelerated individualisation processes.

Urbanisation in Hungary slowed severely after the early Middle Ages, reappearing again in the 1940s, when it took the form of an industrialisation of a mainly agricultural, rural society, and related artificial moves to transform the peasantry into a working class. As a result, some elements of urbanisation were already dominant in the socialist era, but real urbanisation (in a Western sense) with an urban public life only came into being after the transition to democracy.

Many components of globalisation started simmering in connection with the relaxation of travel restrictions from the 1960s. On the other hand, this is the only one of the listed phenomena which was truly only perceived after the demolition of the walls of the “socialist world system” (separated from the global world by the Iron Curtain) and the transition to democracy. For most Hungarians all these processes (individualisation, urbanisation, modernisation, capitalisation and globalisation) together represented an attraction to the Western world; therefore, these trends as a whole may be considered as a Westernisation in the eastern parts of Europe.

In our study, we mainly examined middle-class homes (which often serve as models for other classes). We visited 300 homes and aimed at revealing symbolic representations of space and objects using the cultural anthropological method of participant observation, as well as content analysis of the images in 30 volumes of a Hungarian home decoration magazine; something we repeated, as a control, with images in other Hungarian, Austrian–German and Anglo-Saxon magazines (see Kapitány and Kapitány 2000a). The scope of this study<sup>1</sup> does not allow us to elaborate on questions of methodology in object and spatial symbolism, but will only map out the components of our approach, especially those used in the analysis of the symbolic representation of objects.

One of the possible ways to analyse object symbolism is to break objects down to their components, and regard these parts as semiotic units: the object’s colour, shape, size, material, status, etc. All of the units can acquire symbolic meaning when comparing them to other colours, shapes and materials, and it is possible to assemble the symbolic content of each object from these meanings. Another approach is that of using symbol dictionaries: to collect the symbolic meanings of an object from cultural histories and presume that these meanings have influenced the present symbolic meaning of the given object. However – and this might be a third approach – some objects are so much interwoven with a certain culture (Chinese lanterns, American baseball caps, African tamtams, etc.) that they become a symbol of that culture, and placed in a different environment they symbolise the effects of that culture.

Many researchers also emphasise – this is a fourth approach – that objects only take on a meaning through usage, and thus it is a fully valid approach to conclude the meaning of an object from its use; from the symbolic differences in object use. In addition, it is often noted that no object stands alone, but rather takes its meaning from being a member of a system (of relations); thus the meaning can only be derived from observing a system

---

<sup>1</sup> The study was prepared under research project OTKA T 038287 at the Research Institute of Sociology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

of objects as a whole. When we analyse objects for their symbolic meaning, all the above aspects serve as our guide, one after the other. But is there such a thing as a unified analysis by which all these variables may be grasped? The most useful aid seems to be the concept of memes introduced by Dawkins, if we understand a meme to be the smallest unit of cultural change, which at the same time reflects the essence of the changes to the system as a whole. (When hamburgers arrived in Eastern Europe, this was a meme, as it was a single new unit comparable to other units on the scene of fast food items; a meme, as it clearly carried a symbolic meaning – as a symbol of America, similar to the baseball cap – and a meme also because it is general at the same time as being an element of a change affecting the whole system of symbols; that is, the emergence of American culture in Eastern Europe.)

In determining the meanings of such a symbolic change-unit, one must consider that a symbol is essentially open to many meanings (and can be expanded again and again with additional meanings), unlike concepts, which have a single meaning, and allegory, which may also be reduced to a single meaning from the closely related images they create metaphorically or metonymically.

The symbolic meanings of objects (as memes) may be:

- **Worldview signs:** these can signal a relationship with nature (for example, how important natural materials are in home decoration); an image of society (objects and object arrangements reflecting hierarchies, the relation between the public and the private in the home, etc.); an image of the human being (the size of objects in proportion to humans, whether they are “human-friendly” or technological in style); the relationship between the sacred and profane (the presence or absence of sacred objects and their role); and so on.
- **Value system signs:** these may indicate the degree of need for intimacy or community (such as the separation of rooms); the importance of individuality (by creating conditions for individual body care, or serving individual moods); orientation to the past or future (signs of respect for different generations – the elderly/children – in the home); etc.
- **Identity signals:** objects with religious, national, political meaning, and those reflecting differences in gender, profession or an urban–provincial divide.
- **The signs of ideals, goals, desires, ambitions:** for example, copying or using the objects of a higher socialstatus group.
- **Status symbols (hierarchical signs projected to the outside world).<sup>2</sup>**
- **Domestic hierarchy signals** (spaces for men and women, adults and children, and the differences in respect or special meaning objects related to these roles receive).
- **Symbols of an era** (current trends appearing in objects in the home).
- **Memorabilia from the past** (the personal past as well as items from collective historical memories).

---

<sup>2</sup> This is not only in reference to status as expressed by individual objects. Douglas and Isherwood (1979) proposed an interesting example, or metalayer, of status symbolism: they presented homes on a social scale of hierarchy, with each degree denoting a period in the history of human civilisation. At the bottom of the hierarchy we have homes organised around food (farming-based culture); at the intermediate level we have industrial objects, and the top level contains information economy and services. Putting this into Maslow’s motivation pyramid model, it is only possible to move towards satisfying advanced needs having satisfied more basic needs, and this rule is valid in the world of objects as well. See, for example, Van Vliet in Arias (1993). Of course, individual objects not only reflect the steps taken in the development of civilisation, but, as Norbert Elias’ expressive analysis shows (1982), they also bring about these steps.

- Style signs (originally era or worldview symbols, but in a pluralistic, individualised society these may coincide with signs of chosen styles).
- Signs expressing the individual.
- Signs denoting other cultures, subcultures, compared to the one prevalent in the home (e.g. a bar within the home or a Japanese rock garden in the garden).

A single object (or object group) may contain all of these meanings, and thus, in interpreting the symbolic meaning of objects, any number of readings is possible.<sup>3</sup> The symbol's interpreters are only, and exactly then, at fault – and with this we hope to be true to the spirit of Peirce – if they rule out an interpretation other than their own from the start. The opposite should be the case: interpreting a symbol is all the more effective if as many different readings as possible are piled onto one another. The positivist, Marxist, Freudian, Jungian, Weberian, Parsonian, etc. interpretations are not in conflict with one another, but by each of them grasping a different aspect of the symbol, together they cover (or attempt to cover) the true range of meanings in a given symbol, in an open, never-to-be-closed series.<sup>4</sup>

In consideration of the above, let us now examine some symbolic phenomena (seen as memes) which have become dominant in the object use and mode of habitation in Hungarian society over the past decade.

- In every culture, elements from many other cultures co-exist and go through a synthesis. With globalisation at the end of the twentieth century, the everyday experience of multiculturalism received more emphasis than before; something that came to Hungary alongside the political changes. On the one hand, international capital started flowing into the country in unforeseen quantities, which culturally meant that US and EU cultures made their appearance felt on a larger scale – at the level of objects.
- Changes of a symbolic importance can also always be measured by how large a chunk of the life-world they affect. Important changes are always accompanied by:

a.) An increase in the quantity of elements related to the new occurrence, and

b.) these can be noted in many different areas of life.

c.) One of the most certain signs of their recognition is when they acquire special importance; an overtone which supercedes their direct function.

---

<sup>3</sup> In order to avoid misunderstandings and the distortions caused by projection, cultural analysts often only consider interpretations given by the users of objects as authentic. This method is logical, but does not acknowledge the fact that symbolisation is often an unconscious, inexplicable process; thus the interpretation given by object users is also just one of the possible readings. Many times the outside observer is able to extract important layers of the symbolic meanings of culture, of which people who live inside that culture are not consciously aware. The risks of misinterpretation and projection can be reduced (as ethno-methodology discovered decades ago) if it is always clearly indicated whose reading of a symbol we are describing.

<sup>4</sup> The need for an “authentic” interpretation is a blueprint of a view on culture/society which is built on opposition (it is not by chance that the differences in interpretation appear in the context of colonisation). Symbols are regarded as the basic unit of cultures in this discourse, and it is felt that equality between the cultures may only be retained if each culture “holds the reins” and interprets its own symbols itself. This is indeed crucial: people coming from small-scale cultures often experience the power differences of “who is the interpreter” in inter-cultural relations. In a global society with a democratic frame of mind, there is a never-ending chain of constantly emerging new variations in culture, including new subcultures, and symbols are not only the dividing-line but also the common denominator of cultures.

Thus, in the analysis of changes, we must always concentrate on noting (a) which are the reoccurring elements (b) whether their parallels can be found in other areas of life, and (c) which phenomena induce surprising emotional-impulsive reactions (desire, strong rejection)?

With these criteria in mind, the spread of American culture in Hungary can be seen as one of the most marked signs of multiculturalism (and globalisation). On the one hand, a large number of objects which were not necessarily American-made, but carried distinct traits of US culture, came to Hungary (the earlier popular jeans were followed by baseball caps, baseball bats, cowboy hats, American toys and American-style balloons and other party accessories, Disney cartoon characters in toys and as decorations on T-shirts and other objects, Halloween masks, pictures of American landscapes and cities and of NBA basketball stars, etc.). At the same time, American culture entered into many areas of life, through comestibles: McDonald's, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Dunkin' Donuts, etc. (fast-food chains and the food offered on their menus); in the appearance of celebrations which had no tradition in Hungary (Valentine's Day, Halloween, Challenge Day, American birthday-celebration customs and songs, as well as holiday practices for Christmas); in sports (baseball, golf and darts becoming fashionable, an upgrading of basketball and ice-hockey); in the media and cinema (an unbeatable (unceasing/unstoppable?) flood of American movies and the spread of American show-hosting styles and news reporting methods in television); in architecture: (the appearance and popularity of a light-structured, quick-to-build architectural style); in home decoration (the well-known Anglo-Saxon home structuring – lower level: living room, kitchen; upper level: bedrooms and children's rooms<sup>5</sup> – and the appearance of the "American kitchen").<sup>6</sup> Finally, all these changes were met with strong approbation or negative feelings: jeans and Coca-Cola were already symbolic of the "free world" in the 1960s, but all the above symbols are also symbolic of economic development and prosperity, and were widespread among social groups for whom "the American way of life" represented the means of an upward movement. On the other hand, globalisation in the form of Americanisation has created its own opposition in Hungary: many sought to find refuge in national culture or focus on European values against "cultural imperialism", the undermining of local cultural traditions or the shallowness of a "Wild Western" culture. This manifested itself in the choice of objects as well (folklore objects, symbols of national history), which in many cases went hand-in-hand with an anti-American (and Western European) criticism of modernism associated with "green" movements. Americanisation thus appears to be one of the most striking, important tendencies of the present years, both in its direct effects and in the reactions to it, and the strong emotional response for or against – as we said earlier – may be a prime indicator of the symbolic importance of a certain trend.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> This mode of habitation is a general model in bourgeois Europe, and not specific to America. In Hungary there were attempts to adopt this model, based on the English example, in the early twentieth century, but without success. However, at the end of the twentieth century – notwithstanding the effects of American cinema – it was widely used in urban green-belt areas (cf. American suburbs) and villages.

<sup>6</sup> Further evidence that this is a reoccurring, truly symbolic phenomenon is that it has become popular to create a single open-plan kitchen and dining area even in smaller homes, such as the flats in high-rise concrete blocks, where this is not easy to achieve.

<sup>7</sup> Globalisation and Europeanisation are parallel processes (both of them produce a wider frame for the life-world than the nation state), but these two notions are not the same. Moreover, from one point of view, Europeanisation may be a form of protection for European societies against the globalisation process. But for many people of Eastern Europe the two notions are synonymous: both of them mean the integration of Eastern countries into the rich "First World" (or a process by which the rich and strong centres expand and intensify their influence on the poorer and weaker side of the Continent). The two most suggestive symbolic phenomena of these processes are, on the one hand, the appearance of MNCs in the everyday life of Eastern Europe and, on the other hand, the free movement of travellers, students and employees in Europe or globally.

Multiculturalism stems from other sources as well. The transition to democracy opened the gate not only to the inflow of multinational capital, but also to migration: the numbers of people coming to reside in or move through Hungary became a good deal larger, and included people from poor countries. Eastern Europeans met people and products from Asian and African cultures for the first time, and one of the primary signs of multiculturalism in the 1990s was the appearance of objects from these cultures in home interiors and exteriors. In addition to growing numbers of street vendors, shops opened one after the other, offering exotic objects, with ranges commonly found in many homes. The Far Eastern effect was as strong in Hungary – as other places in the world – as the impact of the US.<sup>8</sup> In addition to a boom in objects from these cultures (figurines, incense burners, rice paper lamps, fans, sunshades, clothing, rattan furniture, rush-woven blinds, etc.), the impact of Asian cultures was manifested in clothing (Indian and batik clothes in women’s wear); in homes and gardens (futons, tatami-style beds and sleeping fashions, and in some places the use of moveable dividers); “Japanese gardens” (even in the Zen-style (rocks in sand, pebbles) or tiny lakes and bridges; the widespread feng shui concept); in gastronomy (Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese and Indian restaurants, which started to become very fashionable in the mid 1990s, after years of a slow and difficult start, and elements of their cuisine appearing in Hungarian cooking, which is otherwise known to be conservative, including the spread of teahouses and the related lifestyle; in health (acupuncture, acu-pressure, iris diagnostics, moxa, among other now legalised, imported Far Eastern healing methods); in games (the appearance of some ancient Far Eastern games, such as go and mah-jong, or fashionable toys like the tamagotchi); in sports (judo was popular from the 1960s, karate from the 1980s, and after the political transition other martial arts and meditation-based body exercises became popular, from jujutsu, taekwondo, Thai boxing and kung fu, to tai chi) (and this was when yoga, which had also been around for a long time, went from being the hobby of a select few to becoming practiced by a much wider section of the population). Kurosawa brought the breakthrough in the world of cinema in the 1980s, and nowadays Asian directors have become popular among middle-class people; in popular culture kung-fu films gained a popularity level comparable to American action movies, and the Japanese anime and manga found their place next to Disney-type cartoons and American comics. Last, but not least, the philosophical–religious impact of Asian culture was important: as opposed to earlier sporadic interest, some Buddhist organisations became established in Hungary, the Buddhist College opened its doors, a Buddhist stupa was built, and Krishna adherents set up a temple and village with many devotees joining. Orientalisation, like Americanisation, has gone beyond the level of simple effect, and its importance is indicated by the many positive and negative feelings surrounding it: many people draw on the worldview conveyed by Eastern philosophy (this is apparent not only in New Age circles but also in endeavours to fertilise traditional Christianity with the knowledge of Eastern Philosophy, or those who try to underpin “Hungarianness” or Hungarian cultural traditions by turning towards Eastern and Asian roots). Conversely, there is a camp opposing the Eastern trends: some people protest against “Eastern mysticism” in the name of European rationality, while still others produce periodic xenophobic reactions against the settlement of groups from the Far East, for example in response to a growing Chinese colony and Chinese markets.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> The spread of the Asian model offered an alternative to Euro-American civilisation, at the same time as being an indication of an attraction to Far Eastern economic development, and in some cases a symbol of the coalescence of tradition and modernity.

<sup>9</sup> There are famous symbolic legends accompanying these trends: for example, in the early nineties it was widely believed that when Hong Kong rejoined China, capital from Hong Kong would escape to Hungary and buy up Csepel Island, the largest island in the Budapest section of the Danube, in order to establish a New Hong Kong as some sort of Chinese enclave.

The spread of both American and Asian elements in the culture of object use was substantial, and could be seen as a general trend; thus it is of a symbolic nature.<sup>10</sup> The examples from the Far East point to another interesting aspect of symbolic change. The inflow of Far Eastern influences continued throughout the 1990s; however, postmodern trends in the 1990s contained other effects as well (e.g. a kind of neo-Baroque or neo-Romanticism gaining conceptual strength), which transposed home interiors into artistically crowded spaces, in line with the tastes of these stylistic periods: thus the objects described earlier had to fit in with an environment of Baroque fullness and Romantic excessiveness. This was not to depart from the style, as the Eastern culture of objects also shows similar tendencies. Another change of styles around the turn of the millennium preferred minimal art in revolt against the earlier era, and a neo-modern wave seems to be taking shape as well. It is very interesting to note the way these trends adjust permanently present effects, which, however, are independent of them, one being the effects of the Far East. Many neo-modern and minimal art-style homes still show traces of Far Eastern influence, only in these cases another part of the original model (Japanese Zen minimalism) comes to the fore. Thus, through this examination of the symbolic representation of objects, it is possible to illustrate how object-symbols can represent both one (national) culture and a whole group of concepts surrounding it, in the milieu of a recipient culture, and at the same time accommodate the symbolism of the cultural mainstream of the time.

We shall present the process of transition in sets of value, which we label individualisation, through a series of symbolic changes of a very different nature. Although this process is also underpinned by globalisation, whose dominant cultures build on a very individualistic set of values, individualisation as a continuous process is not actually derived from globalisation (the most we can say is that both trends can be associated with the spread of the market economy). In the development of European home decoration, individualisation may be spotted not only in phenomena depicting an increased acknowledgement of the individual (e.g. furniture designed for comfort, lighting to serve individual needs, pictures highlighting the importance of the individual, collections that express personal taste, etc.), but also in the appearance of some particular types of rooms.<sup>11</sup> The appearance of bedrooms shows the importance of a spatial separation of intimacy, and the bathroom (as well as other places for body care) highlights the individual through “pampering” the body, while children’s rooms show a higher value placed on once poorly esteemed childhood (considering that in an individualistic value system the child is the one with the potential to become anything, because – contrary to systems of estates or castes – making something of opportunities solely depends on individual potential). Looking at the history of Europe in the modern age, one can see that these types of room always emerge and win popularity on a wider scale in societies where individualistic values gain ground, and the deeper the roots these values put down, the more popular their emergence. In the most developed regions of Western Europe, these new room-types appear in the Renaissance–Baroque era; in Hungary the first signs are dated around the eighteenth–nineteenth century, but they only start to spread in the twentieth century and become the general standard around the 1960s. The change was gradual: first the new types of rooms appeared, but at that time the set of values that they symbolised was not yet dominant. For example in Hungary, at this stage in the 1960s, bathrooms were built en masse, but they were not often used just for body care – something not at all positive in a traditional value system – but for washing clothes, or the bathtub was used for storage. To the same end, children’s rooms

---

<sup>10</sup> It is also worth noting that external influences came to Hungary in waves: first, influences from the immediate vicinity of the Alps (Austria and Germany), which were strong in architecture and home design in the 1970s (at that time it was usual to see Alpine housing structures even on the plains); then Scandinavian forms became fashionable, and in the 1990s a strong impact from Mediterranean culture was seen next to American and Oriental influences.

<sup>11</sup> And with that, a division of sacred and profane was replaced by a dichotomy of public and private.

were created, but these were often only occupied by the child at the age of 18, as a new status symbol of the traditional coming-of-age. This could be seen in Hungary in the 1960s. Later, when the spread of the symbol was accompanied by the spread of the value system symbolised – mainly by the next generation – these rooms were used according to their proper domestic functions and symbolic meaning.<sup>12</sup>

The degree of individualisation rises as the value system gains further ground. Tracking down these symbolic changes, we find that the tendencies had forked and burgeoned by the 1990s. People began to put several washbasins in the bathrooms (to allow individuals to wash separately), and the number of bathrooms mushroomed in well-to-do households (to emphasise the individual aspect of body care).<sup>13</sup> In some places, parents and children, or men and women, each had their own bathrooms, and often there was a separate bathroom for guests (so that guests and hosts need not bathe in the same tub or shower); at the time when we carried out our survey, it was not rare to find a house with three or four bathrooms and toilets.

The separation of the individual is linked with an individualistic value system in our next type of room, the children's room. They began to grow in number, to the extent that while in the 1970s and 1980s it was natural for children to share a bedroom up to a certain age, by the 1990s they were separated according to gender, and soon after a "room of their own for everybody" became the principle. (At the end of the 1990s we saw a home in which the children's separate bedrooms opened into a "children's common room", where the children, otherwise in the seclusion of their own individual worlds, could meet.)

