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THE HUNGARIAN WRITER OF THE LOST TIME

Memory and Poetical Imitation in Gyula Krúdy's Works

Edited by Tibor Gintli

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Gyula Krúdy's (1878-1933) oeuvre admittedly represents a peculiar kind of conundrum within the confines of literary modernism in Hungarian literature. While the most significant authors of the early 20th century drew inspiration from Western European literary forms and preferred to distance their works from previous prose traditions, Krúdy's fiction remained closely linked to those narrative forms inherent to 19th century Hungarian prose. His motive for continuing to use these narrative forms did not stem from a blind desire to follow tradition, but rather originated from a conscious effort to renew and reform the heritage bequeathed upon him by past authors. Thus, the strange dichotomy that characterizes Krúdy's works forces readers to raise the following question: how is it that an author whose experiments in fiction proved far more innovative than anything else written by his generation still not be considered a modern author—even by the majority of his contemporaries?

In Krúdy's fiction, imitation is the process by which the past is evoked and narrative memory is created; his usage of imitation therefore embraces two characteristics that most define his oeuvre. It is for this reason that a collection of essays focusing on the correlation between memory and imitation in works by Gyula Krúdy seems not only appropriate, but also a meaningful way to introduce this unique author to readers less familiar with Hungarian literature.

Keywords: Gyula Krúdy, literature, narrative memory, imitation, Hungarian Studies.

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PREFACE

Gyula Krúdy's (1878-1933) oeuvre admittedly represents a peculiar kind of conundrum within the confines of literary modernism in Hungarian literature. While the most significant authors of the early 20th century drew inspiration from Western European literary forms and preferred to distance their works from previous prose traditions, Krúdy's fiction remained closely linked to those narrative forms inherent to 19th century Hungarian prose. His motive for continuing to use these narrative forms did not stem from a blind desire to follow tradition, but rather originated from a conscious effort to renew and reform the heritage bequeathed upon him by past authors. Thus, the strange dichotomy that characterizes Krúdy's works forces readers to raise the following question: how is it that an author whose experiments in fiction proved far more innovative than anything else written by his generation still not be considered a modern author—even by the majority of his contemporaries?

When discussing an author whose characteristic treatment of literary tradition suggests not only the past's perpetuity, but also its reinterpretation, it hardly comes as a surprise that the narrative technique most commonly found in Krúdy's works is that of imitation. It would be hard indeed to find another Hungarian author other than Krúdy whose works assign a comparably significant role to the imitation of genres,

speech and literary styles while simultaneously alluding to the works and oeuvres belonging to other writers. This intertextual referential system represents the act of recollection as much as it also relays the process by which either characters or the narrator access past memories. In Krúdy's fiction, imitation is the process by which the past is evoked and narrative memory is created; his usage of imitation therefore embraces two characteristics that most define his oeuvre. It is for this reason that a collection of essays focusing on the correlation between memory and imitation in works by Gyula Krúdy seems not only appropriate, but also a meaningful way to introduce this unique author to readers less familiar with Hungarian literature.

Tibor Gintli

Anna Fábri

"Once upon a time I used to be a novel hero…" The Cult of Literature in Gyula Krúdy's Works

> "He came from a Hungary that cannot be seen any more, from a Hungary where the issue of literature was as crucial as everyday bread. Or rather literature was even more important than bread, as bread was available for everyone to the point of satiety: literature was a delicacy of the everyday, therefore it had to be consumed frequently to safeguard the harmony of one's spirit."[1]
> (Gyula Krúdy: "Bródy")

Even if the quote above was never said exactly like this, nobody is surprised by such a summarizing statement: Gyula Krúdy is the writer of profane cults. It would even sound clichéd if we refer to him as the writer of the cult of eating, the cult of love (or rather that of women), moreover as the writer of the cult of Pest at the turn of the century.

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[1] "Abból a Magyarországból jött, amelyet nem láthatunk többé viszont, amely Magyarországon éppen olyan létkérdés volt az irodalom ügye, mint akár a mindennapi kenyér. Azaz fontosabb volt az irodalom a kenyérnél is, mert kenyér jóllakásig jutott mindenkinek: az irodalom a hétköznapok csemegéje volt, a melyet sűrűn kellett fogyasztani, hogy az ember harmóniában maradhasson hangulataival." Magyarország, 14. August 1924.

Even for a shallow reader it is apparent that the profane cult in its complete extension (detailed as a lexicon item) is present in his oeuvre: the feeling of living in a personal community with an elevated idea (and the efforts towards this), its expression in solemn formalities; the manifestations of piety play a part — the varied and elevated forms of remembering, the respecting and safeguarding of "holy places", relics, etc. Cult is the object and the environment of Krúdy's works, as heroes and narrator do also have a personal attitude toward their figural variants. The profane cult has the possibility of duplicating the world: behind what is elevated there is always what is ordinary, vulgar. In addition, the majority of Krúdy's heroes live with the constraint of duplicating the world and creating (or safeguarding) cult at the same time. This is a possible way for them to endure life: there are some who are paradoxically connected to life by this, and there are many for whom life is manifested in this. For example, the followers of the cult of eating surrender to the terribly tough material essence of life and concurrently triumph over it by covering or even sublimating it into rituals, symbolic actions, and legends. Similar gestures of conquering death and incorporating life prevail in the love stories, the adventures of Sindbad, Viola Nagybotos, or Kázmér Rezeda.

It seems that critics often like to discuss the latter questions in the critical reception of Krúdy's works, which always overshadow another question that is at least equal if not even superior to them, i.e., the issue of the cult (or the fashion) of literature. Krúdy has often been characterized as the writer of literary gourmets; however, references can only be detected with regard to what we ought to understand by this. Primarily, it perhaps implies that the subtlety, the specific narration, and the complex ideology of Krúdy's works are fully appreciated rather by experts, the cultured only, and particularly by writers themselves. (This can be easily extended to the analysis of any

literary works: if we begin such a work it is always worth considering other writers' views. Even if they formulate their thoughts enigmatically, sometimes they are able to perceive more (or, more appropriately, something else) in literary works than literary critics or the audience that read for mere pleasure.) It is almost certain however that these obscure characterizations imply something else as well, which is the fact that Krúdy, unlike any other Hungarian writer, depicted literature and always presented it in his works.[2] In other words, he did not generally distinguish literary fiction from (simpler or more complex) ideology.

Reality does not exist in his narrative world; everything and pronouncedly everything is "just" an interpretation, a reflection. He often visualized that the majority of people were very poorly able to make interpretations independently and for interpretation they need already made or semi-finished materials that they can borrow from others' stories, opinions expressed in conversations, from newspapers to literature. As the latter are primarily supposed to interpret the meaning of life, they offer the best repertory of examples. People: actresses, journalists, courtesans and head-waiters (also) speak the language of literature when they talk to each other (everyday phrases refresh literature's neatness, which easily becomes out-of-date). Literature as a behavioural, conversational, and thus

[2] Besides this he devoted more than 100 articles to less significant and outstanding writers, the 'classical' writers of Hungarian literature; he even wrote the so-called "factual novels" consisting of column sequences about two of his contemporaries (i.e., Sándor Bródy, who was the most fashionable, successful, and prominent writer preceding Krúdy's generation, and from his own generation, Endre Ady, who became a cult person very quickly): *Bródy Sándor avagy a nap lovagja* (1925–1927) [Sándor Bródy or the Knight of the Day], and *Ady Endre éjszakái* (1925) [The Nights of Endre Ady].

self-expressing guideline (a sample collection) appears in several Krúdy works.

The characters regard it as the most natural thing that others speak instead of them. Like in Rostand's work, where someone else is courting by using Cyrano's words, these men and women use the words of literature for their own sake to achieve their own goals. Berta, the beautiful wife of the country veterinarian, Rezeda's love master "sent him books and marked places in them which she enjoyed reading a great deal; some time a hair, another time a pencil mark showed where those beautiful eyes were daydreaming in the faraway country town."[3] In Krúdy's novels and short stories, men and women often talk about their readings, frequently refer to literary works, and in the meantime they tend to express their innermost features, however, usually only the way they would like to be seen by others.

Talking about literature is a tool of self-expression in Krúdy works similarly to dressing, hairstyle, or various gestures and phrases. The young Rezeda's contradictory figure, vacillating as she does between profession and career, emotions and being cunning, action and verbalism (in the plot of *The Crimson Coach /A vörös postakocsi/*) is enforced by his literary examples and references: mentioning Strindberg, Karl Kraus, or Turgenev besides Jókai or Cervantes is either motivated by a snobbish flaunting of knowledge, emotional attraction, or professional considerations by taking up the role of the narrator. Krúdy apparently attributes a significant age and milieu-evoking role to the names of writers: mentioning well-

[3] "könyveket küldött, és a könyvekben megjelölte azokat a helyeket, amelyeket ő maga nagy élvezettel olvasott; olykor egy hajszál, máskor egy ceruzajel mutatta, hol ábrándoztak el a szép szemek a messzi vidéki városban." Gyula KRÚDY, *A vörös postakocsi* [The Crimson Coach], Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1956, pp. 162–163.

known or fashionable authors of earlier times is meant to evoke common experiences (often safeguarded in the memories of others) the same way that the mentioning of politicians or the owners of shops having a special significance in the life of towns (primarily in the life of the capital) for they serve as conventional orientation points. All this emphasizes the important role literature (or the printed text) plays in establishing the common memory, the perception of life, and ideology. In various references (in direct and indirect speech as well), closed in metaphors, and in quotations the names of several hundreds of writers are preserved in Krúdy's novels. Thus, they proclaim that literary fiction is pervaded by literature as such and, according to their author, literary fiction has generally been characterizing life and life theories for some time (for almost a hundred years). A mass of dead and live writers and poets are referred to in these books and it is they who represent "the most real group" within the troops of former and contemporary shop owners, actors, innkeepers, waiters, jockeys, horse racers, politicians, gentlemen and ladies of fashion.[4]

[4] The narrator of Kázmér Rezeda also speaks about the inseparable merging of literature and life: "The red volume novels of George Ohnet […] were being read all over Hungary these days and people were weeping over them whole-heartedly. Female readers were both romantic and lecherous. They underlined the more dubious words, but expected for both novels and life to be emotional to an impossible extent. Erotic pleasure mixed with sorrow! — this was the common password among novelists applying for popularity and novel-makers of life." Gyula KRÚDY, *The Charmed Life of Kázmér Rezeda*, transl. by John Bátki, Corvina, Budapest, 2011. "Ohnet György […] piros kötetes regényeit ebben az időben széltében olvasták Magyarországon és szívből megsiratták. A nőolvasók romantikusok és egyben élvhajhászok voltak. a könyvekben aláhúzták a félreérthetőbb szavakat, de elvárták mind a regénykönyvektől, mint az élettől, hogy a lehetetlenségig érzel-

Both narrators and characters refer most to authors of less or more significance of Hungarian literature,[5] however they

mes legyen. Kéj, szomorúsággal keverve! – volt a jelszó a népszerűségre pályázó regényírók és az élet regénycsinálói között." Gyula KRÚDY, *Rezeda Kázmér szép élete*, Griff, Budapest, 1944, p. 170.)