The bathroom and the children's room, two types of room with a parallel history, gained in importance (and by this the value system they represent reached more people as well) and this was not only seen in their rise in number but also in their higher prestige. In middle-class homes of the early twentieth century, the children's room was grouped among lesser rooms such as the kitchen or the maid's room. Later its status came closer to that of the parents' bedroom, but it was long standard practice for the parents' rooms – father's study, boudoir, salon – to be "off limits" to children, except on festive occasions. Today, it is more usual for children to post on their door the sign: "No Entry". At the same time, the bathroom was transformed from lavatory and service room to a room to be showcased for guests – in our opinion parallel to the further rise of individuality and the importance of the personal body.<sup>14</sup>

The next trend in the cultural changes of home decoration to discuss is modernisation. Globalisation is inseparable from modernisation, as it is based on the ideology of "progress" itself, which people in favour of globalisation identify with the birth of ever larger economic-cultural units as well. On the one hand, in every

---

<sup>12</sup> A step-by-step change can be detected in other aspects of individualisation as well. With the spread of the individualistic value system, and greater attention paid to the comfort of the individual, there is an increased emphasis, for example, on lighting and larger windows. This is something that occurred in Hungary, too, but in many places older people tended to draw the curtains half-way on the larger windows, right to about where the smaller window frame used to end, so as to restore the earlier situation; one more in line with their set of values and habits.

<sup>13</sup> Along with the spread of other facilities for body care: saunas, fitness rooms and swimming pools.

<sup>14</sup> The process of individualisation may not only upgrade but also downgrade symbols. For example, television first appeared as a sacred object in homes, regarded by many as fulfilling the oracular function of the church pulpit. In this respect, it was placed in the "sacred corners" of traditional homes and, similarly to other items in the "sacred corner", decorated with lace, flowers, etc. Later, it became more of an everyday article, then proliferated until there were more and more television sets in households, and in their accommodation to the individual, they appeared in less prestigious places as well (kitchen, workshop–garage, etc.), only to then completely lose prestige; or, more precisely, to be ranked hierarchically: from the humble original model to certain advanced and expensive types of sets such as those with giant screens and complete home theatre systems, the latter taking over the basic television's earlier role as a cult object.

era, objects from the most prominent technological industries represent modernisation in the home. On the other hand – as the ideology of modernisation has become one with the advent of industrial rationalisation and an accompanying cult of the sciences – modernisation always appears in eras when rationality, analysis of components and artificial constructions are preferred to mysticism, organic growth and naturalness.

In the former sense, modernisation is a permanent phenomenon, but in the latter appears in cycles, always followed by a counter-movement. In the twentieth century, periods of modernisation in the 1920s and 1950s were both followed by waves of anti-modernist counter movements, and postmodernism at the end of the millennium came with the desire to question the entire “modern age” of industrial society. In the first meaning of modernisation, all periods leave a mark through symbols of “modernisation” among household objects, and later these objects become items of nostalgia for coming generations and symbols of the past. In this sense, the modernisation symbols of the present include PCs, mobile phones and consumer electronics, not to mention the continuous increase in the level of automation of household tasks, which has been ongoing for decades. A striking development in this respect is that the appearance of new objects is accompanied by important changes in home use. One of these changes is the creation of the computer room (or corner). This is often an intimate space (individualisation is inseparable from modernisation in this sense, too), where people carry out their most personal affairs (and, as analysis of chat rooms shows, sometimes even descend into their unconscious to bring alternative personalities to life). It is a completely new phenomenon: as opposed to the earlier separation of the public and private spheres, the two are now both combined (the appearance of radio and television first relaxed the division of public and private, but later this process became two-sided). The reason why high-speed vehicles were able to become symbols of modernism is partly that they make the core values of modernism – continuous movement and acceleration – an experience people can have in their lives. Radio and television guarantee the results of development to the individual by giving an image of it in the home, while the computer even gives the opportunity for the individual to be present – if only virtually – right in the middle of the latest (hi-tech) developments.

In the second meaning of modernisation, the decades of postmodernism substantially cooled the euphoric reception of progress in technology, which was so apparent in the peak periods of modernism. People in the 1950s and 1960s revered plastics – the strong symbol created by progress and science – and discarded old wooden furniture to replace it with plastic alternatives, swapped separate silk stockings for nylon tights, moved into concrete blocks of flats and dreamed of enjoying the taste of grilled chicken in synthetic capsules in the twenty-first century; in the 1980s and 1990s they began to flee from “unhealthy” concrete housing blocks, got rid of “100 per cent” synthetic clothing in favour of 100 per cent cotton (or linen, or silk), returned to “naturally human” wood, stone, and even the “healthy” clay and straw building materials,<sup>15</sup> and deemed anything containing artificial materials a health hazard (from food colouring and additives to pesticides found in food). All this was accompanied by a change in styles: after the constructivism of the Bauhaus style in the 1920s and 1930s, Op-Art and other abstract geometrical styles borrowed from art permeated all kinds of object environments. The reaction in the 1980s and 1990s was to label geometric forms as boring and inhuman, and give way to a renaissance in organic forms. This process seemed irreversible. However, since the turn of the millennium, we perceive the balance as having shifted in the other direction again (or at least towards some kind of a synthesis). People still think “green” , but at the same time concrete and metals are gaining in popularity, and organic forms are again overturned by geometrical artificiality. Interestingly, these changes can

---

<sup>15</sup> Construction from clay and straw was the main symbol of poverty and ill-health in modernist architectural literature.

be traced through the smallest steps: the latest fashion trends still highlight natural materials but in (neo)modern arrangements; metals are mixed in with wooden furniture; experiments are run to discover a “healthy” use of concrete; and so forth, until metals and plastics regain their full territory. Symbolic change is always accompanied by ideologies which stress “practical” considerations (of course this means practical in terms of current trends), and it is notable that objects which are in line with the current fashion are always more “elegant” and have higher prestige than others. In the 1960s everything that did not follow modernist trends was seen as decrepit and outdated, while in the 1990s modern geometric forms were classified as reflecting poverty, and proletarian.<sup>16</sup> In the present, elegance is associated again with modernism (at least for some people).

The following changes are related to the political transition to democracy. In Eastern Europe this is closely related to globalisation, as the elimination of the isolated world behind the Iron Curtain meant for Eastern Europeans joining the “world”. The political change altered the world of objects as well. The dictatorship of so-called socialism bruised all forms of a democratic public forum. The way these trends were manifested in the modes of habitation is that people became suspicious and withdrew into their homes, and the nexus between home and public spaces, represented by the small benches in front of village houses (and the custom of “promenading”), as well as the lively little spaces between houses in cities including street-facing balconies, lost their function in these societies. Balconies served as storage space for old furniture, and were notably out of human use. One of the most marked signs of the transition to democracy in the world of objects was that balconies regained their original use in many places. At the same time, front gardens appeared again in green-belt areas, and people began to compete in their aesthetic cultivation of them, in contrast to socialist times when the pavement in front of private homes was considered “state” property, a no-man’s-land, and was usually unkept. These symbolic changes – clearly related to a reappraisal of private property, an easing of political fears, and the revitalisation of civil society – give passer-bys the “message” that the residents feel it important to join community life and connect their own “image” to the network of communication.

These changes are undoubtedly positive. However, although the majority of changes that occurred with the political transformation were positive ones, like those mentioned above, there are a few examples of symbolic expressions of phenomena which we describe as negative. Cultural democratisation was one of the important, legitimate areas of the socialist system. One of the benefits was that inexpensive cultural items, which were widely available, appeared in home interiors, and as cultural advancement was an alternative channel to a political career for social mobility, the symbols of culture in a narrow sense more or less became status symbols as well. Books are an example, and were quite often found in homes in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Wall-to-wall bookshelves or even whole libraries were necessities in the intellectual household, but sometimes also appeared in the home of the manual worker, for whom they were a symbol of social ambition. Around the time of the political turnabout, there were a lot of important changes in this area. Cultural goods became more expensive, and although reading habits did not decline as much as McLuhan’s galaxy shift had predicted, the role of books as possessions began to wane. On the one hand, following worldwide tendencies, the time spent on reading radically diminished among the youngest age group. On the other hand, and this is the more spectacular factor of symbolic change, the same people who had been boasting of their mini-libraries a few decades earlier now started discarding their books (or banishing them to less prestigious spaces in the home –

---

<sup>16</sup> We have seen a house where the “useless” tower was removed in the name of modernisation in the 1960s, then rebuilt in the 1990s to “upgrade” the boring flat-top building.

like hallways, storage rooms and basements), claiming that “books only collect dust”. This turn (the devaluation of books and the intellectual culture they symbolise)<sup>17</sup> went hand-in-hand with a change in elites. With the birth of a new economic elite at the top of the social hierarchy which regards the cultural sphere as relatively lower class, subordinate to the power of money, this group’s role as a dictator of trends has ensured the spread of their view among all the other social strata.<sup>18</sup>

One of the most important parts of symbolic change in the modes of habitation in Hungary in the past decade is not directly related to any of the above described trends; it is simply a global phenomenon. Naturally, it is probably connected to the triumph of television and computer culture: with the development of images and visual culture. Visual properties have been very much upgraded compared to other aspects of habitation, such as comfort or homeliness, sometimes even at the latter qualities’ expense. For one thing, a panorama has become important. Green-belt areas, hilltops, and top floors are not the most cultivated spaces in every era (although the geographical “upper” bears some resemblance to the social “upper”). In traditional middle-class tenements, the first and second floors were the most elegant and the upper storeys and attics were less preferred: though not to forget that these were the maids’ quarters in private mansions. Difficulties in transportation and other discomforts were stressed about living on a hill in certain periods. However, when visual effects gain primary importance, the more delightful the view the more valuable it becomes; thus anything “upper” clearly has appeal.

Visual properties are also upgraded in the sense that most rooms in the home are converted to “open home areas” that may be shown to guests, and they perform the function of being aesthetically pleasing as a whole. We have already pointed out this kind of change in our discussion of bathrooms, but all other types of rooms have undergone a similar change in the recent past. Open kitchens, and even open bedrooms, are created, with the focus on beauty and a showcase quality every time. As a result of a strengthening of middle-class values, the earlier peasant kitchen, where tools were visibly stored so that they were functionally positioned to be at hand, and bedrooms where pillows were neatly piled up on beds, changed: kitchen-located tools were removed from sight to cupboards and drawers, and bedware into trunks. Nowadays the change is again in the opposite direction: tools in the kitchen are again “showcased” – but now not for their functionality but for their aesthetic value – and decorative duvets and pillows are again made visible. The main characteristic of an open home is that it addresses the outside world – or, using Riesman’s phrase, it is “externally controlled” by the need of people in society to expose themselves. And it is the built form of a culture that is increasingly looking to express itself in the language of pictures.

Finally, let us look at another trend of the symbolic representations of changes seen in the mode of habitation; one that had taken place centuries earlier in the West, but was only part of the accelerated movements of the recent past in Hungary. Urbanisation<sup>19</sup> in general has to a great extent reduced differences between city and

---

<sup>17</sup> This phenomenon illustrates that significant symbolic changes are very often also manifested in the replacement of earlier applied ideologies of practicality.

<sup>18</sup> This is suggested by models of lifestyles, which Eastern Europe revisiting capitalism must face: American films in cinemas and on television do not often show people reading, especially not influential characters.

<sup>19</sup> A connection with globalisation is easily perceived in this case as well: the globalised world is definitely an urban world.

village, and has made home interiors and the array of objects in cities and villages resemble each other more and more.<sup>20</sup> We offer

three examples to illustrate the attempts of the younger generations to become urbanised, which are perhaps slightly less obvious than the spread of television, mobile phones or computers. One symbol of urbanisation is the change seen in the culture of gardening and flower care in villages. On the one hand, there has been an increase in decorative gardens (often despised in the traditional village mentality for being of no use) alongside, or for younger people sometimes replacing, the traditional vegetable garden, and its produce for home consumption. The younger generation clearly associates this change with urbanisation. On the other hand, the types of flower grown in gardens has varied. The flower garden and flowers in window boxes are often symbols of village life for townfolk, but the type of flower is truly significant. In villages, the appearance of some “city” flowers is indeed an indication of urbanisation. (This has always been the case; it is also how the urban, middle-class tulip became a village flower.) The term “city flower” usually conveys the meaning of a species of exotic origin, clearly because these arrive in the village via the capital and other cities.<sup>21</sup> It is well worth looking at the range of flowers planted in village gardens today from this point of view (hortensia, yucca, rhododendron, haemanthus, datura, oleander, hibiscus, etc.).

Similarly, dog-owning practices have altered. While the typical village dog had been of a traditional shepherd breed and mixed-breed watchdog, nowadays it is more and more frequent to see pedigree dogs of the current fashion. The breed that is fashionable changes constantly: at the time of our research it was the husky and the bobtail was slowly being overtaken by the golden retriever. It is most common to keep several dogs: one well-fed pedigree dog (as an urbanisation symbol) and one mixed-breed to tend to the “jobs” around the house. Similarly, hospitality has undergone changes symbolic of urbanisation as well. While village hospitality earlier meant home-made wine, raspberry drink, and home-baked cakes, the current trend is to offer drinks purchased in the shops, Coca-Cola and cakes from the bakery to guests from the city, on the assumption that “that is what they are used to”, “that is the urban way of things”.<sup>22</sup> (Often guests would prefer to see traditional village customs.) This example illustrates how the symbolic gestures of the urbanising village and the city nostalgic for village life pass each other by unnoticed: this movement in the opposite direction can be captured much more generally than the above example in the relationship between present-day Eastern European villages and cities. Villagers want to break away from the disadvantages of village life: they become urbanised and city-orientated symbolically, and attempt to eliminate the symbols of village tradition.<sup>23</sup>

In their yearning to escape from the burdens of city life, or in reaction to modernisation’s anti-human effects and globalisation’s crackdown on national culture, city-dwellers often feel nostalgic about the archaic way of life in the villages, which evokes a national cultural heritage. Many of the city intelligentsia move to villages – some buy a weekend home, others move out permanently – and while the car, telephone and computer allow

---

<sup>20</sup> This is naturally reflected by changes in home exteriors, too. In the 1960s the block-type house – often denounced by architects as rather awful – was popular; a style that even in its single-storey structure resembled the then modern cubicles of housing estates, which were symbols of urbanism at the time. This type of housing was often coupled with a raised entrance porch and stairs leading up to it (imitating the multi-storey feel of urban housing). Nowadays, two- or three-storey houses prevail in villages.

<sup>21</sup> On the plains, for a time pine trees gained ground as urban–city symbols

<sup>22</sup> In the 1960s, the rise in the popularity of coffee-drinking was a similar urbanisation symbol.

<sup>23</sup> In one case, someone demolished their home listed as a folk heritage building in a single night, so as not to be forced into an object environment which for this person symbolised a past backwardness they wished to escape from.

them to stay in touch with the modern city world, they attempt to resuscitate lifestyles which for them are symbolic of the rural, “green” and traditional way of life. Their homes have interiors recalling craftsmanship, with bread-baking in a wood-fuelled oven, jam-making, the creation of a household-sustaining vegetable garden, the revitalisation of traditional, peasant fruit-growing practices, using old cooking recipes, adopting local traditional culture, such as farming practices, architecture native to the area, livestock-keeping, banning television and other hi-tech equipment from the home, etc. These forms are not, of course, the original ways of the peasantry (for no matter how “authentic” their revival is, they are the products of a middle-class attitude, and thus following these goals will usually not end in the original means for which they were intended)<sup>24</sup> but will create a new form of lifestyle, which more than anything resembles the social role in transmitting culture of the one-time lesser nobility. It is the twenty-first century version of that practice. Nevertheless, in villages where these aspirations are present, it is typical of the incoming intelligentsia to make efforts to recreate “village traditions”, which often clash with the natives’ equally strong determination to become urbanised. The result – for the two lifestyles to become an organic whole – is still a future image, but will inevitably come about in the course of a long-term coexistence, just as it is difficult to predict whether globalisation will continue uninterruptedly, or whether counter-movements of a yet unforeseeable nature will push twenty-first century humanity in a very different direction in terms of variations of lifestyle.

The phenomena here discussed represent only a fraction of the symbolic changes perceived in Hungary’s home culture, but should be sufficient to illustrate how changes in the symbolic representations of objects as units of culture (or memes) help us to describe and interpret the multi-faceted changes in this society.

## REFERENCES

- Altman, I. – Werner, C. (eds.) (1985) *Home Environments: Human Behaviour and Environment. Vol. 8.* New York: Plenum Press.
- Arias, E. G. (ed.) (1993) *The Meaning and Use of Houses: international perspectives, approaches and their applications. Ethnoscapes: Current Challenges in the Environmental Social Sciences, Vol. 7.* Avebury: Aldershot.
- Baudrillard, J. (1984) *Le systeme des objets*, Paris: Gallimard.
- Bernard, Y. – Bonney, M. – Giuliani, M. V. (1993) The Interior Use of Home: Behaviour Principles Across and Within European Cultures. In *Arias 1993*, pp. 81–101.
- Conran, T. (1976) *The House Book*. London: Mitchel Beazley.
- Cooper, C. (1972) *The House as Symbol of Self*. Berkeley: Institute for Urban and Regional Development.
- Dawkins, R. (1977) *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Douglas, M. (1975) *Implicit Meanings*. London – Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Douglas, M. – Isherwood, B. (1979) *The World of Goods (Towards an Anthropology of Consumption)*. London: Allen Lane – Penguin.

---

<sup>24</sup> These elements of lifestyle are often not adopted along the lines of their original practicality by the above-mentioned social groups, but through aesthetic choices.

- Elias, N. (1982) *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation I–II*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag.
- Flusser, V. (1999) *The Shape of Things: a Philosophy of Design*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1995) Changing World-Views in Hungary 1945–1980. In *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 29/2 Fall, pp. 33–43.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1998) Systemwechsel und Symbolwechsel in Ungarn, 1989–1996. In Pribersky, A. – Unfried, B. (eds) (1998) *Symbole und Rituale des Politischen: Ost- und Westeuropa im Vergleich*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 159–174.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2000a) *Beszélő házak* [Talking Houses]. Budapest: Kossuth.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2000b) *Látható és láthatatlan világok az ezredfordulón* [Visible and Invisible Worlds]. Budapest: Új Mandátum.
- Kubler, G. (1962) *The Shape of Time*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Peirce, C. H. S. (1932) *Collected Papers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rapoport, A. (1982) *The Meaning of the Built Environment. A Nonverbal Communication Approach*. Beverly Hills: SAGE.
- Taylor, L. (ed.) (1990) *Housing. Symbol, Structure, Site*. New York: Cooper Hewitt Museum – Rizzoli.
- Turner V. (1987) *The Forest of Symbols*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

## TO THE PRAGMATIC OF SYMBOLS

### THE INTERIORIZATION OF SOCIAL EVENTS AND FACTS BY MEANS OF SYMBOLS

---

As cultural anthropologists we have dealt for decades with the analysis of symbols. We analyze symbolic events of various thematic territories such as objects (Kapitány and Kapitány 2005), human motivation (Kapitány and Kapitány 2003), value systems (Kapitány and Kapitány 1995), adaptive behaviours and so on. We try to summarize those experiences to find a common denominator from this work, from the view-point of *socio-semiotics*. To do so, we must start with the evidence. What is the role of symbols in the society? What kinds of symbolization processes are typical? How do those symbols become important bricks in the construction of society?

Claude Levi Strauss (1973), one of the great representatives of both cultural anthropology and semiotics built on Roman Jakobson's (1972) notion of "binary opposition", and its importance in the development of a symbolic universe of society. We need, however, to return to the beginning of this process. The first stage is the emergence of first notions, first ideas. In the social sciences the concept "symbol" is generally considered a derived category, supposing the primary status of notional-conceptual thinking. Social scientists argue that ideas are the primary elements of human thinking, and that symbols are born through the linking of two or more different ideas. We, however, agree with those who begin from the other side, arguing that the primary state is one of holistic observation of the world. Those ideas or notions with one or more definable meanings are secondary to symbols, which retain the spirit of holism. Humans need to use ideas and concepts, the basis of revelation "A equals A". It is also the basis of our instrumental behavior, and the point of departure for analytic thinking. In Nature, however, the truth of "A equals A" is inseparable from the truth of the opposing thesis: "A does not equal A."<sup>1</sup> Symbols and the symbolic thought behind them, retain the simultaneous truth of both theses. With the help of symbols, people can permanently correct the one-sidedness of notional, conceptual thinking.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, the first step is the appearance of notions, emerging from the chaos of the world, as observed by a human being. These first notions are still very confused; like the "symbols", which come later, they contain a lot of associations. A rock means a hard thing, a being, such as man himself, a concrete place in the landscape, a place where lightning struck, the source of a spring (hence with some characteristics of a mother) and so on. Today we say that this rock can be a symbol for these different things, but the original state is precisely the sum (a holistic unit) of these different meanings. The tightening of the circle of associations, the disambiguation of meaning, is a *result of the development* of notional thinking from this multitude of meanings to well-defined and precise notions, these last abstracted from experiences connected with very real, yet

---

<sup>1</sup> Every moving thing equals itself, but it doesn't equal its existence-form in the previous or next minute. (This has been a well-known experience and theoretical problem, from Zenon's *aporia* up to present-day quantum theory).

<sup>2</sup> Every metaphor corrects the thesis that A equals A. If a lover says: "you are to my thoughts as food is to life", he says the following: 1. The soul and the body are different things. The soul is not body, the body is not soul. The soul is soul, the body is body. A equals A. Amorous desire and hunger are different entities, and so are the instinct for self-preservation and the instinct for race preservation. A equals A, and A doesn't equal B. 2. But: there is also a common denominator to them. There is an equality between A and B. I am not a cannibal, but somehow you are also food to me. And if A (A') equals B (although we said earlier that A doesn't equal B), it means A (A') doesn't (totally) equal A.

different rocks. If one of our ancestors used a tiger's tooth as a knife, that knife meant the power of a tiger, the power of the man's arm that wielded it, the sharpness of blade, the person, who used it, and so on. Later, different knives – those made of bone, stone, wood or iron, etc. as well as those belonging to different people – all united in the notion "knife", and this abstract lost the associative circle of special individualized knives. The rock, and the knife – things, that earlier were inseparable from their surroundings and from the activities carried out with them – became abstract words, that is to say, they became "ideas" of rocks and knives. And from this point we can speak about distinct words, ideas, notions and, on the other side, of symbols. A word, idea, or notion means the abstract essence of a thing, being, or object; "A equals A", means the thing, in and of itself. We build up a world of words, ideas, and concepts, in which everything has a distinct meaning.

We have another world, too: the world of symbols. In the world of symbols "A equals A" and, at the same time, "A not only equals A, but equals something else – and/or anything else". Hence symbols have a double character. On one hand the symbolic meanings of words keep the earlier broad association-circle of things; on the other hand we make newer and newer symbols by connecting different things, events, or phenomena; by connecting different words, ideas, or notions; and by spiritualizing the distinct borders between them. In this way we permanently correct the one-sidedness of our notional thinking.

Up to this point we have noted trivialities. Nevertheless, to do so has been necessary, since, in our view, the distinction between notional and symbolical thinking constitutes the basis of the socio-semiotic functioning of symbols. In what follows, we first examine how society appears in the world of notional/ideational thinking; second, we explain the role of symbols.

In the process of ideation we give names to everything; something is called "tree", something is called "war", something is called "power", something is called "idea". One of them is more concrete, another is abstract, but all of them are distinct elements of our thinking. But these names, words, and ideas live their own life in society. We have relations with them. For example, we cut down a tree. (This seems to be a very concrete thing to do, but it also presumes a moment of abstraction; we must know that a sequence of movements and the relation between the properties of our axe and the material of the tree will result in the felling of the tree. The notion "cut down a tree" is a result of a serious mental operation, namely of ideation. But the essence is, that we have a *relation* – in fact multiple relations – with the tree). We have similar relations to more abstract things, too. We hate (or sometimes we like) "war" (although war is not a tangible thing or person. Ancient man needed to personalize war as Ares or Mars, but today, as a result of a long process of abstract thinking, we can imagine "war" as a complex thing without the need of personalizing it). We can think about, and discuss "ideas", although the idea of "idea" is a very abstract thing. Our relation to different things and to their ideas are very similar: we operate with them as with distinct things.

The next step is very important from the point of view of symbolization. While notions and ideas become elements of relations (as with real things, and as representatives of these real things in the mind), a lot of associations are connected to them. These associations are based on sign similarities and contrarities (to other things), on connections with the surroundings, and on the emotions they produced; they include the past of the respective thing, its functions, its possibilities, and so on. In other words, our mind distinguishes things in separation from their environs; we consider them as distinct things. After this indispensable step, the next one restores the original holistic unit of the perceived world with the help of a wide and always open circle of

associations. This very wide circle of associations is condensed in symbols, in the symbolic meanings of the given things.

During the last step, the symbols, in turn, become *elements* for thinking as did notions. But differing from these last, symbols retain their circle of association and openness of meanings. We now examine this process with the help of three examples.

## I. THE RISE OF INDIVIDUALISM

A very important change in European history occurred, when the dominant value system of the Middle Ages found itself face to face with individualistic value system of a modern bourgeois society. The main values of the former are centered in tradition and custom, the domination of community, – or as Tönnies (1972) calls it, “*Gemeinschaft*” – over individual; the mandate to “be like others”, and so on. The main values of the bourgeois system were antagonistic to those of the former; here one fills the pressure to: “be different, be individual, make your own way”, with a high priority put on liberty and personal freedom. Although the welfare of community remains an important value, the individual holds pride of place in such an individualistic value system. In the so-called “traditional value system” the community is primary and the person is derived from his or her community. In the individualistic value system the community – which Tönnies calls as “*Gesellschaft*” – is considered primarily as a collection of individuals. The battle (compromise, mixing) between these two value systems continued seven to eight centuries of European history, with individualism emerging victorious having won “souls” (the its mood and way of life). The victory occurred first in the economy, then in art, first in private life, then in public – the signs of the new value system appeared as social customs and rules of conduct (Elias 1982); and at the same time in ethics and religion (Weber 1972), etc.

These changes in different aspects of life had a common denominator: the central role of individuality. The different experiences of these changes are condensed in the modern notion of the “individual”. Members of modern society became “individuals”. In their relations to each other, to institutions, to the economy, etc. These relations with their many associations to the notion of “individual”, crystallize in the symbol “individualism”<sup>3</sup> as the symbol of modern man.<sup>4</sup> Like any symbol, this one in turn became an other *element* (but only an element) in our world-view. When we analyze modern society, individualism is scrutinized and weighed. We consider the modern man a *complex* of his or her individualism, altruism, rationalism, irrationalism, and so on. When we analyze someone, his or her individualism is assessed as a *part* of his or her personality. No person can be an “individualist” (and nothing else); individualism is only one element of the compound, whether one is speaking of a society, or a person. (Take housing as an example: the increasing number of bathrooms in today’s flats, is one index of the rise of the individualistic value system).

---

<sup>3</sup> We find this „individualism” (and the contradiction of two value systems) at every moment of life. For example, at the table. If the lady of the house follows the rules of the traditional value system and serves you soup, it would be offensive if you were to add more salt to it. It is an offence because, in the traditional value system, all women want to be “like the others”, to conform to the norms of a community. To say that her soup has too much or too little salt is to say that her cooking was not adequate, not “normal”. In the individualistic value system the base is not the “norm”, but the individual. In the latter system it is okay to eat the soup as you like it, according to your personal taste. As it is to your personal taste. So the appearance of condiments on the table, and more forms of self-service (fondue, raquelet, etc.) are the results of the spread of the individualistic value system.

<sup>4</sup> The „binary oppositions” of Levi Strauss become important *at this moment*, at the birth of a symbolic meaning. Most symbols are born in tandem with their opposite. Individualism became a symbol of modern man as compared to a former sense of community. When we use the word „individualism” in a pejorative sense, it takes on an antipathy to “altruism”. Still, the word “individualism” has many other possibilities for comparison besides its opposite.

To sum up: 1. Symbolization begins with the appearance of new and separate phenomena; (in such areas as value-systems it is the appearance of new behaviors in different fields of life). 2. Then comes the process of “ideation”, when people recognize a common denominator among the new phenomena (in our case, the notion of “individualism”). 3. The next step is the “fertilization” of the new notion by a crowd of associations (as when the “individualism” enters the “Lebenswelt” and assumes different forms). 4. During the process of symbolization these associations condense into a symbol; (in our example: when we start to call modern man “individualistic”, it is a *result* of a condensation process). 5. Finally the symbols become elements of different structures (in our case, individualism becomes an element of society, of personality, of housing, and so on in this manner).

### ADAPTIVE BEHAVIORS

Let us take another example. Adaptability is a very important part of being human, enabling us to meet a multitude of different challenges: the dangers of nature, the tyranny of power, family conflict in our family, etc. First we learn how to protect ourselves against the storm, against a powerful landlord or against the machinations of our relatives. Second we recognize the common denominator of these very different behaviors to be adaptation. We create the notion and the abstract idea of “adaptation”. Third we fill this category with a lot of concrete experiences: successful escapes, sly tricks, successful violence or polite behavior, carefully weighing alternatives, and so on. These experiences are very concrete – escape from a storm, tricking a tyrant, settling a family dispute. But fourth, we link these different experiences in the sole notion of “adaptation”, and transform the latter into a symbol, which includes all of these concrete experiences as associations. (There are many distinct experiences in our memory, but we link them together with metaphors, metonymies, synecdoche, personalization and so on, and as we said earlier, precisely this is the difference between the distinct categories of notional thinking and the opened nature of the symbolic thought. If notional thinking is a telescope, which enhances the useful essence of a thing, the symbol is a sphere, a ball, an orb, which offers innumerable routes from its skin to the centre). As we link our different experiences of adaptation, we can combine them. This means that the experience acquired in public life will be useable within the family; the adaptation which was successful at home, can be used for defense against the dangers of nature, and so on. Lastly, in this way the different modes, techniques and sources of adaptation become elements of social life, of personality, and so on.<sup>5</sup> As we combine them, these special experiences become applicable to the most varied territories of life. This is the role of symbolization in the process of adaptation: to make the notions open, polysemic and combinable. Here is the basis of the exceptional flexibility of the human being.

### THE POWER OF ADVERTISING SYMBOLS: THE CASE OF COCA COLA

Our third example maybe more *tangible* than the previous two were. Value systems, and adaptation mechanisms are rather abstract, theoretical categories to which the functioning of simpler symbols is very similar. Our third example is the well-known bottle of Coca Cola.<sup>6</sup> The first two steps involve the enhancement of Coca Cola. It has a special form, different from the shape of other bottles, and we learn to link this form to a special brand, and to the special taste of a special drink. We taste some cola, we see the unique bottle of Coca

---

<sup>5</sup> We don't have enough space here to enter into details, we have, however, written a monograph in which we consider different types, modes and sources of adaptation as elements of human adaptive behaviour (Kapitány and Kapitány 2007).

<sup>6</sup> We analyze this symbolic object more circumstantially in another essay of this book: („Did the Gods Go Crazy?”)

Cola at different places in the world, then we create the “idea” of Coca Cola; after the process of ideation we know, what it means. Third, Coca Cola “conquers” the world. The advertising suggests a special life-style, gives it a special sense (or a bunch of different senses). We learn where we can or cannot find Coca Cola. Fourthly, Coca Cola becomes a symbol. A symbol of what? It depends on the character and circumstances of the community that creates and/or uses the symbol. For residents of formerly communist countries, for example Coca Cola was a symbol of the West, the “free world”, or the United States; a symbol of a world not behind the Iron Curtain. For critics of modern capitalism it can symbolize “consumer society”; for a fundamentalist it may symbolize the world of Evil; for a young man, who drank a lot of cola during childhood, it can symbolize happy years; for a dentist, it is one of the well-known dangers to teeth. Lastly, the symbol becomes an element of our visual language. If we watch a performance of a young Hungarian or Russian group from the fifties or early sixties, and somebody holds up a bottle of Coca Cola, it might mean, “this man is a fan of the west”. Now, that the Iron Curtain has been destroyed, and the “multi-nationals” and western European and American firms have over run Eastern Europe, Coca Cola has become an element in the stock of symbols of power (the power of money, the power of capital). Hence we find Coca Cola’s emblem everywhere, not just in restaurants or stores, but in school corridors (sometimes taking the place of Lenin-portraits), on the notice boards of some churches, and even at an office of the Socialist Party (formerly the Communist Party), the whole show-window of which was covered with Coca Cola advertisement. Coca Cola has become a visual “word”, a part of our visual statements, a simple, (symbolic) element of our “visual speech”.

## CONCLUSIONS

Now we will try to summarize the main functions of symbolization in society. Semiotically speaking, one of its main functions is to correct the one-sidedness of other sign-systems, the system of distinct notions and ideas. The social functions of symbols are endless. Through symbols we can direct, guide and govern others. Symbols are very open in meaning, and have many connections to the other elements of the world; thus a directed symbol can create a whole circle of association, and the whole world of things connected with this symbol will move in that direction. The first theoreticians of the workers’ movement symbolized the relationship of capitalist society as a battle (of classes), and millions of workers and intellectuals followed this symbolic model for one and a half centuries. Newton and Leibniz worked out a world-view of monadic, individualistic units, and both the natural sciences and the social sciences have built on this symbolic doctrine for centuries. Symbols determine the direction of politics, the economy, science and the entire lives of people; they dominate our everyday thinking. The symbolic doctrine of freedom preserves capitalist society (the free market, free enterprise, free movement of labor, etc.) Symbols are the instruments of different ruling groups and different ruling interests, and lengthy books have been written about how symbolic power is felt in medicine, the judiciary, the penal system, and more Foucault 1955, 1972, 1975). But symbols can also play an opposite role; they can also be instruments of revolution and innovation. The symbol “freedom” is not a weapon only for representing the interests of the bourgeoisie. The anti-capitalist workers use this symbol, arguing that the freedom of a worker is not the same as the freedom of a capitalist; the freedom to sleep under a bridge is not the same for a homeless person as it is for a bored millionaire. To create a new symbol includes the possibility of changing existing relations, to revolutionize the world. We see how impressionism (as a new way of painting) revolutionized visual culture, how the music of The Beatles revolutionized the culture of generations, how computerization has revolutionized our whole life. You might reply: but these changes are merely technological. Indeed, these changes do mean technical innovation, but they also have symbolic meaning,

which endows with extra importance and influence. Symbols do not have just a revolutionary (or conservative) function. Sometimes they can be integrative, as instruments of peace. When Sir Walter Scott wrote novels about lovers, who were representative of clashing social groups, he was urging society to give up religious and national rancor (Scottish and English); in this way he built up the symbolic base of the (united) nationhood of the United Kingdom. Stanley Kramer, the director of the “The Defiant Ones” (a famous film of the fifties) inspired a new way of thinking about the relationship between races in the United States, through the symbol of handcuffs, which fastened a white man and a black man together.

We could go on listing the functions of symbols in society, but we think that the most one is the final result of the symbolization process outlined above. As we have mentioned, symbols eventually turn into elements of the everyday development and structure of society, and elements of the development and structure of individual personalities. Because symbols condense and include a crowd of associations, we can obtain very different experiences through them, and it is precisely by means of symbols that history – and experiences of history – can survive into the present.<sup>7</sup>

Budapest-Helsinki, 2009

## REFERENCES

- Bourdieu, P. – Passeron, J. C. (1970) *La Reproduction*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit.
- Bourdieu, P. (1970) L'excellence scolaire et les valeurs du système d'enseignement français. *Annales*, jan-fevr.
- Bourdieu, P. (1972) Le capital symbolique, In: Bourdieu, P: *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, Genf: Droz.
- Elias, N. (1982) *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation I-II*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp
- Foucault, M. (1955) *Maladie mentale et psychologie – Naissance de la clinique*. Quadrige: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Foucault, M. (1972) *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1975) *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Jakobson, R. (1972) *Hang – Jel – Vers*. Budapest: Gondolat.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1993) *Rejtjelek*. Budapest: Szoroban/Interart.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1995) *Rejtjelek 2*. Budapest: Kossuth.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2005) *Tárgyak szimbolikája*. Budapest: Új Mandátum.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2007) *Túlélési stratégiák*. Budapest: Kossuth.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1973) *Anthropologie structurale deux*. Paris: Librairie Plon.
- Tönnies, F. (1972) *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Weber, M. (1934) *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr.

---

<sup>7</sup> In our monograph on human motivation, we present how the experiences of an age of human history are built into the personality serving as an element of an individual's motivational system (Kapitány–Kapitány 1993).

## DID THE GODS GO CRAZY?

### EMERGENCE AND SYMBOLS (A FEW LAWS IN THE SYMBOLISM OF OBJECTS)<sup>1</sup>

---

#### 1. SYMBOLS

Over the past few decades, our main concerns have been symbols, symbolic phenomena, and the nature of the process of symbolic representation (as an epistemological strategy).<sup>2</sup> We have recently begun preliminary work on a book in which we intend to summarize the results of a range of our empirical studies on symbolic representation. Since various schools of various social sciences use the notion of “symbol” in a range of different ways, it would be unwise in a short paper like the present one to attempt to give an exhaustive review of these (in the book we will venture to do so, however). But defining the term for our purposes here remains a task that we should not forgo.

Natural sciences are based on mathematics. They distill the world, in a useful way for human beings into numbers and numerical relations that represent the properties of the physical world (volumes, distances, durations, velocities, proportions, processes, etc.), but also of elements and phases of human actions. Although the basic units of mathematics seem to squeeze nature into arbitrary boxes constructed by humans, they nevertheless reflect nature insofar as human beings have been primarily concerned – particularly over the past few hundred years of industrial society – with how they can take nature apart into distinct *units* that they can subsequently measure up, reproduce and then sell. The concept of a unit presupposes the number, the “1” (“unit” derives from the Latin *unus*), that which is identical to itself ( $1=1$ ,  $A=A$ ) and can be related to other units, added to or multiplied by them, etc. Grasping reality in terms of mathematics, breaking down wholes into units and analyzing quantifiable relations, seemed to be a sensible and promising approach in the social sciences as well (and indeed the social sciences throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have often been preoccupied with translating their subject matter into natural science). But the problems in the field of social reality (sooner, than in applied mathematics) surfaced after a short time. This happened because living systems (and in particular second-tier living systems – that is, societies) are inherently at odds with the axiom of  $A=A$ . The incessant movement that is an essential characteristic of living systems comprises not only motions in space and time, and cannot be fully made sense of as a function of increase and decrease, but *living systems and their constituents are also unstable in terms of their very identity*. In any one given moment, it is impossible to say if one particular constituent of such a system is functioning as an autonomous unit or as part of the system; it is also impossible to say, among other things, to what extent the constituent’s behavior is determined by its present, past or future (via the teleological aspects of its behavior). (Natural sciences were

---

<sup>1</sup> The paper is a part of the OTKA T 038 287 research. (Research Institute of Sociology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences).

<sup>2</sup> On symbolism of homes and objects, see Kapitány and Kapitány 1989, 2000b, 2002a; on national symbols and associations in everyday life, see: Kapitány and Kapitány 1999, 2002b; on changing world views, changing symbols, see: Kapitány and Kapitány 1996, 1998a, 2000a; on symbolism of value systems, see: Kapitány and Kapitány 1983, 1995a, ; on modern mythologies, see: Kapitány and Kapitány 2001; on the symbols of power and status, see: Kapitány and Kapitány 1989, 1995; on the symbolism of political election campaigns, see: Kapitány and Kapitány 1990c, 1994, 1998b, 2003; on the symbolic expression of motivations, see: Kapitány and Kapitány 1993; on methodology of symbol studies, see: Kapitány and Kapitány 1995b, 2002b.

plagued by problems of similar nature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which lends credence to the forecast that the age when social sciences took their cues from natural science will be replaced by other times in which social sciences could be the catalysts of natural sciences.) As a result, it seems that  $A=A$  mathematics is not the appropriate approach through which living systems, including society, can be best understood. Instead, in dealing with such systems we must deploy another sign system, one which rests on a unit characterized by the *simultaneous validity* of  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$ . What we call symbols are precisely such units.<sup>3</sup>

The term, symbol is used in linguistics to signify the units that human beings use to represent things. Words (and to some extent meaningful sounds as well) are symbols insofar as they “*mean*” something (and, according to Peirce’s definition of the symbol, meanings are not immediately available but are prompted by arbitrary signs or sets of signs). But words are also symbols because they *concurrently refer to a particular phenomenon and a group (a class) of similar phenomena* (to use the pet example of linguists, they mean “a table” as well as “Table”). As a result, linguistic signs remind one of the ambivalence of  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$  (because a concrete table, being a table, is identical to the abstract Table, and, at the same time, the two are different<sup>4</sup>, since this particular specimen does not contain all the possible variants that the general notion comprises)<sup>5</sup>. In this respect, words are symbols and, as symbols, they are tools *inherently qualified to express the non-mathematical relations characteristic of organisms and societies*. This feature of language naturally leads to the Platonic notion of “idea”; to the emergence of the problem of nominalism versus realism; to the ever recurring new versions of the antagonism of objectivity versus subjectivity; and to many other epistemological conundrums. But this feature of language also makes it possible for language and its individual constituents to express “objective reality” as well as the subjectivities (and also communities as subjectivities) that happen to contemplate that reality, and to correlate signs and things in a manner that *the signs are able to track the transformations taking place in any living thing*. When words are signs refer to a thing, they do it in a way that allows them, preserving their essential content, to reflect yet unrealized future variants of the thing – the word “table” as uttered by the first ancient table-maker can still be understood without difficulty when it refers to the most extravagant creation of a contemporary furniture designer. We can still use it to refer to things thousands of years apart because that ancient table is at the same time identical to and different from the designer table in the symbolic unity of the concept.  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$ .