[5] Among the classics of Hungarian literature that Krúdy refers to the most in his novels are the writer king of his youth, Jókai, then Petőfi, Tompa, Himfy-Ksfaludy, however, besides them he often mentions Bessenyei, Kármán, Károly Kisfaludy, Mihály Vörösmarty, József Eötvös, Zsigmond Kemény, János Arany, and János Vajda as well. Among the less prominent writers of the Reform Era, Sándor Balázs, Gusztáv Lauka, and Kálmán Lisznyai are very often referred to. In the league of editors, journalists, and poets from the turn of the century who became insignificant over the course of time, the names of Imre Gáspár (like Balázs Gilli and Gasparone as well), László Kálnay, Aladár Benedek, Kornél Ábrányi, Miklós Nagy, Gyula Erdélyi (this latter one playing important roles under the name of Szilveszter in several Rezeda–Alvinczi novels), Béla Pongrácz (who has a key role under the name of Béla Bonifácz in *A vörös postakocsi*) Gyula Indali, and Károly Vadnai neve tűnik fel appear the most often, as well as the names of the most prominent writers, like Gergely Csiky, Károly Eötvös, Kálmán Mikszáth, József Kiss, Béla Tóth, Zoltán Ambrus, Sándor Bródy and Károly Lovik. Names of his contemporaries, like Ady, Béla Révész, the Szomory brothers (Dezső and Emil), Elemér Bányai (known as Zuboly), Ferenc Molnár and Viktor Cholnoky appear a lot. Publishers, owners of journals, and editors like Andor Miklós, Miklós Lázár, Lajos Mikes as well as the deviant Béla Virág (Jaskula), are referred to also. Female writers are mentioned several times: Júlia Szendrey for example (Krúdy wrote columns, romantic short stories, about her figure, moreover she had a part in one of his plays), Emília Kánya, Lenke Bajza, Flóra Majthényi, the Büttner sisters (Lina and Júlia), Mrs Zsiga Gyarmathy Zsigáné and the odd countess Sarolta Vay, besides whom the famous courtesan of Pest, Róza Pilisy, is mentioned, who was seeking after a literary career and published a volume of poems at her own cost (under the name of Madame Louise she was the most often

frequently quote the most outstanding writers of world literature (representing French, English, Spanish and other literatures), very often by applying the language of cult. This is generally the language in which the names of Cervantes, Shakespeare, and some other Krúdy favourites (such as Pushkin, Dickens, Turgenev and Thackeray) are mentioned, and it is not rare either that conventional appellatives sometimes instead stand in for their names: "the one of the Mournful Countenance", "the swan of Avon", "the lame lord", etc. Shakespeare was no doubt the most significant literary cult person for Krúdy, and not only because he always appears as an important reference in Krúdy's novels and short stories, or because he referred to him in his column and his other journalistic works the most often, but also for speaking about Shakespeare with almost religious allusions: "He was the only one all over the world who had the eye of God, he saw everything."[6] Besides the great and outstanding writers, others appear from time to time as well who could not get a place on the Mount of Parnassus, but whose popularity, like that of the elder Dumas, persistently plied the skies, while there are some like Paul de Kock, who was once a beloved writer of bored ladies, but his name's meaning has become a period colour with the passing of time.

Krúdy selected the largest group of Hungarian writers, journalists, and editors in his novels out of the many figures of the literary life of Budapest at the end of the 19th century, and thus he ensured at the same time that the memory of literary

recurring figure of the Krúdy novels). Among the well-known dilettantes the names of János Hazafy-Veray and Mariska Simli appear the most, while out of the editors of sample books, including sample letters, poems, and dinner speeches, the name of Mélyacsai recurs.

[6] "Ő volt az egyetlen ember a földön, akinek olyan szeme volt, mint az Istennek, mindent látott." *Rezeda Kázmér szép élete*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

men, maidens, and elderly women even forgotten in their lives are kept alive forever. While it seems evident enough that even contemporary readers were not able to associate the majority of these literary figures with books (their reading experiences), today's readers may even more hardly differentiate the fictitious names from the real ones that occur so much more often in Krúdy's work. This will result in the merging of fiction and fact on the one hand, which becomes more and more complete in the course of time (this is presumably not far from the writer's intention), while on the other hand the reader is taken close to the cult of literature because the feeling of being an insider becomes stronger in him almost imperceptibly (this is based on the very simple consideration that when lesser known names are referred to in the text, it is more necessary to know of them).

The "memory more lasting than bronze" is not meant to be created for the narrator but for the contemporary figures and their predecessors. This is presumably due to the belief that Hungarian literature, the collective creation of the great, the genius, and the middle and smaller scale writers, awakens and preserves national memory, as was often explained by Krúdy in a number of articles, necrologies, and other occasional essays. Even if among his predecessors and contemporaries there were many who devoted a number of studies, essays, and articles to the history of Hungarian literature, its great writers and their works, none except for Krúdy took so great an account of obscure writers, poets, and editors. It seems fairly evident that it was he alone who created the monument to the grey workers, the sadly forgotten and modest extravagant monument of the turn of the 19th century in his hundreds of writings.

The voice of piety can unmistakably be heard from the narrator's (own) words whenever he speaks about the past of Hungarian literature, actually its recent past, but also lets his readers know with ironic references, satirical or parodistic

hints, that literature is not only a sacred matter but also a profane praxis, moreover the creators and maintainers of the literary cult (often) benefit from the cult serving their own interests.

It is a telling fact that in the Krúdy novels the writer is often the hero, moreover in some cases the protagonist, and among the most frequent locations of the stories we can find the editorial office as well. Among the writer heroes Kázmér Rezeda appears the most by playing a key role in the most "crimson coach" and Alvinczi novels, respectively, such as *A vörös postakocsi*, *Őszi utazások a vörös postakocsin* [Autumn Voyages on the Crimson Coach], *Nagy kópé* [The Great Knave], *A kékszalag hőse* [The Hero of the Blue Ribbon], and *The Charmed Life of Kázmér Rezeda*, respectively. A young writer called Bimy is the main hero of *A velszi herceg* [The Welsh Prince], while Józsiás is another (from *Hét Bagoly* [Seven Owls]) which can also be interpreted as the novel of the Hungarian (more precisely of Pest) literary life at the turn of the century. Writers appear in smaller but very important roles, some of them are reappearing figures, like Alvinczi's secretary, the old Szilveszter, Béla Bonifácz, Guszti Szomjas, or Dideri Dir, who (Szilveszter) are modelled after living persons: Szilveszter after Gyula Erdélyi, Béla Bonifácz after Béla Pongrácz, Guszti Szomjas after László Kálnay, and Dideri Dir after Gizella Lengyel. All of these people evoke Krúdy's youth, while in the figures of the young Rezeda, Bimy, or Józsiás we can find a remarkable number of autobiographical references, though indirect because impersonalized yet reconstructable confessionalism.

Similarly to the other illusionists (actors and actresses, demimonde women or the kings of horse races and other scandalous gamblers), writers or editors serve the readers on the one hand (and at the same time they raise the desire of continuous consumption of them), and on the other hand they provide an expression and form for the feeling of emptiness that

they cannot even identify. The novels of the writer characters (who are often referred to as Krúdy's alter egos by critics) visualize the period of literature's (and sacred matters') profanation as well as the tragicomic fights doomed to fail against the profanation. These works claim to readers in a refrain-like manner that literature (and writer) that lost its (his) dignity (at the turn of the century), increasingly needs a cult. This cult is initiated and kept alive by the readers (who are primarily personalized by female characters) on the one hand, and perhaps particularly by writers and poets on the other hand.

Krúdy hints that writers adopted the secrets of cult creation partly from their predecessors and partly from people outside literature. For example, the reappearing figure of the Krúdy novels, Kázmér Rezeda, learns his own impressive and ritual gestures from Eduárd Alvinczi, the great gambler, and from the various priestesses of love. However, he practices the rituals of writing following the example of his writer predecessors exclusively:

> He put a black silk cap on his head when he decided to take up the writers' pen again. He wrote with tiny letters as he saw it when he was young from Béla Tóth or Imre Gáspár who almost completely ceased to live a sensitive and ordinary human life, they were writers with twisted fingers who leaned over their papers with terrifying orderliness. It did not matter to them at all if there was spring or winter outside. (At a certain time every writer wanted to be Honoré Balzac even in his way of life.)[7]

[7] "Fekete selyemsapkát tett a fejére, mikor elhatározta, hogy ismét felveszi az írók tollát. Apró betűkkel írt, mint Tóth Bélától vagy Gáspár Imrétől látta fiatal korában, akik már jóformán teljesen megszűntek érző és mindennapi emberi életet élni, elgörbült ujjú írók voltak, akik félelmetes rendszeretettel hajoltak papirosaik fölé. S egészen mindegy volt nekik, hogy odakünn tavasz van vagy tél. (Egy időben minden író Balzac Honoré szeretett volna lenni életmód-

The novel that Mr Kázmér Rezeda started to write was entitled: "King Rudolf's appearance in North-Hungary". According to Krúdy, literature is actually an extension of life (in terms of space, time, quality and quantity) for readers and sometimes for writers as well, and at the same time it is a companion for the lonely, shelter for the one who suffers from ordinary life. It is another world where one can enter, and which presents experiences, moreover memories to its visitors, from which however it is sometimes difficult to return, as Rezeda's story in the *Autumn Voyages on the Crimson Coach* shows. Krúdy never denied the real dangers of extreme literariness (the Quixotism). These pervade the whole plot of *The Crimson Coach*, and one of the novel's characters, Béla Bonifácz, describes them precisely to Dideri Dir's daughters, who were obsessed with literature:

> Literature is a terrible poison. It makes civilians (both men and women) syphilitic if they taste it once. All writers are swindlers. They name their job a royal occupation, the most glorious profession. However nobody actually needs literature. People would be much happier if there was no literature. They would keep on being born, loving and dying. The great wonderful Life has nothing to do with the many tiny letters. Writers like a secret society have been poisoning people's soul so that they could make a living. Their tales, songs, are for causing agitation and confusion in human souls. And if the sweet poison of literature moves into a family, unhappiness will follow it there soon. Writers' wives are unhappy women.[8]

jában is.)" Gyula KRÚDY, *Őszi utazások a vörös postakocsin*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1956, p. 139.