But words are only the point of departure for symbolic representation. What we usually call “symbols” are layered on top of words or “primary symbols”. Whenever we use a thing (a mental concept, an object, a living being, a human product, a sign – or, more precisely, the mental concept of an object, human product, or living

---

<sup>3</sup> It should be stressed that what is at stake here is not contradictory approaches, one represented by mathematics and the other by social sciences and the arts. In fact, the advances made by mathematics and natural sciences in the 20<sup>th</sup> century seem to call for the abandoning of traditional categories. The opposition we outline here concerns *two ways of making sense of the world, two strategies of representation* – one of which is rooted in the identity relation of  $A=A$ , and is the *starting point* of mathematics and natural sciences, and the other, which is premised on the simultaneous validity of  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$ , is that of the arts. Our thesis is that the latter is also the best starting point for the social sciences.

<sup>4</sup> The same holds for the general Table: it is identical with the particular tables inasmuch as they are its variants; and it is different from particular variants since it ignores their particularities.

<sup>5</sup> Hockett and Asher’s (1964) interesting hypothesis derives human language from the innovation that made it possible for our ancestors to use signs in a dual function: unlike most signs used by animals, they had to express danger and attraction at the same time. For example, large animals were at the same time a source of danger, and, as they were potential prey, a source of attraction as well. In this view, language, and eventually *homo sapiens*, emerged out of this intersection of antagonistic impulses. It does not matter if (a) the conceptual ambivalence precedes and in fact makes possible the hunt for animals of that man used to be prey; or (b) the necessity of such a hunt (because of an ice-age scarcity of food, for example) precedes and sparks language into being; or (c) the two are ultimately interdependent – the emerging sign system will be based on *ambivalence* down to its smallest units.

being as a sign) as “*standing for*” another, we resort to symbolic representation. Strictly speaking only such “secondary symbols” should be considered (and are in fact considered by semioticians) as symbols.

Claude Lévi-Strauss wrote “understanding means reducing one type of reality onto another” (1955). And, in fact natural scientists do nothing else than describe one kind of reality in terms of another (which is the world of the abstract concepts of mathematics in their case). The social sciences, (which always offered arguments of a softer, more vulnerable sort than did the “hard” sciences, grounded on mathematics), were relegated to a lower rank than natural sciences, precisely because they were unable to arrive at a consensus as to which “other type of reality” social phenomena could be reduced to. The types selected to function as the underlying reality were constantly replaced by other types: social phenomena have been explained in terms of different models in which society was conceived of as a “living organism”; as the manifestation of a set of laws inherent in the ideas entertained by the community; as a “fight for survival”; as a function of the mode of production and ownership relations; and so on. Countless underlying realities have been produced, and in spite of the occasional warnings of some scholars, only a few realized that these separate worlds to which social phenomena were reduced constituted but alternating types belonging to a “*wider category*” similar to mathematics as an all-embracing and uniform “other type of reality”: *the symbolic representation of reality*, the representation of reality through symbols.

In the case of “secondary” symbolic representation, a metaphoric and/or metonymic connection between a signifier and a signified is established. This connection functions to recreate the simultaneity of identity and difference between two or more entities that have already been designated through primary symbols. While primary symbolic representation – the system constituted by the terms of the language – serves to represent the identity/non-identity nature of that part of reality that is independent of human beings, in secondary symbolic representation it is the “secondary” system of “*social*” patterns (which is also based on simultaneous identity and non-identity), that finds a way to be expressed. Primary symbols (words) describe a world given to man but existing independently of him (a concept of a rock would be impossible without humans, but rocks exist independently of humans; only human beings can understand the word “rock”, but they can experience the word’s meaning without resorting to social concepts). Secondary symbols (symbols taken in the narrow sense of the word) involve social concepts. When Jesus calls the fisherman Simon “*petrus*”, a rock, he likens him to a rock and, by the same stroke, invests the rock with social significance, because symbols work both ways (let’s ignore the fact that Jesus was presumably not the first one to employ this metaphor). As it has often been observed, secondary symbols (and hereafter we will only mean that when we refer to symbols) only carry meanings for a smaller or larger community of human beings. They serve to connect those who can interpret them as symbols. (Once again, users of symbols we can see  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$  both with regard to ourselves and the symbol: on the one hand, Simon Peter is a “rock”<sup>6</sup> and is not a rock; and the rock is and is not Simon Peter; on the other hand, I am part of the community using and understanding this symbol and, as such, I am identical to myself as “a member of the Christian civilization”; but as an individual different from any other individual, I do not completely fit that identity.) To use a slightly old fashioned term, symbols represent the “*dialectic*” nature of the world, and in particular of social reality, in the simultaneity of identity and difference.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Quotation marks are often used to signify that a connection or a conceptual identity relation are meant *symbolically*.

<sup>7</sup> Since the term “*dialectics*” have been used in philosophical discourses and everyday speech in a number of different senses, it should be noted here that what we mean by it is the simultaneous validity of  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$  – that nature of things in which they are identical to themselves and different from themselves. This is not simply

As we saw in the case of primary symbols, symbols have an essential feature that is not available in mathematics but that is fundamental in the generation of secondary symbols: they are *always open to new interpretations*. What “hard” sciences usually blame “soft” sciences for, namely their “*subjectivity*”, is actually their “*virtue*”. This is what makes social sciences capable of describing living systems (and particularly their main subject: culture) as they are – caught up in the dialectics of subjectivity and objectivity, presence and absence, partness and wholeness. Arts do the same, but they “*apply*” symbols instead of analyzing them. The infinite openness of symbols, is the reason why Shakespeare can still mean something to us four hundred years after he wrote his plays. The ways in which he made sense of the connection between the signifiers and signifieds of his symbols are evidently different from our ways, but by establishing a symbolic link, he made it possible for any current or future reader of his plays to reinterpret that connection. When Richard III woos Lady Anne, the concrete action becomes the symbolic expression of the general term of “*verbalized cruelty*”, and, thus, it is turned into a blueprint, potentially containing future readings of similar experiences. No wonder Shakespeare’s play has been used to depict a range of things from the extremes of individualism, through fascism or Stalinism, to the manipulatory techniques of consumer society. And it can be taken for granted that the line of readings will continue as long as the symbol is fed by actual experience.<sup>8</sup>

With symbols ever open to new readings, if the social sciences would like to consider them as the basic component of their own scientific endeavors, they must first admit to the openness of symbols. Abandoning the Popperian (1972) dogma of refutability (“*falsification*”) as the criterion of scientificity is only one implication; the other is the acknowledgement of the fact that the propositions of the social sciences are always only readings. However, these readings are not less valid than the laws of natural science, but in fact, as an extra, *include subjectivity* compared to the natural sciences.<sup>9</sup> When progress is made in the natural sciences, earlier laws are refuted or their scope becomes more limited. In contrast, the propositions made by social scientists have limited relevance per se, and the scope of a well-chosen symbol will grow larger by the “*addition*” of new readings. Social Darwinist, Marxist, positivist, *Geisteswissenschaftlich*, structuralist, semiotical, game theoretical, systems theoretical or chaos theoretical (etc) readings of culture do not contradict one another, but, from the point of view of a symbol-based approach, they form aggregates. In fact, social scientists will get out of touch with the realities of the culture that they intend to describe if they come

---

“the dialectics of particular and general” (which is the case of first-tier symbols, i.e. words), but it accompanies every kind of motion, and is the cause of paradoxes one of which has been explored by Zeno in his famous aporia about the arrow that is here and not here at the same time. But the dialectics taken in the sense of  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$  can assume many forms: the dialectics between polar opposites, part and whole, dependence and independence, the synchronic and the diachronic, and so on. The constant flux of things, the unceasing transitions from one state to another is only part of the issue; the point is that all such properties are present in the thing *at the same time*. We argue that symbols, rather than numbers, are the most adequate means to represent this sort of dialectics. However, human beings need both of these complementary tools – symbols *and* numbers – in their efforts to cope with the world.

<sup>8</sup> So it is not only the case (as is the case with primary or linguistic signs) that the general, precisely by virtue of it being general, contains the potentialities of every particular, but also that (secondary) symbols, due to their potentially infinite range of meaning, encompass unrealized phenomena *in advance*. (In this view, nominalist and realist scholars were both right, only they did not speak about exactly the same thing.)

<sup>9</sup> This approach was always present in the social sciences and the fashion for hermeneutics made it only stronger. But, because the notions of “scientificity” remained anchored in the realm of the natural sciences, it has proved impossible to eliminate the feeling of inferiority of the social scientists who relied on the hermeneutical approach or some other “soft” method, and/or eliminate the epistemological skepticism and the validity deficit concerning arguments that were branded as subjectivist. Nor has it been possible to get rid of the aspiration to make the individual social sciences in some way congruous with the criteria of scientificity as defined in the field of natural sciences.

to believe that their reading is the *only* valid reading (or that it is more valid than others), if they shut themselves off from other readings, and the simultaneity of their relevance. Social theories characteristically select a limited number of meanings from the wide and open field of meanings attached to symbolic units created through the interaction of individuals, groups, and cultures, and by using these special meanings to explain a wide range of social facts. But soon enough, another theory is bound to emerge, claiming that the reading it offers has a higher degree of relevance than the previous reading. Of course, theories are different with regard to the width of their scope, so certain readings will become more popular and useful than others. However, even in this case the relativity of their validity remains granted. Theories of social sciences fighting for hegemony is only a sign of the immaturity of these sciences. The social sciences will come of age when they have accepted that, while observing the traditional rules of rational argumentation and debate, their science needs a *synthesis* of readings – because their subject matter, human culture, is also rooted in the infinite openness of symbolic meanings.

## 2. SYMBOLS AND EMERGENCE

Although this paper does not concern itself with the relevance of symbolic representation for the social sciences, but rather with the role played by the process of symbolic representation in “*emergence*” (and vice versa), the above introduction was nonetheless necessary in order to clarify our concept of the symbol. From what have been said it is perhaps clear that we think symbolic representation plays a crucial role in emergence. If we construe “emergent properties [as] effects that are not sums of the effects of each causal conjunct” (Mill 1843: 428), then the coming to being of each symbol, and in fact of each reading of each symbol, is an instance of emergence. Insofar as recent definitions of emergence relate the concept to adaptable systems or to systems aiming to bring some of their external conditions under control, they, on the one hand, converge to definitions of what living systems are (even though we know that the concept of emergence as used by such investigators primarily concerns AI research); and, on the other hand, they are bound to arrive at the conclusion that flexible adaptation, let alone the control over external conditions, presuppose an organization based on the simultaneous validity of  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$ ; that is they, imply that symbols could be more adequately used to represent such systems than numbers.

We argue that emergence in culture takes place (among other ways) through the coming-into-being, transformation, and exchange of symbols – that is, to quote Sorokin, “the mental integration of meanings [and this precisely is symbolization] is the first step in the emergence of any absolutely and relatively new system” (Sorokin 1962: IV/63) – and that the process of symbolic representation is always emergent. To use a somewhat extravagant formulation, we could say that symbols and symbolic phenomena are systems that, in each of their successive states, contain constituents that *cannot* be derived from the previous state of the system because as systems they potentially contain everything that they are not. This holds not exclusively for symbols, but also for society (were it otherwise, we would not be able to use the symbol as the basic unit of social research), presumably for any organism, and, we can suspect since Gödel, for the physical universe as well.

But it is time to continue the discussion at a less abstract level. In what follows, we will try to shore up the above argument using illustrations from a specific field of symbolic representation, the symbolism of artifacts, and we will attempt to derive some general properties of emergence from particular examples.

### 3. *THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY – A FILM WITH A LESSON*

Now we can reveal why we titled this paper using an obviously attention-seeking and un-academic phrase. *The Gods Must Be Crazy* is the title of a series of feature films by South African-born director Jamie Uys. The first film in the series has a scene that, among other things, can trigger ideas about what objects and emergence have to do with one another. In this scene, which is at the very beginning of the film, a pilot flying over Africa tosses a bottle of Coke out of the cockpit's window, which falls and hits a Bushman on the head.<sup>10</sup> The Bushman, who belongs to a tribe that lives secluded from civilization, cannot help believing that the Unidentified Flying Object came from the gods. Gifts of gods are usually useful, and so is the Coke bottle, at least initially. As if they were performing psychological tests of creativity in which examinees are asked to find out novel and unusual usages of conventional artifacts, the members of the tribe use the bottle as if it were a vessel, a hammer, a musical instrument, a ball, a compass, and then they use it as a component in more complex, machine-like devices. But as times goes on, the Unidentified Object begins to be encumbered with negative social associations; it becomes the object of strife and, finally, it is turned into a weapon. Once a gift of the gods, now a potential destroyer of a society portrayed as idyllic. And then the protagonist Bushman sets out to return to the gods what proved to be a harmful and meaningless present...

But, instead of this introduction, we could have said this:

Suppose, for the sake of an easy departure, that objects pop up out of nothing. An object comes into being and soon it becomes an object of human concern, when, and because, uses are attributed to it. Objects are called as such because they are the objects of human activity. In this respect, uses can include such abstract functions as ornamentation, the inducement of pleasure, the conferral of prestige, etc. Uses have proliferated throughout the history of the human race (though, of course, not gradually, since objects could be used in unchanged ways for thousands of years), and as the objects acquire new uses, the range of associations we attach to them are broadened. Beside the proliferation of uses, objects begin to interact with society and transform social relations and, in the course of this process, they acquire new associations again. But interacting with society, they also become symbols – symbols of the social relations they help to transform, and of those that transform them as useful objects. The resultant symbolism of objects contains the associations relating to the properties of the objects, as well as the associations emerging due to the proliferation of uses, due to the transformation of the society in which the object is embedded.

The film that was mentioned can be read as an illustration of the same course of events. The object, which appears out of the blue, is first endowed with notions of a miraculous, god-given origin; then positive associations of use are attached to it; later on, as a result of its uniqueness (which makes it potentially monopolizable), it becomes a status symbol; and finally it changes into the depository of negative symbolism occasioned by a range of human conflicts motivated by the desire to possess it. In the end, the object becomes a social symbol, and, under the circumstances, a negative one at that. The plot of this rather didactic film is, among other things, a portrayal (a symbol) of “progress” – the progress of the world of objects and of society.

---

<sup>10</sup> The wordplay in the Hungarian title of the film sparks off a range of meanings. “Must be crazy” is rendered in Hungarian as *Fejükre estek*, which literally translates as “they fell on their (own) heads.” The phrase is idiomatically used to signify someone stupid, and derives from the belief that an injury to the head, particularly if somebody was dropped as a baby, might cause mental retardation. The Bushman calls the gods crazy, imbecile because they gave him a stupid gift. But since the Coke bottle hits *his* head, with a clever turn the Bushman, who stands for the human race here, is linked with the gods in a relationship of identity and difference. We leave it to the reader to follow up a multiplicity of implications.

And the moment when the protagonist eventually realizes that all this progress led to something “evil”, (when we become cognizant of the problems in our world and start to reflect on our society and on progress), is also part of progress. No matter how didactic the film is, its symbolism, as any genuinely symbolic portrayal, has many layers. First, it is obviously emblematic of the encounter of civilizations, and, while it portrays the untainted life of the Bushman tribe as idyllic, its symbolism is imbued with a sense of cultural superiority. Viewers watch the burlesque of the simple-minded Bushman from the point of view of “civilized” people, flattered by the suggestion that those whom the Bushman call “gods” are in fact the people who are watching the film in the auditorium – the members of “white” civilization. Second, the film also sends the clear message that Western civilization is destructive insofar as it pursues absurd, meaningless ends that are harmful to life. The Coke bottle is thus at the same time a symbol of the “superiority” and the “malignancy” of the civilization it belongs to, and as such it joins that group of somewhat overused symbolic objects of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to which McDonald’s hamburgers or mobile phones belong. (Incidentally, the symbolic role Coca-Cola plays in Eastern Europe, and actually in the whole of Europe, is not much different from the double role the bottle performs in the land of the Bushman.) However, our preferred reading has been a third one: we have construed the film as the symbolic portrayal of the role of objects – their coming-into-being and their acquisition of new uses and of symbolic features. What lends support to this reading is our premise that the objectively untenable assumption that objects pop out of nothing, is in fact in harmony with the experiences of a growing number of people. In our age, when objects seem to multiply daily, the overwhelming majority of people play no role at all in their creation. Objects are made for us by others, and they are made in ways and places unknown to us. From computers to air conditioners to the latest gadget, our objects seem to be little less than ready-made gifts from the gods.

Thus, the world of our objects seems to be emergent to a great extent. But is it? For objects, of course, do not just come from nothing and are not the gifts from the gods.

### 1. Some component features of emergence and symbolic representation

Consider the Coke bottle once again.

1. To describe the present form of the Coke bottle as an instance of emergence seems to be an exaggeration. Glass vessels used for holding liquids have been around for thousands of years, and containers made from other materials for much longer. Although Coca-Cola might well have been the first ever to produce *this* shape of glass bottle, this makes no difference from our point of view, because glass bottles have been made in a virtually infinite number of shapes, and it is purely coincidental whether or not one possible member in the *series* of variations actually appears in reality – what matters is that any potential member of the series *follows from* its antecedents. Nonetheless, the series had a first member. Not being primatologists, we can only hypothesize that the very first step might have been made when man created the first vessel, modeling it on the shapes he found freely about in nature (hollow trees, dented stones, nests, etc.), and which could be used for holding food, water, or other things. (One current assumption is that clay bowls derive from cup-shape plants and circular woven baskets.) Whatever the case may be, the process was triggered by proto-humans *making* something, instead of the tool they found ready-made in nature. This was a genuine moment of emergence. Even if the shape mimicked the shapes found in nature, it did not follow from its precedents. Supposing what happened was that hominids kept following with their fingers the curvatures of a found shape (this mode of observing objects has been recorded with primates) until the movement became imprinted as it

were and, all of a sudden, it clicked with them that the shape could be manually made – this was a moment of emergence.

Whether or not the first bowl came into being in this way, we can safely generalize from the example by saying that the “tool-making turn” consisted in the deliberate coordination of bodily movement in order that a physical object be produced. While it can be argued whether or not humans are the only tool-making animals, it is difficult not to see that human tool-making was an event that could not be derived from its precedents: the first tool maker triggered an infinite sequence of deliberate co-ordinations of bodily movement in order to produce physical objects. In this view, a crucial moment of emergence (taken in Polanyi’s sense as a system’s assimilating the elements of its environment while retaining its self-identity) happens when the system (a human being in our case) reclassifies the elements of the environment as elements of its own set of properties. The circular shape observed is reclassified as the capacity to form circular shapes – *the general activity potential of the system and the phenomenon observed act together to produce an emergent – a novel form of activity that does not follow from any antecedent activity.*

2. If we now continue to track the long process that led to the Coke bottle, the next leap comes when users realize that different shapes of vessels have different functions. Aesop’s fable of the fox and the stork is a written testimony of this leap. The moral of the fable – in which the stork is unable to eat the soup that the fox serves from a shallow dish, and the fox, invited for a return dinner, is unable to lap up whatever the stork offers in a long-necked jar with a narrow mouth – is not only about differences of physiology, nor is it a lesson only about otherness in general. It is also a caricature of a past when man had not yet realized the functionality of different shapes of objects. (And, of course, it teaches children this functionality.) The leap, which signifies a radical departure from the continuous build-up of experiences, consists in “*abstraction*” – in the realization that experiences share certain essential characteristics that can be abstracted (and portrayed, as is done in the fable through the opposition of the shallow plate and the long-necked bottle). This seems to be another crucial law of emergence: *the system assimilates its environment by defining the essential feature of functionality (as seen from the system’s point of view) and fixing it in a (symbolic) form (or a formal binary opposition).*

The two facets of emergence mentioned so far can be considered as two sides of the same process. On the one hand, an external form is translated into an activity and, on the other hand, the experiences deriving from the activity are condensed and abstracted, in symbolic forms. Moreover, this two-pronged process pertains to symbolic representation as much as to emergence. The process of symbolic representation displays the same dialectics insofar as it connects a relatively external (objective) element with an active internal (subjective) element in a way that the resultant symbol never ceases to remain an opportunity for the transition from the external to the internal and vice versa, and opens the possibility of experiencing the simultaneity of identity and difference – it is a portrayal of the nature of reality as  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$ .