[8] "Rettentő méreg az irodalom. Vérbajossá teszi a polgárokat és a polgárnőket, ha belékóstolnak. Az írók mind szélhámosok. Kinevezik királyi mesterségnek, a legdicsőbb foglalko-zásnak a maguk dolgát. Holott tulajdonképpen senkinek sincs szüksége az irodalomra. Az emberek sokkal boldo-gabbak volnának, ha nem volna irodalom. Tovább is szület-nének, szeretnének és meghalnának. A nagy, gyönyörűséges Életnek semmi köze sincs az apró, sűrű

The writer-novels (Rezeda's, Bimy's, and Józsiás' stories) claim that both the writer and the reader (the audience) are interested in increasing the prestige of literature, which offers a substitute for life, moreover a lead for life, and moreover they mutually support each other in this activity. Literature safeguards and creates the memories of the once miraculous world, thus setting out the values and ideals of the present as well. He tries to live up to this task (this profession) upon very practical considerations, or out of mere necessity. In his novel devoted to the issue of literature's increasing vulgarism, *Hét Bagoly* [Seven Owl], he depicts elegiacally, in a (self-) ironic tone, and sometimes with unmerciful sarcasm, that although literary works seem to be a "saintly activity" to outsiders, they are practically nothing else but work. The writer as the anointed person of the modern world (at the turn of the century) changes into a showman or a craftsman working on order, while the former group of fans become most of all a consumer circle, however, all want to preserve and maintain the memory of literature's past created ideal (some imagined golden age) at least.

As a manifestation of these efforts, the narrator(s) and the characters, undertaking the role of the narrator from time to time, often use the narrative process of comparing or even identifying the characters of their stories' with literary figures.[9]

betűcskékhez. Az írók, mint egy titkos szövetség, századok óta mérgezik az emberek lelkét, hogy maguk meg tudjanak élni. A meséik, dalaik mind arra valók, hogy nyugtalanságot, zavart idézzenek elő az emberi lelkekben. És ha egy családba beköl-tözött az irodalom édes mérge, ott nyomon következik a boldogtalanság. Az írók feleségei mind szerencsétlen asszonyok." *A vörös postakocsi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–127.

[9] The uniformity of the narration of various narrators, which is very characteristic in Krúdy's first big successful novel, *A vörös*

For example the narrator of *The Crimson Coach* indirectly compares Béla Bonifácz to Mihály Kohlhaas[10] and claims that Kázmér Rezeda identifies himself with a character in a Thackeray novel. Madame Louise calls her servant Ivan Ilyich,[11] while Rezeda of the *Autumn Voyages* dreams of winter evenings as if he was Anegin and talks about Alvinczi as if he was sometimes playing the role of János Kárpáthy and his lovers are compared to literary heroines.[12] And there are even other novels by Krúdy in which the protagonists are referred to emblematically, like some well-known literary heroes, for a shorter or longer time: Alvinczi appears from time to time as Monte Cristo, the elderly figure of Somersault is named Don Quixote, while Pistoli[13] or Mr Pista of the novel *Boldogult úrfikoromban* [In My Happy Youth] is often referred to as Falstaff by the narrator.

In these novels, the cult of literature appears in a number of additional forms as well. The desire of becoming similar to novel heroes reaches a point of near madness in literary men who copy the outlook, gestures, and attitudes of their great predecessors, e.g., the young Rezeda at the beginning of his career wishes to take after György Bessenyei, while a character in *The Charmed Life Of Kázmér Rezeda* wants to resemble Heine. Sacred objects turn up as well, like the cloak of Sándor Balázs (Szilveszter's cultic clothing), which exemplifies on the one hand the continuity of literature, yet on the other hand they

postakocsi, is due to narrative solutions referring to life's literariness.

[10] *A vörös postakocsi, op.cit.*, p. 117.

[11] *Ibid.*, 85.

[12] *Rezeda Kázmér szép élete, op. cit.*, p. 93.

[13] In the case of Pistoli, a double reference to Shakespeare is implied: Pistol is a pub crawl in *Henry the 4th* and *Henry the 5th*, and Pistol appears on the scene as a henchman of Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

offer the possibility for an individual to share in the sacred past of literature. Furthermore, there are cultic encounters that are devoted to literary issues by writers and poets (sometimes even by readers). These usually take place on ordinary, moreover vulgar sites: in pubs most of the time, literature pervades even everyday talk; it is referred to at rendezvous, and on free days, or more silent (customer-free) evenings at brothels as well.[14]

In Krúdy's works long ago workhouses of literature generally appear as sacred places: editorial buildings, homes, and houses of long-deceased writers. The streets of a city, the districts of József- and Terézváros preserve the footprints of long ago (yesterday or the day before yesterday) lived writers and poems, and the reader should feel that Pest is a sacred town. This city is actually safeguarding the memories of (a mostly imaginary) past that was the age of devotion when the "national dream" was shaping, "Hungary was the Land of Fairies" and literature was "the most sacred art" and not a product.

The peculiar, grotesque-emotional adventures of writer-protagonists strongly highlight that books and the act of reading become not only general life experiences in the course of time but also personal souvenirs like any other souvenirs of life. By remembering old, lovely readings (the books read in one's youth), often the wonderful (naive and devoted) youth itself comes to life for the heroes. Thus the literary work preserves two types of time: the time of its creation and, more vigorously, the time of individual, personal readings.[15] Krúdy also informs his audience that the cult of literature and literary works actually merges the cult of the historical and personal past. It implies the reliving, or at least the evocation of the pure ideals of earlier times. According to Krúdy, literature offers a

[14] *A vörös postakocsi, op.cit.*, pp. 203–204.
[15] *Ibid.* 159.

particular opportunity for remembrance; it helps us to recollect something that actually never happened. The depiction of this has likely contributed to the continuously shaping (and transforming) cult of Krúdy's oeuvre.

> I like those books — as he wrote in one of his articles about János Arany — in which you can read about the people of yesterday; people whom never saw in reality, yet we thought of them as if we were spending the happy and golden-spotted days of our youth in their company under a big tree.[16]

[16] "Szeretem azokat a könyveket — írta egy Arany Jánosról szóló tárcájában —, amelyekből tegnapi emberekről olvashatni; olyan emberekről, akiket a valóságban sohasem láttunk, de mégis úgy gondoltunk rájuk, mintha ifjúságunk boldog, aranyfoltos napjait az ő társaságukban töltöttük volna egy nagy fa alatt." *Arany János emlékezete* [The Remembrance of János Arany], 1923. = *Írói arcképek I–II*, Magvető, 1957, I, p. 234.