3. Clay vessels are older than the glass objects. But sooner or later glass bottles appeared, and this transformation led to the next step in the social history of the Coke bottle. Did the arrival of glass bottles of Coke constitute an instance of emergence? We noted before that objects come in series of variations and new variations follow from previous members in the series. So a different color, shape or material does not signify a radically new departure in most of the cases. In some cases, however, the alteration of only one of the component features seems to be revolutionary. How is this possible? Since anything can acquire a symbolic nature, the smallest difference has the “*potential*” to acquire a symbolic meaning and thus become significant.

Which feature becomes symbolic depends to a great extent on the community that creates and uses the symbols. As societies change, its symbols change too – the meaning and significance of the symbols transform. If we consider materials, for example, we can see how the meaning of plastic has undergone spectacular changes over the past few decades. In the modernist 1950s and 1960s, plastic was held in great esteem: nylon stockings were more expensive than silk pairs, period wooden furniture was replaced by plastic sets, clothes labels proudly stated high percentages of synthetic materials, and sci-fi stories offered the attractive prospect of (plastic) pills thrilling palates with the tastes of steak or strawberry pie. But when technological development became synonymous with the destruction of the environment for the New Age people of the 1980s and 1990s, plastics became suspicious: architects once again grew fond of “natural” materials, labels now attracted customers by indicating high percentages (preferably 100%) of wool, cotton or silk; and artificial materials in food (artificial colors, additives, fertilizers used to help plant growth, etc.) became bywords for poison. But a revival of modernist tastes at the very end of the 20th century seems to swing the pendulum in the other direction again... In this case, the significance (and meaning) of the material used for making an object depends on the socio-cultural context (and on the factors that determine it). The shifts in the perception of plastic could be essentially derived from the perception of science in 20th century culture. But there are cases, when the material itself triggers processes that cannot be derived from preceding patterns however complex they may be. The appearance of iron tools at the end of the Bronze Age was one such example.<sup>11</sup> Historians use material designations to indicate the change partly because bronze and iron tools quite literally fought for superiority, and the fight ended with the victory of iron weapons and tools. Why was this change fundamentally different from other changes in material? Why was it emergent? Arguably, the makers of iron weapons continued a series, only they produced the same weapons from iron instead of bronze. The genuinely novel element in this case lay not in societal factors but in the properties of the material itself. (But of course the recognition of these properties and abstracting them depends on human beings, as did the recognition and abstraction of the bottle shape.) The essential feature of weapons is the degree of their sharpness, strength, and durability. Iron defeats bronze in this respect – it is *particularly adaptable* for the purpose intended. Note that we arrived at a new turn. The new material gives rise to a new system: while iron weapons used to be created as elements of the system of weapons (i.e. the material was a sub-category within the wider class of tools, in this case weapons), “ironness” now became *the* organizing principle (and iron *weapons* became a sub-category). Particular adaptability for an intended purpose turned the properties of the material into the organizing principle of an emerging system. Emergence occurred when *a subordinate property in the system metamorphosed into the regulating property of another system*. What makes properties capable of such miraculous transformations in human culture is the “symbol”. *As symbols can show any element of a system (and in fact of the world) to be part and whole at the same time, part and whole can metamorphose into one another any time.*

4. Coke bottles are hermetically sealed (as are Coca-Cola cans). Airtight packaging is undoubtedly a major innovation in the long-term storage of foods and beverages. But does it count as emergence? Was it a step forward that did not follow from what preceded it? It seems certain, that this was not the case with regard to the *Coke bottle* – former experience in sealing food in an airtight way made the step to apply the technology to Coke evident. Therefore, this feature of any bottle of Coke offers no lessons with respect to emergence, if not the meager conclusion that *not all innovations are emergent*.

---

<sup>11</sup> The *appearance* of plastics was similar from this respect.

5. It is perhaps more rewarding to consider the feature that we rely on to identify Coke bottles. Although we found before that a particular shape is only a contingent factor, this holds only from a certain point of view. Coca-Cola bottles are difficult to mistake for other bottles (and especially for Pepsi bottles). When in the course of the development of modern consumer society (and probably in earlier instances of market economies as well) products begin to be associated with particular producers and/or distributors, and give rise to “brands”, the specific shape (color, material, etc.) making producer A’s product different from the similar product of B acquires, or can acquire, special significance. In this entirely new context, as the firm and the product merge in a symbol, the shape of the product signifies itself (A=A) *and* the company (A≠A). But in the realm of meaning, one thing becomes what it is by its non-identity. The individuality, the self-identity of the Coke bottle as enshrined in its shape denotes and exhibits something that has nothing to do with bottles: an organization, a success story, a “feeling”, and a lifestyle associated with the brand. And since it has to evoke all these senses, the individual form, the shape that cannot be mistaken for any other shape, becomes significant. (And each specimen of the type must then have the same shape.) This meaning emerges unpredictably, and what happens is, in fact, the counterpart of what we have seen to occur in the example of iron weapons. Whereas in the case of iron weapons a part suddenly appeared as a whole, here “*an entire system*” – the production, distribution, and consumption of Coca-Cola, and perhaps the American way of life as such – *is encapsulated in the meaning field of one of its constituent parts* – a whole world in a bottle of Coke. But parallel to the part/whole dialectics, there is something else: *the degree of individuality of a feature* (in our case this feature is the shape of the Coke bottle) *dramatically increases*. Both facets of the change can be considered to count as general characteristics of emergence.

6. The Coke bottle that appeared in Uys’s film had a further active layer of meaning. The Coca-Cola Company is one of many US companies. In the context of the US domestic market, its flagship product denotes little more than itself vis-à-vis other products and cola drinks. But when Coke, along with other iconic US goods, are exported, the “*encounter of cultures*” imbues them with new associations insofar as they begin to act as representatives of the culture where they originated. (Which particular products will attain a similar iconic status depends on the success of the product; on how far the product’s features as well as the features of the image marketing specialists attach to it, harmonize with the general image of the originator culture;<sup>12</sup> and last but not least, on the overlap of the sales initiative and the economic/political expansion of the exporting culture.) Cinema-goers automatically decode the symbolism of the Coke bottle in this context: the bottle thrown from the airplane into the desert is a symbol of Western civilization and of cultural colonialism. And it is in this context that the connotations of the Coke bottle become ambivalent, reflecting the ambivalence of the relationship between technologically (and economically) advanced and less-advanced civilizations – on the one hand, the widespread distrust of the colonizer’s culture on account of its acculturating impact, and, on the other hand, the admiration for the great achievements of progress. (This set of associations is portrayed in a Hungarian musical, where in one self-ironic scene young Hungarian beatniks gathering for a party in the 1960s unwrap with awe the parcel that contains a bottle of Coke that had been smuggled through the Iron Curtain, and that they see as an envoy of the Free World. The same symbolism is exploited in an absurdly funny way in a Hungarian film, when youngsters of the same period, knowing little but believing too much about Coca-Cola, confuse a newly received bottle of Coke with narcotics and manage to get high on the innocuous drink with a

---

<sup>12</sup> Note how both Coca-Cola and Pepsico work hard to bring about the harmony between Americanness and what their product symbolically represents. Even as they emphasize the global nature of their products by showing, in commercials, people of different racial backgrounds drinking them, the visuals make an effort to attach the symbols of multiculturalism with household concepts of America, American notions of freedom, and “the American way of life”.

little help of auto-suggestion.) We can generalize from this last (?) step in the evolution of the symbolism of the Coke bottle by saying that *what happens when two separate systems come into contact is not only that their elements blend, or that one system conquers the other (by assimilating its constituents or reclassifying them as its own), but also that the interrelationship itself acquires symbolic significance and penetrates the constituents of each system.* On the level of the process of symbolic representation this means that the paradox of  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$  is established not just by the system (A) intermingling with something that it is not ( $\neq A$ ); and not just by the parts being identical to and different from the whole of which they are parts; the paradox of the symbol is also constituted by the relation itself being projected into “each constituent part” of the two systems. Therefore, the contact sparks an emergent relational property that is a property of none of the individual systems when taken separately. The symbolism of the Coke bottle will contain features pertaining to the relation between Western civilization and native peoples, or to the relation between the “Free World” and Communism. Consequently, the meaning of Western civilization will shift as well, inasmuch as it will begin to mean That Which Relates So And So to Native Peoples and That Which Relates So And So as to Communism, as well as meaning itself.<sup>13</sup> And since every conceivable relationship is by necessity a condensed form of  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$ , the process in which the relationship penetrates the constituents of the systems only amplifies the constituents’ basic ambivalence of  $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$ .

### 1. A few further examples

Let us leave our Coke bottle for a moment and look at a few other examples, primarily from the field of the symbolism of objects. During the 1990s, as part of a series of studies in search for the world views of the era, we found that Asian culture also had a striking effect on Hungarian society. It is not worth going into the details of the reasons for this, as the kinship between the rise of the political and/or economic importance of a culture and the expansion of certain elements of that culture is self-evident (and endlessly analyzed); it is also widely accepted that cultures at times (and especially at times when they reach a point of exhaustion) tend to seek inspiration from the impact of cultures built on values far removed from their own basic values or axioms of perception. We will not elaborate on the various manifestations of the impact of Asian culture (at any rate, it is only possible to talk about significant cultural impacts if the *same* trend shows up in *different* areas of life). Asian influences can be traced in various spheres of life: they become manifest in the inflow of Asian decorative objects and a rise in demand for these objects; in the vogue for Asian home design (Japanese room partitioning, futons, tatamis, ikebana, bonsai, incense, wind chimes, rice-paper lampshades and Chinese lanterns) and for Asian home design philosophy (Feng Shui); in the impacts of Eastern landscape gardening and in a preference for certain clothing items (saris, kimonos) and materials (such as batik textiles); in Asian cooking sweeping into the country (reflected in the growing number of Chinese, Thai, Indian, etc. restaurants and the selection at food stores, as well as in otherwise conservative Hungarian households welcoming Eastern spices and food specialties to their everyday menu); in the triumph of Eastern martial arts and mind-body disciplines (judo, karate, kung-fu, thai-boxing, jujitsu, aikido, tae kwon do, kendo, and yoga or t’ai chi); in the integration of Asian healing methods (acupuncture, acupressure, iris diagnostics, Ayurvedic medicine, moxa treatment, etc.) into health culture; in the rising popularity of some products of the Eastern film industry and visual culture (samurai-western, manga, anime, kung-fu films from Hongkong, Chinese and Japanese art films); in the 18-19th

---

<sup>13</sup> But of course the systems of Native Peoples or Communism, on the other end of the relationship, will also shift to mean That Which Relates So and So to Western Civilization/the Free World, as well as themselves; and the shift will take place in each constituent of the systems.

century Japanese painting school (mainly Hokusai) becoming a part of general knowledge; in the increased attention on some modern Indian, Japanese and Chinese writers; in the popularity of courses teaching Eastern music and dance; and last, but not least, in increased enthusiasm for Eastern philosophies and religions behind all these trends (Buddhism, Taoism, Vedic Brahmanism, Krishnaism). This fashion of Asian culture can be a temporary phenomenon (to be replaced by other similar fashions later on)<sup>14</sup> or a more permanent one, that continues to grow as the role of Asian countries increases in the world; it could lay down the foundations of a synthesis, where a mixture of “Western” and “Eastern” civilizations is created, leaving room for new combinations again and again. From our point of view, it is the changes *within* this Asia-cult seen around the turn of the millennium that are most intriguing. For example, the impact of the Orient was coupled with a taste in interior design and decoration in the 1980s and 1990s, in which objects from Asia and from other cultures virtually inundated homes in some kind of picturesque profusion. (The crowded interiors were not only a consequence of the fact that the average size of homes could not keep up with the proliferation of objects in consumer society, but were to a large extent a result of the fact that postmodernism brought with it a neo-baroque taste, that began to replace the constructivist modernism of the 1960s in many segments of life). The 1990s, and particularly the second half of the decade created its own “minimalist” art to defend itself against this neo-baroque sense of taste. Interestingly, both the postmodern neo-baroque and the new modern minimalism found an inspiration in Asia; so in fact the turn in the sense of taste was palpable within the Asia-cult itself. (Both movements could draw on Asian examples, as the sophisticated splendor of Chinese and Indian palaces and the exotic exuberance of Asian gardens and forests were just as “Asian” as the minimalism of Japanese home interiors and Zen gardens). Thus, both movements could say that their own views represented the “real Asia”. This is an example of the same phenomenon that we saw in the changes in the functions of the Coke bottle: *the object (as an element of culture) potentially encompasses many layers of meaning (characteristics), with one, then the other becoming more dominant*. The shift among these layers is not entirely predictable (it does not follow from the precedents). Although it is quite certain that one trend is followed by a counter-trend, that thesis is followed by antithesis, but what “*direction*” the change would take is only precisely seen in hindsight. At this point it is clear that a trend of crowded interiors has been replaced by a penchant for emptiness, but many other ways would have been possible for overturning the themes of the 1980s and early 1990s – many other oppositions or pairs of attributes could have shaped events. Thus, emergence is not where the opposite of a trend emerges (a mechanical pendulum movement between polar opposites could be an integral part of a system),<sup>15</sup> but rather it is in the way in which the negation of what was there before finds a direction. (This could even be a result of a conscious choice: “we’ve had enough of this congestion, let’s follow a minimalist trend next year!” – but this conscious choice *does not follow from the antecedents*, because things could have moved in many other directions at the moment of intuition when the choice was made).

If we examine these changes from the point of view of the entire system, it is clear that *a change which affects the whole system will redefine and alter the meaning of its components*. Society as a whole will change and as a consequence, the key or the organizational rule to what holds the system of components together within the concept of “Asian-ness” will change as well, and this will, in turn, alter the meaning of the individual components. If however, we look at this type of change from the point of view of the components, we can

---

<sup>14</sup> For example, there has been a notable rise, though not on the same scale, of a kind of Africa-cult in the past few years.

<sup>15</sup> Thus we may create a system that would automatically generate the opposite of every one of its elements, based on an internal rule, and then each step which negates the previous could be derived from the previous steps.

determine that this is a transformation between part and whole, similar to what happened in the case of iron weapons we discussed earlier: a former part-feature (e.g., Japanese minimalism in the case of the Asia-cult) will emerge and become one of the pillars of a new system (the vogue of minimalism). On the other hand, we can also conclude that since symbols are made up of a whole and its parts permeating each other, thus the change will work both ways: the change of the whole will transform the meaning of the components, and this can occur in no other way but through the change of the constituents. It is precisely at the level of the component where change first occurs – people start using certain elements in a different way, but they do this because unconsciously they are able to anticipate the direction of change in the whole system, through experiencing things in a symbolic way (which is possible due to the fact that cultures are made up of symbolic structures, as we have pointed out in our introduction). In this respect, we may justifiably refer to the analogy so often used in describing this kind of change, that the genetic structure of an organism is such that it is able to give its components the ability to “act” – if not always and unfailingly – in line with the needs of the whole organism. This does not mean that the agents are aware of the significance of these changes: sometimes a new thing occurs without any intention of making a change, and then the implications of this change may challenge the entire former system.<sup>16</sup>

Research on the symbolism of objects has uncovered other aspects that can be useful in the study of emergence. Our next example is the television set as a symbolic object. At the time of the first experimental broadcast in Hungary, a privileged few were owners of sets with 10x10cm screens, that were hidden behind curtains. The set – a true *laterna magica* – projected a sense of mystery and magic, and the curtains referred not only to exclusivity, but also to the previous form of the moving image – the cinema. (And the cinema with its seats and curtains referred back to its forerunner, the theatre and its imagery.) However, the television set soon parted with these references, and its revolutionary character, which consisted in bringing the public sphere right into people’s homes, and making it subordinate to the home in many respects (which the cinema did not do), became apparent. In this way, the television set created an intimate relationship between the private and public spheres, whereby it subordinated the private sphere to the public (once again), as is known to have happened – albeit in very different way – with everyday church practices in the Middle Ages. It is not by chance that the TV set took on the functions of a “sacred object”: initially this was strengthened by the fact that only a few people had sets and the neighbors often joined them to watch programs. For these viewers, the television (and the opinions it broadcast) possessed the oracular authority of a priest giving a sermon. Later, the group of viewers split up to form smaller groups, and gradually the typical viewer-group was reduced first

---

<sup>16</sup> One of the most fruitful areas of study in emergent social change is the analysis of “scandals” with far-reaching impacts. Such scandals (e.g. the Hernani controversy, the first exhibition of impressionist painters, or the enthusiasm and the repugnance with which the Beatles were received) were the side-effects of the emergence of some new phenomenon (surrounded by a strong symbolic field), where the unexpectedness of the event had a shocking effect. Emergent phenomena shock people in a negative sense and signal danger; something that cannot derive from what was there before may endanger the whole of the former familiar life-world. This is why people make efforts to “anchor” new components. However, the other side-effect of shock, a feeling of liberation and euphoria, shows that people need such changes very much. Not only because fossilised social forms that are unyielding to change are self-limiting, but basically because it is at the heart of all living systems to enter into interaction with their environment, for which it is necessary to encounter external-foreign elements, new impulses. The frenzy experienced at meeting such impulses is similar to what any living creature feels on obtaining a new kind of nourishment. Such new “nourishment” appears day after day, and to continue with the metaphor, when conflicting groups meet in a scandal, the enthusiasm demonstrated by the enthusiastic party is in this respect much like the pleasure felt at finding some very special nourishment or one found after a long period of starvation. This is what we described in the introductory passages of this paper as the simultaneous feelings of “watch out, danger!” and “let’s go, there is food!”, as a vital impetus to becoming human. This kind of synchronicity/dualism emerges again and again in a social environment.

to the nuclear family, and then to the lonely individual. During this process, the television set retained its “sacred” role for a while, signaled by the fact that it was usually placed in a position equivalent to the “sacred corner” of old peasant houses, and was covered with a lace embroidery or given some other, highly respectable treatment (often it was in the very place of the “sacred corner”). Even the appearance of alternative channels could not shake this sacred and oracular feel, only made it pluralized. The sacred status of the box only disappeared when the increase of the number of sets in the home made the television set function as personal property that everyone could use to their own comfort, and when the sets appeared in new spatial contexts (in the bathroom, kitchen, children’s room, garage, etc.) where it was not television that dominated space but television became a background to the main functions of that space. On top of this, these new places were often the less prestigious locations in the home, and if an object was placed in such a space, it usually led to a loss of prestige. All these changes were in fact the result of a rise in the number of television sets. It is undoubtedly clear that a process of “downward causation” – the effects of the changes of the system as a whole – also contributed to these meaning shifts. (If no such change had occurred, the use of television sets would have taken a different path.) However, in this case it was mainly the proliferation of TV sets that triggered the shift – the quantitative change reduced prestige that had been guaranteed by the privileged nature of the object, and at the same time it led to a multiplication of functions, that became shared between a number of sets).<sup>17</sup> However, a rise in numbers cannot in itself be seen as an emergent process. Emergence occurs when quantitative growth reaches a “critical mass” and flips over to a change in quality – the time *when* such a transformation occurs cannot be derived from the previous states of the system. And once again, the source for this transformation lies not in the units of a system that is best grasped by the tools and methods of mathematics, but at the symbolic core of culture – and the possibility of transformation is a salient feature of symbols. While the Coke bottle was an example of emergence through a rise in the degree of individuality of the object form, the television set exemplifies an emergent change where the object’s individuality is curtailed.