György Eisemann

Imitation as Memorial Performance in the Epic Works of Gyula Krúdy

When the literature theoretical efforts based on the speech acts recognised the rhetoric capability of language, which has been emphasised from Hegel through to Nietzsche until our time, these efforts highlighted at the same time the wide perspectives of its performativity. If the sense, event, and presentation generated by language as an activity is the figurative performance of the prevailing present — which is naturally far from being outside the past (tradition) — then this assumption requires further explanation: relating this to memory, to the archive of memory. Naturally it is not surprising that performative manifestations may be an exercise in recalling and vice versa. However, their co-operation raises a question that provokes answers of very significant impact that are unexpected, especially in our time. How may a relation be created between the pragmatic-movement rhetorical character of speech and the recalling character of literature-archiving? The dispute, originating from this is belonging to this question, wishes to explore the

possible points of connection between speech act theory and text theory.[1] The response experiments are timely because the concepts referring to performativity occasionally separate the meaning from the media of objects and bodies exactly, which is revealed by their timing, disregarding or negating the reciprocity of the specific act (action), and the interpreting experience. As regards modern literature, memory research in this field has probably reached a conclusion that cannot be disregarded even today, with the interpretation of Proust by Hans Robert Jauss, which has been in circulation since 1986, when it marked out the happening in the contact of the retrospective and the recalled self — that is the figure which acts with a material relation (e.g., "tasting") and the immaterially memorised one (the one that is kept in the mind) — through which the time that went by may become describable as the forthcoming time.[2]

As regards the relation of performance and memory at the same time, the epic work of Gyula Krúdy has proven to be of an aesthetically elementary power not only due to the poetical merging of performance and memory. But also by the fact that Krúdy's work was able to organically manifest the two language usages that seemed to be different — among others — exactly in the practice of *imitation*. In a nutshell, mimesis was discussed either as a general aesthetic or specific formal category of form in uncountable variants, however, little attention was paid to the otherwise so often quoted primary source, to its character, which may be read from *The Poetics* of Aristotle, which refers to the activity of mimesis. Since the work of Aristotle mentions imitation — not only in

[1] See György KÁLMÁN C., *A beszédaktus-elmélet szövegfelfogása = Te rongyos elmélet*, Balassi, Budapest, 1998, pp. 63–75.

[2] Hans Robert JAUSS, *Zeit und Erinnerung in Marcel Prousts »À la recherche du temps perdu«. Ein Beitrag zur Theorie des Romans*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1986.

connection to drama, which is examined with special emphasis — as the mimesis of some *act*, as the also active replaying of some former events. According to this, the performance does not imitate an old, generally known legend by taking a given text to the stage; which is to say that it does not illustrate, it does not tell the story, but it implements the act. It does not imitate the structured action, but it presents the act, the memorised happenings of the past, by bringing the drama to the stage through speech, the epos alone. This way the presented event imitates another one through the nature of performativity and not through thematic representation. Naturally the starting out point is the following: the speech act may be a recollection just as a performance may be an imitation. However, this still does not show the elements of the poetical impact of their interaction. Nevertheless, it may be suitable for providing assistance in experiencing the active co-existence of the immaterial memory and material communication, that is, of the spirit and of the thing, the semantics of which[3] does not threaten even with the obligatory side-effect of being anxious because of the representation.

Therefore, the „antique" dramatic and epic mimesis did not rely on recorded texts, but it wanted to mime-repeat the legendary pre-historic event, and the activities that preceded written communication. It is highly probable that disregarding this is a reinterpretation that took place since then as a result of the dissemination of recording by writing. It may be suggested on rational grounds that the speech act theory itself may owe its recognition to the literal provocation that forced it to face the special non-textual capabilities of language. That it

[3] Cf. Gábor TOLCSVAI NAGY, *A képzelet jelentéstana Krúdy műveiben = Stílus és jelentés. Tanulmányok Krúdy stílusáról*, eds. Teréz JENEI, József PETHŐ, Tinta Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2004, pp. 93 – 105.

is recognised in speech as such an acting "energy", its intimacy and its semantics, which may be only felt in its sonority, which is not present in the writing in itself, or which can be truly recreated only by being mapped through speech — through reading. This way of reading directed at literature rhetoricity may be even more separated from being tied to the grammatical basis.

Consequently, the theories of intertextuality may also be further developed through supplementing them with the medial consideration, which does not disregard the method of voice recollection that may be heard from writing — its so-called illocutive modality. Thus the theory of speech-acts may be successfully applicable in a new area — on the level of intertextual imitation.