In the most recent phases of our research on the symbolism of objects, we attempted to map out symbolic associations attached to certain objects in a manner complementary to Osgood’s (1976) “semantic differential”; our goal was not to map out the semantic aura of certain objects, but rather we tried to discover what objects certain concepts evoked from a person’s set of associations. Thus, we tried to collect the objects associated with the concepts of “old-fashioned”, “youthful”, “modern”, “conservative”, “peasant-like”, “noble”, “intellectual”, “middle-class”, “Hungarian” (that is: “national”) and “related to globalization”. Then (now in line with Osgood’s approach) we asked our respondents to give a reason for their choice: on the basis of what attribute (or semantic field), did they choose that particular object? If we look at the groups of “old-fashioned” versus “young”, perhaps it is not surprising, but still notable that most respondents associated negative ideas with the concept of “old-fashioned” (poor, hand-me-down, feeble, disgusting, repellent): they chose objects that had these negative connotations. There were only a few exceptions, where the reason for choosing the object was along the lines of concepts like “nicely weathered”, “accomplished”, “traditional” or simply “beautiful” or the neutral “old”. Nevertheless, the results show that for most respondents the value of “being young” is very strong (and “being old” is a negative value). Although this has presumably been the case to some extent since time immemorial (as being old is synonymous with, or the antechamber of, decay), we know that perceptions of “young” and “old” have changed through different eras, and varied in different cultures and social conditions. For example, we can safely say that the values behind “being young” have

---

<sup>17</sup> As it is often the case after such devaluation, there has been an opposite trend consisting in the birth of *new* forms that connote high status or exclusivity (giant screens, home theatre systems with plasma screens, etc).

become a lot firmer in recent decades (in consumer society). The transition to democracy in Hungary was accompanied by a shift towards consumer society, but there is another aspect to consider as well. A wave of conservatism in the communist block in the 1980s went hand-in-hand with the perception of the historical past, the period before communism, as a “golden era” in the eyes of those who wished to use the values of that past as antithetical to those of communism. This increased the value of that past, of old things, and of old people as well: old objects, discolored photographs began to appear in the homes of intellectuals in 1980s, spiced with a strong ideology and feelings, and academics and other people turned their attention to “oral history” and memories of old people. Now the question is how the transition came about. How can we derive from such phenomena the very negative contemporary associations of “being old”? (If all this happened in a *volte-face*, we could say that a “conversion” always means making a previously extrinsic system intrinsic – thus the next state of the system follows from the preceding state of the adopted system, even if not from the preceding state of the system which was abandoned. Consequently, such change is not emergent. An example for this kind of change is when people move from “building socialism” to “building capitalism” – these people relate to the values of capitalism in the same way as they did to socialist values. This has happened in some cases, but we are now looking at cases where this kind of a conversion has not occurred, at people who used to be at odds with Kadar-era socialism, and yet changed to shy away from the values of “being old”.) Many people who were conservative in the 1980s were anti-socialist (and pro-conservative) either because they believed in the values of individualism (which were curtailed under socialism) or because they embraced the idea of close-knit organic communities (which was eroded by socialism). Both groups turned to the past as part of their criticism of the authoritarian socialism of the age. A non-socialist environment in the eyes of these people was one they wished to “assimilate” (this kind of an environment was conveyed in the form of capitalist society or the past before socialism), and socialism was an environment they found hostile. With the transition to democracy, the assimilation was done, while socialism continued to be an undesirable environment that, however, became the “past” – and thus the connotations of “past” were changed from positive to negative. The advocates of individualistic values now became a part of an existing capitalist society, where the values of individualism and self-assertion are strongly linked to the ideal of “eternal youth”; and the ideals of close-knit organic communities were put on the banner of a generation of young people – thus the semantic fields of past and present were completely rearranged. This was *one* factor that contributed to the fact that the value systems of formerly anti-socialist generations have undergone a metamorphosis in terms of the concepts of “being young” and “being old” – without disruption, and while holding on to their earlier set of basic values. But as this metamorphosis did not follow from its precedents, it was another example of emergent change, whereby a new order of things came into being through the assimilation of the environment. This also means (and we have not yet mentioned this as one of the aspects of emergence) that by assimilating a certain environment, *a system will always create a new environment for itself*, thus being able to ensure a dialectical relationship between itself and the environment at all times, even if it constitutes some kind of a closed meta-system with its environment and even if the assimilation of the environment continues to take place over and over again.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Humanity in a globalised world – until it meets some creatures from outer space – could already be considered a closed meta-system today. On the one hand, the environment for a global community is the natural environment of macrocosm and microcosm combined; and, on the other hand, the meta-system keeps “creating” environments for itself insofar as the individuals, groups and cultures that make up the system as a whole can actually turn opposed to it due to their particular interests and drives, and in such cases they can be regarded as the “environments” of the meta-system.

For our last example, we will use the results of the same study. We asked people what they considered the symbols of “adulthood”. The typical answers ranged from a watch and a wallet through the personal identity card to house keys (the differences sometimes reflected the financial situation of the respondent’s family). Adulthood is a state of being marked by society with a distinct barrier point, despite the fact that it is something people enter into gradually; a state that is reflected in rites of passage (*rites du passage*) on several levels of social organization. The symbolism of the above objects is associated with these rites: the identity card is a symbol of a status-shift signifying initiation into official society, the formal systems of the state; the watch, which is often a gift for the confirmation ceremony, and the wallet, usually given as a graduation present, are all parts of the family’s rites of passage (and at the same time may be a part of a rite of passage of a religious community or an educational institution). Handing over the keys to a new home is a part of the rite of passage in a prosperous family (with individualistic values), while the housewarming party is the rite of passage for entering a certain age group as well. In such rites of passage (and in the symbolism of objects that emphasizes the importance of the passage), the experience of the leap taken, or, we could say, *emergence itself becomes the subject of symbolization*. It is necessary that people partition their otherwise seamless lives with such milestones – as we have seen, the emergent nature of change may be traced in various spheres of social life: it is intrinsic to human nature.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper we attempted to gather together a few component features of emergence, basing our conclusions on the results of some empirical research we have carried out. While offering an exhaustive catalogue of the aspects of emergence would have obviously been too bold an undertaking here, let us sum up what we have found:

- 1. Not all innovations are emergent. But emergence does occur when the general activity potential of a system and a phenomenon external to it – which becomes a target for the system’s activity potential – interact in a manner that a novel form of activity is produced, which does not follow from any antecedent form of activity.*
- 2. The system assimilates the elements of its environment by defining the essential feature of functionality (as seen from the system’s own point of view) and fixing it in a (symbolic) form (or a formal opposition).*
- 3. A subordinate property in the system metamorphoses into the regulating property of another system.*
- 4. And/or an entire system becomes encapsulated in the meaning field of one of its constituent parts.*
- 5. Parallel to these, the degree of individuality of a feature is dramatically increased or decreased.*
- 6. A change that affects the whole system will redefine and alter the meaning of its components, and vice versa. The two processes run parallel.*
- 7. A rise in numbers may lead to emergence, but it cannot in itself be seen as an emergent process. Emergence occurs when quantitative growth reaches a “critical mass” and transforms into a change in quality – the time when such a transformation occurs cannot be derived from the previous states of the system.*
- 8. In cases where old and new are antithetical, the appearance of an opposite does not constitute emergence, but rather emergence is in the way in which the negation of what was there before finds a direction.*

9. *What happens when two separate systems come into contact is not only that their elements blend, or that one system conquers the other (by assimilating its constituents and reclassifying them as its own), but also that the interrelationship itself acquires symbolic significance and penetrates the constituents of each system.*

10. *Assimilating their environments, systems create new environments.*

11. *Emergent changes induce pleasure and fear at the same time.*

12. *Emergence becomes a symbol of human nature.*

Emergence, then, occurs when two systems (system and environment) meet; when part-whole relations within the system, or the degree of individuality of system constituents change; when quantitative changes reach a point of critical mass; when sudden alterations in the direction of the system's movement come about. If now we want to answer *why* emergence occurs, we need to refer to the symbol as the thing at the core of culture. The symbol is the fundamental particle of the non-quantifiable aspect of the world. As we have seen, symbol-making humans connect the relatively objective with the actively subjective, particular with general, part with whole, present with non-present in a way that the resultant connection, the symbol, opens the possibility of a transformation from the external to the internal, from the part to the whole, from the present to the future and the past, and vice versa, thus making the possibility of the simultaneity of identity and difference ( $A=A$  and  $A\neq A$ ) real. The concept of the symbol explains that emergent properties do not arise from nothing, but that they always *inhere* in the symbol as potentialities. It is not change that needs to be explained; it is change that explains everything else. In making sense of the world, human beings are in need of a numerical conception of things, by which they can break down things into constituents and aggregate these into systems and environments, but they also need to correct the necessary simplification implied in such practices by the use of the alternative sign system of symbols. Turning our attention to emergence will perhaps help us to become more cognizant of the fact that the world, and in particular human society, is full of changes which are impossible to explain by the means of quantitative science.

Are, then, the gods crazy? Well, perhaps not. True, they hit us on the head with Coke bottles that create plenty of problems. But if the Bushman tries to run to the end of the world to return to the gods their bothersome gift, he must sooner or later realize that the world is endless; if he throws the bottle back, it will come down on his head once again. Perhaps he will realize that the one that threw it first was himself (since the pilot and the Bushman are, from a certain point of view, actually the same). He might also notice that he is not different also from the gods; that he is the one who went crazy and that he did not go crazy at all; that what the gods in fact gave him as a gift was not the bottle, but the Problem, and that now they are looking down at him chuckling, curious to see what he can do with it. Furthermore, he will perhaps realize that in fact he is the one chuckling, and perhaps the bottle is also not different from him. And then the Bushman goes home. He does not care any more whether or not he carries the bottle; he will always have it (and he will never have it). The world is full of problems, but it is clear that only humans see it as such, and that the world does not see it that way. So the Bushman goes back home, settles down in the world, waves hello to the inscrutable, wily gods, and tries to make himself feel comfortable.

## REFERENCES

- Bertalanffy, L. V. (1971) *General System Theory*. London: Allen Lane – The Penguin Press.
- Boulding, K. E. (1978) *Eco-dynamics. A New Theory of Societal Evolution*, Beverly Hills – London: Sage Publications.
- Blackmore, S. (1999) *The Meme Machine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dawkins, R. (1976) *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Douglas, M. (1975) *Implicit Meanings*. London – Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Douglas, M. – Isherwood, B. (1979) *The World of Goods. Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*. London: Allen Lane – The Penguin Press.
- Flusser, V. (1999) *The Shape of Things: a Philosophy of Design*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Geertz, C. (1974) *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, C. (1983) *Local Knowledge. Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.
- Hockett, C. F. – Ascher, R. (1964) The Human Revolution. *Current Anthropology*, 3: 135–147.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1983) *Értékrendszereink* [Value Systems]. Budapest: Kossuth.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1989) *Intézménymimika* [Institutions and Gestures]. Budapest: Vita.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1990) *Értékválasztás* [Value Choices]. Budapest: Institute of Cultural Research.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1993) *Rejtjelek* [Ciphers]. Budapest: Szorobán-Interart.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1994) *Értékválasztás, 1994* [Value Choices]. Budapest: Friedrich Naumann Stiftung – Societas.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1995a) *Rejtjelek 2.* [Ciphers]. Budapest: Kossuth.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (eds.) (1995b) *„Jelbeszéd az életünk.” A szimbolizáció története és kutatásának módszerei* [Living by Symbols – History of symbolization and research methodologies]. Budapest: Osiris.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1996) Changing World-views in Hungary (1945-1980). *Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 29.2 Fall pp. 33–43.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1998a) Systemwechsel und Symbolwechsel in Ungarn, 1989-1996. In Andreas Pribersky and Berthold Unfried (Hg): *Symbole und Rituale des politischen: Ost- und Westeuropa im Vergleich*, Frankfurt/Main: Peter LangVerlag.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1998b) *Értékválasztás, 1998*. Budapest: Új Mandátum.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (1999, 2002b) *Magyarság-szimbólumok* [Symbols of Hungarianness]. Budapest: European Folk Art Institute (3 editions).
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2000a) *Látható és láthatatlan világok az ezredfordulón* (Visible and Invisible Worlds at the End of the Millennium). Budapest: Új Mandátum.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2000b) *Beszélő házak* [Speaking Houses]. Budapest: Kossuth.

- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2001) Wie wir moderne Mythen am Institut für Kulturanthropologie der ELTE Budapest analysieren. In Bernard, J and Withalm, G (Hg). *Myths, Rites, Simulacra, Semiotic Viewpoints I-II*, Angewandte Semiotik 18/19, Wien: Österreichische Gesellschaft für Semiotik.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2002a) Tárgyak szimbolikája [Symbolism of Objects]. In Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G (eds). *Tárgyak és társadalom I. Tárgykultúra és tárgy kultusz* [Objects and Society I. Objects in Culture and Cult]. Budapest: University of Applied Arts.
- Kapitány, Á. – Kapitány, G. (2003) *Értékválasztás 2002*. Budapest: Új Mandátum.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1955) *Tristes tropiques*. Paris: Librairie Plon.
- Mill, J. S. (1843) *A System of Logic. Ratiocinative and Inductive*. London: John W. Parker.
- Osgood, C. E. (1976) *Focus on Meaning*. The Hague – Paris – New York: Mouton.
- Peirce, C. S. (1932) *Collected Papers II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Popper, K. R. (1972) *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sorokin, P. A. (1937 – 1941, 1962) *Social and Cultural Dynamics I-IV*. New York: The Bedminster Press.
- Turner, V. (1967) *The Forest of Symbols*. Ithaca – New York: Cornell University Press.
- Turner, V. (1974) *Dramas, Fields, Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca – New York: Cornell University Press.

This paper gives a short summary of a new 'theory of motivation and method of analysis which was developed by the authors. This approach, as the results of their studies suggest, provides an effective method for analysis of human *motivational structure specific to the individual*. It allows the identification of the *causes* of psychic malfunctioning that results from imbalances of motivational structure even in cases where the individual makes an attempt to disguise his/her real motives.

Between 1972 and 1986 the authors have developed a method of analysis to discover the motives characteristic of individuals. The method is based on the hypothesis that people's dominant motives are manifested in the *structure of speech*. (Numerous studies have demonstrated the relationship between intonation, speed of speech, and other formal features of speech on the one hand, and temperament on the other. Similarly, it has been shown that the vocabulary and the grammatical constructions used are related to cultural and educational factors.) However, the authors identified a level of speech that had not been studied previously and that seems to express motives directly. At this level the speaker's motives receive expression (or, in other words, are projected) irrespective of the speaker's conscious intentions. Some of the existing standard methods of motivational analysis (such as the MMPI or the CPI) are based on the subject's explicit reports of his/her motives, and though there are some built-in mechanisms in these techniques to filter out obvious lies, confabulations or irresponsible responses, these test cannot fully avoid the danger that instead of identifying the subject's real motives they register those that he/she wishes to emphasize. (Furthermore, it is often the case that the subject is not fully aware of his/her real motives and, consequently, he/she cannot express them, or, he/she reports his/her supposed motives rather than his/her real ones.) Therefore, the authors were looking for a procedure that would succeed in bringing out the real motives of the subject independently of his/her conscious intentions and they believe to have found just such a system of signs in certain characteristics of speech structures. (Incidentally, this method seems to be superior, even to projective tests using fixed indicators, such as the TAT or the Rorschach.)

The method is based on the authors' hypothesis that there is a direct one-to-one correspondence between given motives and particular stylistic types of speech construction (which can be identified nearly algorithmically similarly to a dictionary entry or an equation.) Even a small change can turn any dry, non-stylistic statement into one with clear stylistic features. (Thus, in the text we can find constructions of repetition, enumeration, logical argumentation, specification, modification, or counter-punctuation. Similarly, there appear in the text constructions expressing moods, emotions, or passions, absurd and grotesque formulations, dramatic exaggerations, etc.) All such changes, all such stylistic characteristics are indicative of the presence of one or another particular motive. Because of this, in spontaneous speech such stylistic variants appear when and because the corresponding motive becomes dominant among the different motivating forces acting on us. As a result, our motives are projected in terms of their corresponding stylistic characteristics independently of our intentions. Therefore, if we have at our disposal a sample from a person's spontaneous speech, we can infer from it his/her motives through the registration of its stylistic-constructional characteristics. This is the basis of the method developed by the authors: using tape-recorded speech samples

they identify and register each and every stylistic feature of the text. The presence or absence of any particular stylistic feature allows one to infer the presence or absence of the corresponding motive, and the relative proportions of, and relations between the separate stylistic features makes it possible to identify the corresponding proportions and relations between the relevant motives they express, that are characteristic of the individual. (The particular correspondences between given stylistic features and related motives are specified in a table below.)

Investigations started in 1973. Between 1973 and 1981 the authors developed their system by applying it to the motivational analysis of several hundred texts (some of which were their own speech-samples). From 1982 to 1984 a sample text based on 200 subjects was analyzed both by their method and by the TAT and the CPI used as controls. The correlation between their method on the one hand, and the TAT and the CPI on the other, were, in general, quite high. Thus, in those areas where a comparison was possible to make, as, for example, between their test and the CPI, the correspondence was found to be over 80%.

In 1986, to test the reliability of their method, they administered the test *again* to 30 of their original subjects. They found significant changes in the motivational structure of their *younger* subjects whose personalities were not yet fully developed and who showed a rather high degree of conflict. These shifts could be related to corresponding changes in their life circumstances' (such as marriage, divorce, or employment). In contrast, the motivational structure of the *older* subjects proved to be nearly perfectly stable. For them, the repeated test showed, with minor-alterations, the very *same motives* to be *dominant* as those found two years earlier, though both the administration and the analysis of the test was carried out by different investigators this time.

The most important novelty of this method is that the object of analysis is *spoken language* itself. The authors emphasized, that speech is not only a tool of communication, but it is also a *projection* expressing the individual's intentions, aims, and aspirations.

The method is based on the *correspondence between the structures of speech and those of the individual's motives*. However, human speech is never determined by one single principle of construction alone. Even in a short text one can always demonstrate the existence of *super-, sub-, or coordinate* structures of different speech constructions. Since each constructional type is an expression of some particular motive, their *relations* represent the different *super-, sub-, or co-ordinate relations that exist in the underlying motivational structure*. Thus, the fine-grained analysis of text structure can uncover the whole motivational structure of the individual, revealing the organization of the different motives that is, specifically characteristic of him/her.

First of all, the authors try to make clear what types of speech constructions and what kinds of motives they have in mind. For the identification of the separate motives it was necessary to apply motivational categories that a) were clearly *separable* from each other (the results of a subsequent cluster analysis verified that the motivational areas used by them met this criterion), and b) were *present in each individual*. These motives are present in each member of modern societies, and any particular person can be characterized by the *degree*, and the *proportion* of such motivational categories, and by their connections to other motives.

TYPES OF MOTIVES: "DESIRE", "GOAL", "READINESS"

The authors also had to take into consideration the fact that there are *different types* of human motives.

First, there are motives that are *general desires that have no object* (the authors refer to these as "desires"). Second, there are other motives that are *directed towards specific aims* (the authors call these "goals"). Finally, there are those that derive from the *expectations* of the environment. However, these are also inner motives, as in such cases it is our *inclination to conform* to expectations that motivates us (they authors refer to this kind of motive as "readiness").

These three types of motives are similar to Murray's distinction between "needs" and "presses", except that his "press" category is subdivided by them into the categories of "goal" and "readiness". Furthermore, they consider both of these latter categories as somewhat more "internal" motives than are Murray's "presses". This follows from their assumption that the relationship between the individual and the world is not a mechanical opposition between the "inner" and the "outer". Rather, even when the sources of motivation are clearly external, such as a concrete goal, object, or environmental influence, the individual still plays in this relation an important *active* role, and it is this active factor that is the most significant in motivation. On the other hand, Murray's categories of "modal needs" and "effect needs" are practically identical to author's distinction between "desires" and "goal".

The authors also have to assume that *all three motive types can appear in relation to the same object*. For example, let us take the case of the motive of "contact-formation". We can have a "desire" to establish contacts with others (i.e., we suffer from the lack of human contacts), however, *there is no* specific person with whom we would wish form *contact*.

In contrast, sometimes we have a "goal" when establishing contact in which case *we know precisely the person we want to form contact with*. Without a goal desire means the feeling that we should establish contact with a concrete person or group, etc. Finally, we can show a "readiness" to form contacts, when we sense the expectations of our environment as to *what it is like to be a person who "connects well"*, and we are willing, we are "ready" to adopt this model.