Therefore it is possible to enter the play of modern imitation, on the pragmatic level of generating meaning from the field of intertextual operations as well. And in view of the live speech, or even frequently discussed anecdotal features of Krúdy's prose, the more concrete definition of this aspect is driven towards memorisation by guest texts that operate as speech acts.[4] In this case, the semantic and poetic processing of

[4] To relations of anecdote and modernity, see Anna FÁBRI, *Ciprus és jegenye. Sors, kaland és szerep Krúdy Gyula műveiben*, Magvető, Budapest, 1978, pp. 7 – 53; Kinga FABÓ, *Pluralitás és anekdotaforma. Krúdy prózapoétikája = A határon*, Magvető, Budapest, 1987, pp. 96–113; László FÜLÖP, *Modernizált anekdotizmus. Krúdy Gyula: Boldogult úrfikoromban = Realizmus és korszerűség. 20. századi magyar regényírók*, Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 1987, pp. 181–224; György BODNÁR, *A „mese" lélekvándorlása*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1988, 17–36; István DOBOS, *Az anekdotikus novellahagyomány és epikai korszerűség. A századforduló öröksége = Szintézis nélküli évek. Nyelv, elbeszélés és világkép a harmincas évek epikájában*, eds. Lóránt KABDEBÓ, Ernő KULCSÁR SZABÓ, JPEK, Pécs, 1993, pp. 265–284; Tibor GINTLI, *Anekdota és modernség*, Tiszatáj 2009/1, pp. 59–65; Katalin FLEISZ, *Önreflexív alakzatok Krúdy Gyula prózájában*, PhD-thesis, DE BTK, Debrecen, 2012, pp. 9–43.

recollection makes the time retained in its language presently existing through a performance that imitates its past. In what follows, some characteristic text sections often highlighted in the literature will be discussed.[5]

How is it possible to read the name and personality of Sindbad, quoted from the *Thousand and One Nights*, in the opening novel of the volume "Szindbád ifjúsága" [Sindbad's Youth]?[6] The first sentence indicates the source of the quote, through which it straight away looks back on earlier events that took place one quarter of a century before the time of the speech. "Sindbad — about twenty five years before our one thousand and one night sailor story — was a pupil in a sub-

[5] To mnemotechnics of the Krúdy-prose recently see Balázs MESTERHÁZY, *Az elsajátítás alakzatai. Emlékezés, álom és történet Krúdy Gyula Szindbádjában*, Alföld 2001/3, pp. 48–58; Zoltán KELEMEN, *Történelmi emlékezet és mitikus történet Krúdy Gyula műveiben*, Argumentum, Budapest, 2005; Tibor GINTLI, *„Valaki van, aki nincs". Személyiségelbeszélés és identitás Krúdy Gyula regényeiben*, Akadémiai, Budapest, 2005, pp. 67–100; Miklós TAKÁCS, *Egy Bécs városához címzett fogadó Budapesten. A városi emlékezet és a „monarchikus" identitás narratívái Krúdy Gyula Boldogult úrfikoromban című regényében = Terek és szövegek. Újabb perspektívák a városkutatásban*, eds. Tímea N. KOVÁCS, Gábor BÖHM, Tibor MESTER, Kijárat, Budapest, 2005, pp. 285–292; Magdolna OROSZ, *Monarchia-diskurzus és az emlékezés terei Krúdy Gyula Boldogult úrfikoromban című regényében*, Irodalomtörténet, 2008/2, pp. 233–248.

[6] To the Sindbad-stories, the composition of volume and the style see eg. Szabolcs OSZTOVITS, *Szempontok a korai Szindbád-novellák értelmezéséhez*, Irodalomtörténet, 1981/2, pp. 414–440; Gábor FINTA, *A lét vándora. Krúdy Szindbádjáról*, Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények, 2000/3-4, pp. 405–415; Gábor BEZECZKY, *Krúdy Gyula: Szindbád*, Akkord, Budapest, 2003; József PETHŐ, *A halmozás alakzata. A halmozás fogalmának, típusainak és funkcióinak vizsgálata. Krúdy Gyula* Szindbád ifjúsága *című kötete alapján*, Akadémiai, Budapest, 2004.

gymnasium border region, at the feet of the Carpathians, and he was a waltz dancer in the dancing school of the town."[7]

This sentence uses the illocutive gesture of presentation; the narrator calls its hero the sailor of the fable collection and at the same time the pupil of the town. The act of introduction therefore is connected to a time in the past, a quarter of century earlier, when it recalls the name of one of the actors of the well-known fable collection. Therefore the act of referring to the *Thousand and One Nights* carries not only a metaphoric informativity, but it triggers recollection as a time-related acting statement. The name (alias) "originates still from the time, when the pupils of the sub-gymnasium read the fairy tales of the thousand and one nights".[8] This means that the definitely inter-textual echo of the also quoting act of naming opens the memory contents, the archive of flavours and scents.[9] This is followed by the well-known interplay of immaterial memories and material perceptions, more exactly their merging, or even more accurately the native continuity and reciprocity of the past and of the present — which is not separated in time, but which is found to belong together. "As if he would see in front of him even now the red ears and face

[7] Translated by the author of this study. Gyula KRÚDY, *Szindbád*, ed. KOZOCSA Sándor, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1985, p.23.

[8] Cf. Gábor FINTA, *op. cit.*, pp. 406–407.

[9] To this permanent theme of the research, see László FÜLÖP, *Változatok gasztronómiai témára = Közelítések Krúdyhoz*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1986, pp. 175–212; László SZILASI, *Maggi. Étel által történő helyettesítés és evés által történő emlékezés Krúdy Gyula* Isten veletek, ti boldog Vendelinek! *című novellájában*, Literatura 2002/3, pp. 313–321; Tibor GINTLI, *op. cit.*, pp. 92–99; Péter DÉRCZY, *A „nagy zabálás" mitológiája. Krúdy Gyula gasztronómiai tárgyú műveiről*, Alföld 2007/9, pp. 97–104; Krisztián BENYOVSZKY, *Majd megeszlek. Utóhang egy Krúdy-novellához*, Kalligram 2011/7–8, pp. 84–87; István, FRIED *Krúdy Gyula utolsó étkezése Márai Sándor* Szindbád hazamegy *című regényében*, Irodalomtörténet, 2012/2, pp. 198–208.

of the chief forester on the coach seat, and the frosty tip of his moustache. Suddenly the scent of roasted walnut and the scent of fresh milk loaves reached his nose... Of course, of course, at that time twenty five years before it was Christmas when he travelled in this landscape and he hurried to his parents for the festive days." The recollection of the past, imitated by a speech act, goes hand in hand with the current act of recollecting during travelling — that is, it is adapted to it.