The law of the three motivational types is the following: in a given motivational domain (such as "contact-formation" was in the previous example), psychic balance is established in a person when all three motive types are in equilibrium, each being present in comparable proportion and without excluding one another. However, *if only the desire is very strong* (the other two motive types being weak), this means that the individual is highly motivated to form contacts, but he/she *does not know with whom and, even less, how*. Therefore, his/her attempts at establishing contacts are likely to turn out unsuccessfully. (In pathologically extreme cases this results in egoistic-narcissistic symptomatology.) If *only the goal is strong* (but, for example, the desire is weak) then the person clearly feels that there is *some particular person (or persons) he/she should establish relationship with*. However, because of the weakness of his/her desire, he/she has not got enough inner energy to accomplish this. (The pathologically extreme cases of this type most often exhibit the symptoms of persecution mania.) Finally, if it is the readiness that is strong, then the person can establish contacts easily, appearing attractive and sympathetic to others'. Lacking strength in desire and goal, however, he/she feels the abundance of potential relationship to be a *burden*, and has, in fact, a need for much less contacts than what he/she has available. (The extremes in such cases show depressions and anxiety.) For each individual the ideal case would be if the three motivational areas were in harmony. The (exaggerated) domination of either one of the motive types typically becomes a source of psychic problems.

The formation of interpersonal contacts, that the authors used as their example above, is one of the basic motivational domains the authors have studied. All in all, the authors have succeeded in identifying 11 such basic domains.

It is not possible within the confines of such a short paper to give a detailed rationale for why they used those and only those 11 motivational areas that they did. In their book (Kapitány and Kapitány 1988) published in Hungary they provided a detailed account of the relevant hypothesis and their empirical confirmation.

In this article the authors can only give a brief summary of that the basis of this motivational system is the historical development of the human personality. *Each motivational area (and its corresponding speech construction) becomes dominant, universal and general at different periods of historical development.* Thus, the 11 motivational areas represent different historical periods in the motivational structure of the individual.

*The 11 motivational domains are as follows:*

- 1.) *Apperception of environmental influences* (the ability and effort to obtain more and richer *stimuli, impressions, and experiences*).
- 2.) *Contact-formation* (the ability and effort to form *personal* relationships in which the other is important for us as a *person*).
- 3.) *Organization of information* (the ability and effort to organize and systematize information from a given perspective).
- 4.) *Following authority models* (the ability and effort to interiorize, and be guided by ready-made patterns or models).
- 5.) *Task-orientation* (the ability and effort, in relation to someone or something, to work, to carry out some particular task, or to make others work or do a particular job).
- 6.) *Morality* (the ability and effort to give justifications for one's actions and decisions).
- 7.) *Possession* (the ability and effort to *tie others to oneself*, or to *acquire* things, knowledge, etc.).
- 8.) *Dominance* (the ability and effort to achieve recognition in some area; thus, deviating somewhat from the every-day usage of the term, there is no necessary implication here of achieving control, or placing oneself *over* others).
- 9.) *Way of life* (the ability and effort to establish a way of life or conduct that is *matched to ones personality*).
- 10.) *Freedom* (the ability and effort to fight against and change the circumstance's that are, in some respect, limiting the person).
- 11.) *Aim of life* (the ability and effort to organize the different elements of life around some central value or some basic principle directing the particular aspects of life, such as one's vocation, family, or, simply, "survival").

Concerning some of these areas, one might raise the question whether they are indeed present in everybody. But even the most cynical criminal makes some effort, to justify his/her actions (not to speak about gangster-solidarity), and such efforts, in the present use of the term, already belong to the sphere of a certain kind of "morality". Even the laziest person feels the need to mobilize others for his/her service, which is also a kind of task-motivation. And however primitive a person may be, he/she will still have the need to provide some simple explanation for the world around him. For this he/she will need to establish some, even if only superstitious, relations among his/her different beliefs, and this is already an example of organization of information.

The authors have thus identified three motive types for each of the 11 motivational domains, i.e., all in all, they have worked with 33 motives. *Each one of these 33 motives has its own specific expression in speech.* Whenever a given motive becomes active in a person, it is immediately projected as well, and when more than one motive are present simultaneously, they will all be projected. The motives appear in speech in the same proportion and hierarchy in which they exert their influence on the speaker. Each of the 33 motives directly affect the speaker's *perspective*. They represent different kinds of relations, *different attitudes towards the world*, each of them providing a different way of grouping the elements of the world that the mind apprehends (and that later get expressed in speech. Thus, it is *these separate attitude structures* that appear in the *33 different modes of speech construction* (and from these it becomes possible) then, to infer through analysis the underlying motives. *Speech constructions of motivational types in different motivational areas.*

The relationships among the separate motivational forms and speech structures are depicted in the Tables below:

Motive 1.		
<i>Perception of</i> = This motive corresponds roughly to Tolman's or Hebb's "exploratory motivation, <i>environmental</i> Klineberg's "need for sensation"; McDougall's "curiosity" and amusement, <i>influences</i> Murray's "need for sentience"; Cattell's Q-factor; Zuckerman's "sensation seeking", etc.		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
Indicators: The given speech units are serially related to each other in an <i>associative</i> structure	The <i>repetition</i> of meaningful units (the repetition of function words is not included here	<i>Evocative</i> units (the use of adjectives, word formations, onomatopoeia, etc. expressing happy, sad, melancholic, etc. moods)

Motive 2.		
<i>Contact-formation</i> = This corresponds roughly to Levine's "relatedness", Horney's "need for love" need for affection and approval, Guilford's "need of sociability", Murray's "affiliation", "counteraction", "attainment of sympathy", Allport's "affiliation", Rogers's "need for acceptance", Ericson's "trust", the importance of "love" in Fromm, Maslow, Leary, and others, indirectly, to McDougall's "feeling of loneliness" as a motive, etc.		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
Indicators: The speaker discuss something from the point of view of what it means to him/her, describing his/her <i>inner-feelings</i> ,	Describing other people's actions or statements in <i>relation to himself</i> , interpreting them as actions directed towards him.	<i>Reacting to or anticipating other's assumed, or real opinion</i> , subjecting oneself to other's, assumed criticism, etc.

Motive 3.		
<i>Organization of</i> = This corresponds roughly to Murray's and <i>information</i> Guilford's "need for order", Murray's "need for understanding", Morris's "organizational activity"; some of its elements can also be found in categories such as Cattell's "desire for knowledge", or Murray's "need for cognition"		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
Indicators: <i>Enumeration</i> , division into subparts, etc. (Firstly... secondly... thirdly...)	<i>Framing</i> " the text (returning at the end to the introductory part, or, simply, providing some closing indicating that we have finished our description)	Overriding somebody else's, or else's or our own earlier opinion; <i>debate, modification</i>

Motive 4.		
<i>Following</i> = Possible related categories: Freud's <i>authority models</i> "super-ego", Maslow's "need for dependence, respect" Cattell's "E, F and Q <sup>3</sup> factors", Witkin's "field dependence", Murray's "deference, simlance, succourance", Tolman's "dependence", Leary's, Guilford's "self-submission", etc.		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
Indicators: <i>Correction</i> , restarting in order to find the best possible expression for our message	The use of language <i>characteristic of a particular social stratum</i> (depending on what social group, or individual belonging to it, provides the authority model being followed) (e.g., literary language, specified scientific language, political jargon, jargon specific to a generation, slang, etc.)	Describing oneself and others by emphasizing some particular <i>role</i> they have (e.g. rank, vocation, familial role, generation, gender), instead of characterizing their unique features. (E.g. "I'm a teacher who..." included here is the use of <i>plural</i> when describing things related to oneself: "We, Americans, etc.)

Motive 5.		
<i>Task-orientation</i> = Possible related categories: Murphy's "fulfillment of the one's duty", Maslow's "task-centeredness", partially related are Murray's "succordance" and "nurturance"		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
Indicators: The use of <i>emotionality evoking elements</i> /invoking, pathos, self-pity weakness, and smallness as emotion evoking elements, etc./	Emphasized logical construction, emphasis on logical relations, <i>logical argumentation</i> .	<i>Thinking aloud</i> , the description of the thought strategies of the speaker, the enumeration of the speaker's tasks, duties and steps to be taken.

Motive 6.		
<i>Morality</i> = Possible corresponding categories: Tolman's "self-justification", Allport's "assuming responsibility"; Freud's "super-ego" concept is also related to this category, and so is Leary's "responsible type", etc.		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
Indicators: <i>Absurd, grotesque</i> turns of speech, <i>jokes, irony</i> : any expression that shows something in an 'up-side-down", unfamiliar perspective.	Emphasizing some point of view, that corresponds to <i>normality, standard rules, habitual, general opinions</i> concerning any behavior, opinion, etc.	Presenting the object of discussion in <i>different situations</i> , pointing out the differences among the situations, and emphasizing the <i>situation-dependent</i> nature of things.

Motive 7.		
<i>Possession</i> = Roughly related categories: in Allport and in several neo-Freudists "ego-extension", McDougall's "feeling of ownership", Murphy's "possession of material goods", Murray's "acquisition" and corresponding to "possession" as related to "contact-formation" is e.g. Maslow's "belongingness", Fromm's "rootedness", etc.		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
Indicators: Describing certain things as being <i>distant</i> in time or space from the perspective of longing for, or being anxious about them).	Describing events, people or things as <i>extraordinary</i> .	<i>Reference</i> to memories or knowledge believed to be shared with the listener or reader, their recall or <i>application to some actuality</i> .

Motive 8.		
<p><i>Dominance</i> = Roughly corresponding related categories: Tolman's "domination", "power" in Murphy, Maslow, Adler, Horney, etc., Murray's "dominance" and "recognition", Cattell's Q-factor, and "competitive self-esteem", Guilford's, Maslow's "self-confidence, esteem-needs", Guilford's "general ambition", Murray-Kluckhohn's "authority", Mc Dougall's "elation" (pride, dominance, etc.) Allport's and different behaviorist's "desire for success", Horney's "prestige", "attainment of personal admiration", "need of power", etc.</p>		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
<p>Indicators: The formation of <i>polar contrasts</i> in which the two things compared appear as extreme opposites ("on the one hand... while on the other hand...")</p>	<p>Emphasis on a <i>common feature</i> shared by a pair of possible opposites, or on their underlying identical aspects. (When this motive appears on its own, without being "intended", then obviously, the two contrasting sides of the opposition do not receive emphasis).</p>	<p>Setting forth what actual steps have to be taken <i>to realize</i> some implicitly and explicitly stated <i>ideal or goal</i>.</p>

Motive 9.		
<p><i>Freedom</i> = Related categories: "need for competence", "need for autonomy", "privacy", Tolman's "aggression against external obstacles, Guilford's "freedom", Horney's "self-sufficiency" and independence", Murray's "infavoidance", "defendance", "rejection", "autonomy", Lear's, Fromm's "non-conformism", Maslow's "increase in autonomy", "self-realization", "self-actualization", etc.</p>		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
<p>Indicators: <i>Exaggerated, overemphasized, dramatical exposition of human relations, actions, events.</i></p>	<p>The <i>object</i> of identification or hatred shown by <i>overstatements or absolutistic terms</i>.</p>	<p><i>Distancing oneself through a change of perspective</i> from exaggerated identifications or oppositions; looking at the object of identification objectively, as if "from the outside" or understanding the forces of opposition or the object of hatred "from the inside".</p>

Motive 10.		
<p><i>An own way of life</i> = Relevant categories: "security seeking" in Thomas, Guilford and Maslow; Murray's "striving for autonomy", "harmavoidance", Levine's "need for self-maintenance and protection", Maslow's "need for habitual rhythm" and "need for safety", Guilford's "need for comfort", "need for order", etc.</p>		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
<p>Indicators: The description of the effect that some circumstance, object, environment, or event taking place in a given environment, has on <i>the subjective state of mind</i> of individual. (A psychological "analysis")</p>	<p>A <i>figurative, detailed description</i> of some object, concrete environment, or interaction with objects.</p>	<p>Describing life processes, people, objects, and series of events, with an emphasis on their <i>mutual interrelatedness</i> in the process of development.</p>

Motive 11.		
<p><i>Aim of life</i> = Relevant categories: Maslow's "need for self-realization", "self-actualization", Fromm's "creating one's own life", Leontieff's: "aim of life", etc.</p>		
DESIRE	GOAL	READINESS
<p>Indicators: The kind of speech construction that, <i>starting from the individual, the specific, the phenomenal event, develops towards the general, social, common, or other global relationships</i> that determine the former, and turning back from the more general towards the particular... (and a rather redundant speaking)</p>	<p><i>Simultaneously capturing both the individual and the social aspects</i> underlying some phenomenon (emphasizing the social aspects in individual, or the individual aspects in social phenomena). The sentence is just like a concise definition.</p>	<p>The utilization of speech <i>constitutions expressing passion</i> enhancing accumulative structures, thought-rhythms, longer passages produced on sudden impulse, etc.) emotionally changed communication of <i>thoughts</i>.</p>

The literature on the psychology of personality and motivation research provides, apart from the ones described above, numerous further categories that do not correspond to a given motivational domain in this system, but rather to its *forms of expression*. (These refer to *attitude models* relating particular motives to corresponding speech constructions, as they appear in the forms of expression that "signal" the motives.) Such are, for example, the series of categories (e.g., "self-monitoring", "social feedback", or Cooley's "Looking Glass Self") that correspond in this system to reflective self-evaluation and to the *attitudinal expression in speech of the readiness* to form personal contacts (rather than directly to the *motive* of "contact-formation" itself). The attitudinal speech expression signaling the readiness to follow authority models was the authors' "role" category which corresponds to the different role-categories that appear frequently in the literature (e.g., as in Parsons, Linton, Goffman, and others). The manifestation of Kapitány's "dominance" category was the "realization of ideals and aims". Here the related categories are, for example, Maslow's "*sense of reality*", or Guilford's "*objectivity*". In description of authors, the motive of "environmental influences" as "desire" and as "goal" is "characterized by speech constructions involving repetition" (i.e., focusing on the object of attention) or by "associative deviation" from the object. It is this aspect that is captured by Piaget's concept of "centration-decentration" as well. According to analyses of authors, the attitudinal changes manifestations of the motive of "freedom" are the "speech in point of view", or the distancing oneself from extreme identification or exaggerated opposition. Here again we can find corresponding categories in the literature, such as Anna Freud's or Bettelheim's "*identification with the aggressor*", Guilford's "*self-control*" and "*sense of cooperation*". In essence, Freud's "*sublimation*" can also be considered as a related category.

Thus, from the point of view of authors all these psychic mechanisms that are, in general, *not viewed as motivational categories*, are, in fact, *expressions* of motives.

The relatedness of motives, on the one hand, and modes of speech constructions, on the other, is proven by a large number of analyses. In the Hungarian publications of authors, they provide extended illustrations on actual sample materials as to how the given motive appears in the different speech construction.

#### A SHORT ANALYSIS OF AN INTERVIEW

In this short paper let us examine an expert from an interview with a well-known film-director (i.e., from a recorded life speech sample). In the first expert, the director speaks about how one of his films came to existence:

"D. L. gave me a unique and very special deal. He called me up and said. "David, I have crazy idea. You want to make Blue Velvet?" I said, "Yes," and he said, "You want total artistic control?" And I said, "Yes." So he says, "You cut your salary, you cut your budget, and I'll give you total artistic control." So I cut my salary in half, I cut the budget down almost in half and made it. And D. was true on his word. He gave me total artistic control.

Then he speaks about the female protagonist:

"No casting agent ever mentioned her. I didn't even know I. R. was an actress. I just happened to meet her in a restaurant in New York and we discussed the movie. I told her I was casting it, not even realizing she was and actress. Then a week later I was looking at

a copy of Screen World and I found a picture of her from a film she did with the Taviani brothers, and I said, "Good night! She's an actress!" So I got a script to her that afternoon, and she loved it instantly. She felt that she knew D. and that she knew the part. So, because of her attitude and because I felt she was right in every way, it happened."

Then about the male protagonist:

"D. H.'s name had come up in meetings before, but as soon as it did, it was shot down because of his reputation. Not because he wasn't right, but because his reputation was so strong that it was just out of the question. And that was sad, because he had been off everything for over a year and a half and no one really knew that. So his manager told me that D. was totally different and that we could phone the producers whom he had just worked with to check and then D. called and said. "I have to play Frank because I am Frank." Well, that almost blew the deal right there. But he was truly great to work with."

Then about actors in general:

"I sort of work the other way around. I get a part and say, "Oh, boy, wouldn't they be perfect?" But there are people I would like to write a part for I'd like to write a part for Isabella again. I'd like to write a part for I. D. again. J. H., also. I like to work with people I've worked with before. They become like friends and family. I'd rather go through the war with people I get along with."

Then about the film:

"I hate talking about how things are, done, it's like a magic trick: As soon as know how it was done, they say, "Oh." The curiosity instantly vanishes."

And then he describes the role of a painter in his becoming a film director:

"I remember one in particular: B.K. He was a painter. Until I met him, I thought that Van Gogh was the last man who painted. I was thirteen and lived in the Northwest, so for me there were no painters. When I heard that Bushnell was a painter, and that he did for a living. I nearly passed out. I became feverish. I didn't want to go to school anymore. It was an awakening. By the time I was a junior in high school. I started renting a room next his studio. My father paid half the rent, which was a super-cool thing for my father to do, because having a studio was not a normal thing. High school didn't have a big hold on me. I knew I was going in a different direction. But life back then was fantastic."

When analyzing the text with Kapitány method, it becomes apparent that the speaker has very strong "*environmental influence*" and "*possession*" motives, as both of these appear in whatever or whoever he speaks about. Let us take as an example the "possession" as "goal" motive (which is manifested in the form of describing everything as *extraordinary*, even things that might seem quite ordinary from another's point of view, or in the form of noticing the extraordinary in everything).

Thus, the director introduces the producer's offer as something extraordinary, as something very special: "He gave me a unique and very special deal." "You want total artistic control?" "He gave me total artistic control." Of course, the reader can say now: it is not all surprising that the director describes the offer as extraordinary when, in fact, that is what it really is. While this is true, it is also the case that a person with highly motivating "possession"-goals focuses his attention precisely on such events: this type of person is *always* full of interesting anecdotes. Furthermore, this is not the only event that is described as very special in the interview; rather, nearly everything is presented as out of the ordinary. Thus, for example, it is again the unexpected, atypical aspects of the situation that are emphasized by the director when he describes the choice of the actress (they met by chance, he had no idea that she was an actress, then, an unexpected turn of events: he found a photo of her, and they immediately started to work, etc.). This is what is usually described as "just like in fairy-tales"; – and his *fabulousness* is always the manifestation of the "possession" motive as "goal" (and as "desire"). The choice of the male actor is also characterized by out of the ordinary features. Here again, it is described as a striking fact that the actor does not simply accept the role, but he is miraculously suited for it: he is *"the role himself"*. The relationship that the director established with the actors is also characterized as something special: "They become like friends and family." Until now, our example illustrated the extraordinariness of people. However, it is not only such people that represent goals of "possession" for the speaker, it is not only them he wants to consider as belonging to him. He sees in this light the whole *shooting of-the film* as well: "It's like a magic trick." His getting to know a "real-life" painter is again discussed as an extraordinary experience:

"I thought that Van Gogh was the last man who painted". "When I heard that Bushnell was a painter, and that he did it for a living, I nearly passed out. I became feverish. I didn't want to go to school anymore."

The other dominant motivating force in the case of this person in *"environmental influence"*. This motive appears especially strong as "goal" (strong interest in, and active attention towards certain things), which is signaled in speech by *repeated-returns* to some topic. This general *curiosity* appears in the text in many places, and from *what* is being repeated, the *primary object of interest* can be inferred. Such topics include the reduction of *expenditures*: "You cut your salary, you cut your budget." "So I cut my salary, I cut the budget..." and the problem of *artistic-control* over the film: "You want total artistic control?... He gave me total artistic control." In the next passage we find a repetition again, suggesting the speaker's interest, of the fact that I. R. is an *"actress"* and that the *knew* the character she had to play: "I didn't even know I. R. was an actress... not even realizing she was an actress. 'Good night! She's an actress!'" In the case of the male actor, the topic that is being repeated (i.e., the object of the speaker's "environmental influence"-goal and, thus, of his interest) is the *reputation* of the actor: "I have to play Frank because I *am* Frank."

Another such element in relation to the shooting of the film is *the job itself*, i.e., the question of *"how to make it"*: "...how things are done..., ...how it was done...".

A further reoccurring object of interest that appears as a repeated theme in the director's speech is that of *writing a role* for his favorite actors. Here, then, there is correspondence between the content of the text and the real motive: on the one hand, the director is telling us that he would like to write for them a new role, while, on the other hand, the motivational analysis also suggests that writing roles for these people is an

"environmental influence"-goal, i.e., an object of *interest* for the speaker. "I would like to write a part for. I'd like to write a part for Isabella again. I'd like to write a part for I. D. again."

Even if the speaker *denied* in words that he was interested in such an activity, the fact of repetition in the text would still convince us of the *opposite*; this being one of the advantages of the application of Kapitány method. When considering all the 33 motives in the text (that is, in the whole text, not only in the experts quoted above), the two that prove to be most powerful are the "environmental influences" and the "possession" motives. This is not to mean, however, that the others are not present in some *subordinate* form, or being connected to *certain themes*. From this point of view, it is interesting to consider the last passage where the director is speaking of the painter. The expressive features that are salient in the description of certain people or of certain significant changes in life circumstances allow us to infer exactly *what* meaning that given person or event had - in the speaker's life; *what motivating forces* became activated in him. These are at least as important in identifying the personality profile or the motivational structure of a particular individual as are those motivating forces that characterize his personality *in general*. For example, in relation to the painter the strength of the "desire to form contacts" is conspicuous. This is manifested in the increased proportion of elements referring to inner, personal feelings in this passage. (It is a question of further analysis whether it was the meeting with the *painter* that made this motive so important for the speaker, or whether the relatively *stronger influence* of the motive was characteristic of him *in the particular period of his life* when he happened to meet the painter.) It is certainly a fact that in this passage there is an increase in "*self-centeredness*", the expression of "contact-formation" as "desire": "I remember... I was thirteen and lived in the Northwest..." "I thought that Van Gogh was the last man who painted..." "I became feverish..."

Furthermore, the expressions of "contact-formation" as "*goal*" also become more frequent (describing things *in relation to himself*, and presenting the painter in the role of *exerting influence on him*).

A further motive that appears in this passage in relation to the painter is that of "*freedom*" as "*desire*", the expression of which is the exaggerated, over-emphasized presentation of the relationship. That is, apart from actual extraordinary features (i.e., extraordinary, but *real* elements noticed by the director), we also find obvious *exaggerations* as well:

"I nearly passed out. I became feverish. I didn't want to go to school anymore. It was an awakening... Life back then was 'fantastic.' The appearance of the "freedom" motive as "desire" suggests that the strengthening of the aspiration for *autonomy* came about as a result of getting acquainted with the painter. This is the motive that underlies the change that the speaker himself also gives expression to (describing, it according to his dominant "possession" as "goal" motive as extraordinary: as a "new life"). (The fact that he chooses to express this with counter-punctuation /"until I meet him, I started..."/suggests-that in his life situation the "dominance" as "desire" motive was also active in the speaker.)

#### FURTHER POSSIBILITIES OF KAPITANY-METHOD OF TEXT ANALYSIS:

##### RELATIONSHIP, DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES OF MOTIVES

Of course, what the authors could demonstrate in the short space available for them here does not correspond to a full analysis of a person's motivational structure: it is not more than a "trial boring" using our procedure. However, the authors hope that this short illustration is sufficient to demonstrate the nature of their method.

The full analysis is aimed at the overall characterization of an individual's motivational structure; it does not stop at the simple identification of the dominant motives of the person analyzed. Rather, it provides a characterization of the exact relationships that exist among the different motives, their sub-, super-, and coordinations, their oppositions or mutual facilitations, and of the history of their development. The primary aim of the analysis is to uncover *the motives that are active at the time when the text is formulated*. However, as the example above illustrates, when the text describes past events and relations, the Kapitány-method also brings out the speaker's *attitudes* to these *as they were in the past*. As the schools of psychoanalysis rightly state, our actual motivational structure is never totally independent from its antecedents. While in the opinion of authors they have no absolute determining value, the *past* motives are, nevertheless, rather important to fully understand the *present* motivational structure. It is the development and change of motives, and the stratification of motivational experiences that lead to the solidification of motivational structure. By adulthood, this results in the establishment of a more or less *stable* hierarchy and organization of the particular motives.

The mentioned example also illustrates the fact that the *dominant motives* of an individual's motivational structure are continuously present in the person's particular motives and their expressions, manifesting themselves in a great variety of different topics. Thus, through the analysis we can first uncover the continuously present, dominant motives of the individual, and then we can proceed with the separate investigation of those *actual* motives that are related to some particular situation, person, or event. As the example shows, through questions relating to one's past it is possible to discover *the history of the development of the person's motivations*. This, moreover, also allows us to uncover the sources of the problematic aspects of the motivational structure, and to identify the loci of the disequilibria among the particular "desires", "goals", and types of "readiness".

This analysis can be further refined. Through the examination of their correlations, we can identify *the motives that systematically co-occur* as well as those that *show no relationship with each other*. The presence of the latter kind of motives indicates that at some point in the individual's life a strong barrier was raised separating the two motives which, therefore, cannot be mobilized simultaneously. (Such a person, for example, cannot strive for "contact-formation" and for achievement of his "aim of life" *at the same time*, as for him, these two motives are always in opposition to each other.) This kind of "either-or" relation between motives always acts as a source of conflict, since in an optimally healthy state any motive can co-occur with any other; - of course, such an optimally healthy state does not exist.

We have a particularly strong source of conflict when there is a lack of contact between "desire" and "goal", or between "desire" and "readiness", both *pertaining to the same motivational area*. This means that a person is unable to find ways to realize his desires (for example, he strongly wishes to feel free, but can never find the solution through which he could achieve this state). Or, in contrast, it is also possible that, though a person can satisfy other, people's expectations in a given area, nevertheless, he or she, himself or herself, has no inner need for that sort of thing (that is, while he/she is satisfying the expectations of others, e.g., in "contact-formation", he/she can never feel that he/she really needs contacts). In many cases the problem lies not in the fact that "desire", "goal" and "readiness" are represented in unequal *proportions*, but rather in that they are *not related* at all. Thus, it is possible that a person has each of the motive types in sufficient proportion, but still he/she is unable to mobilize them in a coordinated manner.

The authors have to mention these facts in order to point out that the motivational analysis of texts as described above is able to bring out very subtle connections as well.

#### CHARACTERIZATION OF THE PERSONALITY

Thus, through the analysis of the psychological deep structure that is manifested in speech constructions we can arrive at a deeper and more complex characterization of an individual's personality than is possibly via content analysis.

We consider it to be one of the advantages of the Kapitany-method that it makes it possible to give a *unique structural characterization* for each person. (Considering only the possible variations of the different strength-orderings of the motive types, the 33 factorial gives us such an enormous number ( $10^{37}$ ) that is far greater than the current human population of the Earth ( $6 \times 10^9$ ). Furthermore, if we also take into consideration the particular relationships among individual motives, the number of possible variations becomes  $10^{159}$ !) Therefore, the overall profile we get is absolutely unique, and, as such, it can give a *characterization of the personality* through the description of the motivational structure of the person analyzed. The aim of this analysis is not to classify individuals into *types* (extrovert, introvert, performance-oriented, success-oriented, anal-erotic, oral-erotic, etc.), but rather to capture the *uniqueness* of their personality. This kind of characterization attempts to unify the advantages of both the ideographic and the nomothetic approaches.

A further potentiality inherent in this method is related to the fact that the motives examined are present in *each and every* individual, and their proportion and relations are essentially independent of the person's cultural background, or, to use B. Bernstein's expression, of whether the person expresses himself in "elaborate" or "restricted" verbal code. This is true in spite of the fact that the analysis is carried out on such a highly culturally determined text as the spoken language, since the kind of material we analyze, in contrast to other aspects of linguistic performance such as vocabulary or grammatical acceptability, belongs to those parts of language use that are not basically culture dependent. Of course, whether the language of the text is expressed in "elaborate" or "restricted" code, does have an influence on the construction of the text or on its expressive richness. However, it is clear that, for example, enumeration (as the expression of the "organization of information" motive as "desire") can be present in a rather primitively constructed text just as easily as in a complicatedly formulated text, and the same holds for modification of earlier utterances, or for speaking about oneself, etc.

Thus, the analysis can be applied to anyone irrespective of the level of the person's expressive ability, as long as we know the code system in which he expresses himself.

Within the bounds of this short paper the authors cannot give a detailed characterization of how their hypothesis relates to the different theories of motivation and psychological schools, though they can state that their concept of motivation cannot be directly assimilated into any of the main psycho-logical approaches. At the same time, it is also the case that all the major theories have some features that are also characteristic of their method of analysis.

For example, according to Maslow one of Freud's basic discoveries was the realization that the cause of most neuroses lies in our fear of knowing ourselves. Therefore, we should discover our deepest inner reality.

Classical psycho-analysis in one such approach that attempts to direct us to our "essence" though the uncovering of *underlying factors*, and so is the analytic method what has been introduced here.

The authors are also in agreement with Rogers who based his so-called "client-centered" therapy on the assumption that the different motivational structures are on equal footing: the analyst should not qualify the patient's motives. Rather, he should identify himself with the patient's motivational system and, at most, attempt to help to formulate the latter's motives more precisely. The authors also agree with Rogers's principle that *every individual has the capacity to make his motives conscious*, and therefore the task of the psychologist should not be more than to *help this process along*. The method of analysis which was described here can be acquired and used to analyze our motives and to make them conscious.

The final object of this method of analysis is the *overall motivational structure*. The very same motivational forces (and the same types of constructions) can be embedded in rather different overall structures in different individuals, and, as a result, their significance will also be different. The functioning of the personality is *determined by the whole structure*, and so the principles of *Gestalt-psychology*, which hold that the same elements can have different meanings in different configurations, are also relevant here.

But in so far as the authors starting point is human *behavior* (in particular, speech behavior which is the primary object of their study), they can also build on the foundations of *behaviorism*. This is the case because they also find it important to investigate the individual through his *natural, real-life behavior* and not in artificial experimental situations which impoverish and distort the real nature of behavior.

While accepting certain relevant points of views of the different schools, the authors also emphasize that, due to the classic schools' different basic principles, their use and interpretation of the relevant categories and principles are not identical to the authors, and so they should clearly delimit from the terminology of classic schools their own use of these categories. This, however, could be properly done only through a full critical analysis of the categories in question together with a systematic demonstrative presentation of their own motive concept: but, unfortunately, this is not possible within the limited scope of the present paper.

The authors hope that even if they could not provide a full discussion of the conceptual basis of their approach to motivation, they have nevertheless, succeeded in demonstrating the essence of their "discovery", which is the method of analysis itself. Their method, i.e., the identification and analysis of motives on the basis of speech constructions, can serve not only a social psychological analysis, but, as a rather precise tool for the *uncovering of the causes of different conflicts and psychic disturbances*, it promises to be also applicable in *psychopathology as a diagnostic (and therapeutic) tool*.

Furthermore, as it can be easily acquired by practically any-one, their method could turn out to be highly useful in *pedagogy* to help in the *identification of the motivational structure and the mobilizable inner need-structure of the individual*. (For the same reason, this analytic method can be applied in any other field where one intends to build on making people more interested.) Finally, as a tool to identify the motives that manifest themselves in literature, this method can be successfully applied in the *psychology of arts*, or in art-analysis when it is carried out from a psychological perspective, as well as in several other fields not mentioned here.

Budapest, 1986

## REFERENCES

- Abbott, K. A. (1976) Culture Change and the Persistence of the Chinese Personality. In DeVos, G. (ed.) *Responses to Change*. New York: D. Van Nostrand, 74–104.
- Allport, G. W. (1957) European and American Theories of Personality. In David, H. P. – von Bracken, H. (ed) *Perspectives in Personality Theory*. New York: Basic Books.
- Allport, G. W. (1958) What Units Shall We Employ? In Lindzey, G. (ed.) *Assessment of Human Motives*. New York: Evergreen.
- Berkovitz, L. (1969) Social Motivation. In Lindzey, G. – Aronson, E. (ed.) *The Handbook of Social Psychology*. Addison Wesley.
- Bernstein, B. (1964) Aspects of Language in the Genesis of the Social Process. In Hymes, D. (ed.) *Language in Culture and Society*. Harper and Row.
- Bernstein, B. (1966) Elaborated and Restricted Codes: Their Social Origins and Some Consequences. In Smith, A. G. (ed.) *Communication and Culture*. New York – Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Bernstein, B. (1970) Some Sociological Determinants of Perception. In Fishman, J. A. (ed.) *Readings in the Sociology of Language*. Mouton.
- Birdwhistell, R. L. (1966) Some Relations between American Kinesics and Spoken American English. In Smith, A. G. (ed.) *Communication and Culture*. New York – Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Carroll, J. B. (1960) Vectors of Prose Style. In Sebeok, T. A. (ed.) *Style in Language*. New York – London: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Wiley.
- Cattell, L. B. (1958) The Dynamic Calculus: A System of Concepts Derived from Objective Motivation Measurement. In Lindzey, G. (ed.) *Assessment of Human Motives*. New York: Evergreen.
- Chomsky, N. (1966) Three Models for the Description of Language. In Smith, A. G. (ed.) *Communication and Culture*, New York – Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Cicourel, A. V. (1972) Basic and Normative Rules in the Negotiation of Status and Role. In Sudnow, D. (ed.) *Studies in Social Interaction*, New York – London: The Free Press – Collier-Macmillan.
- Cushman, D. P. and Craig, R. I. (1976) Communication Systems: Interpersonal Implications. In Miller, G. R. (ed.) *Explorations in Interpersonal Communication*, Sage.
- Erikson, E. H. (1953) Growth and Crises of the "Healthy Personality". In Kluckhohn, C. and Murray, H. A. (eds.) *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*, London.
- Erwin-Tripp, S. (1970) Analysis of the Interaction of Language. Topic and Listener. In Fishman, J. A. (ed) *Readings in the Sociology of Language*, Mouton.
- Erwin-Tripp, S. (1972) On Sociolinguistic Rules: Alternation and Co-occurrence. In Gumperz, J. J. – Hymes, D. (eds) *The Ethnography of Communication*. New York – Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Eysenck, H. J. (1957) Characterology. Stratification Theory and Psychoanalysis: An Evacuation. In David, H. P. – von Bracken, H. (ed.) *Perspectives in Personality Theory*. New York: Basic Books.
- Festinger, L. (1958) The Motivating Effect of Cognitive Dissonance. In Lindzey, G. (ed.) *Assessment of Human Motives*. New York: Evergreen.

- Frank, L. K. (1953) Cultural Control and Physiological Autonomy. In Kluckhohn, C. – Murray, H. A. (eds) (1953) *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*. London.
- Garfinkel, H. (1972) Studies of the Routine Grounds of Every-day Activities. In Sudnow, D. (ed.) *Studies in Social Interaction*. New York – London: The Free Press – Collier-Macmillan.
- Hymes, D. (1972) Models of the Interaction of Language and Social Life. In Gumperz, J. J. – Hymes, D. (eds.) *The Ethnography of Communication*. New York – Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Hymes, D. (1970) Ethnography of Speaking. In Fishman, J. A. (ed.) *Readings in the Sociology of Language*, Mouton.
- Jakobson, R. (1960) Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics. In Sebeok, T. A. (ed.) *Style in Language*. New York – London: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Wiley.
- Janis, I.L. (1958) The Psychoanalytic Interview as an Observational Method. In Lindzey, G. (ed.) *Assessment of Human Motives*. New York: Evergreen.
- Joos, U. (1970) The Isolation of Styles. In Fishman, J. A. (ed.) *Readings in the Sociology of Language*. Mouton.
- Kelly, G. A. (1970) Brief Introduction to Personal Construct Theory. In Bannister, D. (ed.) *Perspectives in Personal Construct Theory*, Academic Press.
- Kelly, G. A. (1958) Man's Construction of his Alternatives. In Lindzey, G. (ed.) *Assessment of Human Motives*. New York: Evergreen.
- Kluckhohn, F. R. (1953) Dominant and Variant Value Orientations. In Kluckhohn, C. – Murray, H. A. (1953) *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture*. London.
- Labov, W. (1972) Rules for Ritual Insults. In Sudnow, D. (ed.) *Studies in Social Interaction*, New York – London: The Free Press – Collier-Macmillan.
- McGuire, N. J. (1969) The Nature of Attitudes and Attitude Change. In Lindzey, G. – Aronson, E. (eds) *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, Addison Wesley.
- Mischel, W (1978) Personality Research: A Look at the Future. In London, H (ed.) *Personality a New Look at Metatheories*, Hemisphere Publ. Co.
- Moerman, M (1972) Analysis of the Conversation: Providing Accounts, Finding Breaches and Taking Sides. In Sudnow, D (ed) *Studies in Social Interaction*, New York – London: The Free Press – Collier-Macmillan.
- Murray, H. A. (1958) Drive, Strategy, Measurement and Our Way of Life. In Lindzey, G (ed) *Assessment of Human Motives*. New York: Evergreen.
- Nuttin, J. (1957) Personality Dynamics. In David, H. P. – von Bracken, H. (ed) *Perspectives in Personality Theory*. New York: Basic Books.
- Osgood, C. E. (1960) Some Effects of Motivation on Style of Encoding. In Sebeok, T. A. (ed.) *Style in Language*. New York – London: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Inst. of Technology – Wiley.
- Pike, K. L. (1966) Etic and Emic Standpoints for the Description of Behavior. In Smith, A. G. (ed.) *Communication and Culture*, New York – Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Pike, K. L. (1964) Towards a Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior. In Hymes, D. (ed.) *Language in Culture and Society*, Harper and Row.

- Sachs, H. (1972) On the Analyzability of Stories by Children. In Gumperz, J. J. – Hymes, D. (eds.) *The Ethnography of Communication*. New York – Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Schatzmann, L. – Strauss, A. (1966) Social Clan and Modes of Communication. In Smith, A. G. (ed.) *Communication and Culture*, New York – Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Sebeok, T. A. (ed.) (1960) *Style in Language*. New York – London: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Inst. of Technology – Wiley.
- Shibutani, T. (1961) *Society and Personality. An Interactionist Approach to Social Psychology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Slobin, D. I. (1971) *Psycholinguistics*. Glenview Ill – London: Scott Foresman.
- Small, S. A. – Zeldin, K. S. – Savin-Williams, R. L. (1983) In Search of Personality Traits: a Multimethod Analysis of Naturally Occurring Prosocial and Dominance Behavior. *Journal of Personality*, 1.
- Smelser, N. J. – Smelser, W. T. (1963) *Personality and Social Systems*. New York – London: Wiley.
- Smith, A. G. (ed.) (1966) *Communication and Culture. Readings in the Codes of Human Interaction*. New York – Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Snyder, M. – Kiendzierski, D. (1981) Choosing Social Situations: the Origins of Correspondence Between Attitudes and Behavior. *Journal of Personality*, 3.
- Solomon, J. (1981) Dimensions of Interpersonal Behavior: A Convergent Validation Within a Cognitive Interactionist Framework. *Journal of Personality*, 1.
- Stagner, R. (1974) *Psychology of Personality*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1986) A Triangular Theory of Love. *Psychological Review*, vol. 93, no.2.
- Sudnow, D. (ed) (1972) *Studies in Social Interaction*. New York – London: The Free Press – Collier-Macmillan.
- Thomas, W. I. (1965) *Person und Sozialverhalten* [Social Behavior and Personality]. Neuwied: Luchterhand.
- Tunnel, G. (1980) Intraindividual Consistency in Personality Assessment. The Effect of Self-Monitoring. *Journal of Personality*, 2.
- Underwood, B. – Froming, W. F. – Moore, B. S. (1980) Mood and Personality: A Search for the Casual Relationship. *Journal of Personality*, 1.
- Vernon, M. D. (1971) *Human Motivation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vernon, P. E. (1961) *The Structure of Human Abilities*. London – New York: Methuen –Wiley.
- Wardell, D. M. – Royce, J. R. (1978) Toward a Multi-Factor Theory of Styles and Their Relationships to Cognition and Affect. *Journal of Personality*, 3.
- Wellek, A. (1957) The Phenomenological and Experimental Approaches to Psychology and Characterology. In David, HP and von Bracken, H. (ed.) *Perspectives in Personality Theory*, New York: Basic Books.
- Wenzel, U. – Hartig, M. (1977) *Sprache – Persönlichkeit – Sozialstruktur*. Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe.
- Wicher, F. W. – Lambert, F. B. – Richardson, F. C. – Kahler, J. (1984) Categorical Goal Hierarchies and Classification of Human Motives. *Journal of Personality*, 3.
- Wieder, D. L. (1974) *Language and Social Reality. The Case of Tolling the Convict Code*. The Hague – Paris: Mouton.

Woodruffe, C. (1984) The Consistency of Presented Personality: Additional Evidence from Aggregation. *Journal of Personality*, 4.

Young, T. P. (1961) *Motivation and Emotion. A Survey of the Determinants of Human and Animal Activity*. New York – London: Wiley.

Zuroff, D. C. (1982) Person, Situation and Person-by-Situation Interaction Components in Person-Perception. *Journal of Personality*, 1.