The fifth trip ("Szindbád útja a halálnál" [Sindbad's trip to death]) starts out from the world of the *Thousand and One Nights*, from the city of Stambul, and the narrator's retrospective speech situation announces the references of a modern "fable writer" to the predecessors, to the earlier authors. Subsequently arriving in Budapest from Rijeka by way of Lemberg, the primary memories referring to the primary hero are replaced by the memories of Sindbad himself, that is, the scene of the external-subsequent view goes by, and the story may be read from the speech scene that is concurrent to that of the actor.[10] After the time-clause deixis ("at that time") emphasising the shift, such a dialogue begins between the flower girl and Sindbad, in the occurrence of which the tone, the noticeable character of the intonation, will be just as important as the grammatical structure of what is being said. The significance of the meaning of speeches grows far beyond the semiotic role of communication.[11] The

[10] To problem of the Sindbad-narration see Péter DÉRCZY, *Szindbád és Esti Kornél. Műfaj, szerkezet és világkép*, Literatura, 1986/1–2, pp. 81–94. The narratological aspects amplified with effects of focalisation Zoltán Z. KOVÁCS, *Mit látott Jeney, akit később bankóhamisítás miatt bezártak? Szindbád és a fokalizáció*, Literatura, 2002/3, pp. 345–352.

[11] Therefore Ferenc ODORICS recanted the real communication between the persons: *Adományozás és megfosztás*. Szindbád útja a halálnál, Literatura, 2002/3, p. 302. Essentially the non-semiotical dialogue perceives HITES Sándor, in connection with an other Text: *Szindbád-lexikon*, Literatura, 2002/3, p. 330.

frequently cited metaphor that compares the "stifled deep voice" of Sindbad to different string instruments[12] this time uses the voice of the viola. "Well, what do you want to say?"[13] The emotional words of the flower girl are also audible and readable according to the modality of their way of being said. "There was some kind of quiet sobbing hidden in the girl, which was like the remnant of a long and overpowering weeping. She answered slowly, in a stifled voice, in order to prevent her sobbing from rising to the surface. — I would like to die, and I will soon die."[14] It is negligible to list where and how often similar sentences foretelling of death have been used in sentimental and romantic literature. What deserves special attention is the description of the intonation of the voice. The phrase expressing the desire to die manifests itself from the "roar" of stifled sobbing, from the signals coming from there, by assembling these signals into words, from the linguistic fragments of weeping. It separates the phrases of testimony from the background noise of low-keyed weeping. And these kinds of acoustics of the guest text turn the weeping voices into sonoric signals — in the generally known relation

[12] To this stereotype see István FRIED, *Szomjas Gusztáv hagyatéka. Elbeszélés, elbeszélő, téridő Krúdy Gyula műveiben*, Palatinus, Budapest, 2006, p. 32. See moreover István SŐTÉR, *Krúdy Gyula = Romantika és realizmus. Válogatott tanulmányok*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1955, p. 575; József SZAUDER, *Tavaszi és őszi utazások. Tanulmányok a XX. század magyar irodalmáról*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1980, p. 192; Aladár SCHÖPFLIN, *A magyar irodalom története a XX. században*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1990, pp. 282–287. The poetics of this voice studies Katalin SZITÁR, *Krúdy lírai prózájának értelmezéséhez. A* Női arckép a kisvárosban *című novella alapján. I–II*, Irodalmi Szemle 2012/11, pp. 55–74, 2012/12, pp. 72–80. To the the narration, the sound and the memory see: József KESERŰ, *Az újraértett Krúdy*, Irodalmi Szemle (online) 2012. január 1.

[13] Gyula KRÚDY, *op. cit.*, 59.

[14] *Ibid.*

of the background material and the signals of the medium. Therefore the voices of speech are assembled into syntactic and semiotic structures with the pronunciation of the imitated phrases in the foreground of the noises in respect to which they may be announced.[15] At the same time it is also striking that the intonation here is not definitely separated from the surrounding material where its roots are: the articulation returns from time to time to the weeping-related movement of the larynx. Therefore the pronunciation sometimes extinguishes and at other times regenerates the phonetic differences, in such a manner that their back-and-forth play should not surpass the constative levels of communication. And through this the material of the road itself also carries a meaning. It not only carries the meaning purely, as a property that is attached to it from the outside, but the act of carrying in itself will be converted into a meaning. The stereotypical speech steps beyond its semiotic horizon by generating a meaningful act — representing the stifled, but perceivable sobbing — from the material of its voicing and intertextual medium. By dissolving the mistaken appearance of the two-folded nature of phenomenality and materiality it is doubtless that the medium itself becomes again a message, but in such a manner that its material tells what it believes and what it feels. Therefore it does not wish to express something else beyond its manifestation, and the manner of the presence or the misunderstanding or finding of a remote meaning do not even occur. Moreover, this voice does not operate according to some kind of assumed representation system; therefore, it cannot be interpreted alongside its logics either. The phonetics of the weeping voices already can be heard over a preliminary phonological horizon, where the experience of finiteness may

[15] Cf. Friedrich KITTLER, *Signal – Rausch – Abstand = Draculas Vermächtniss*, Reclam, Leipzig, 1993, pp. 161–181.

be expressed in the form of a clearly articulated phenomenon. There are examples of this kind of suggestively recreated discursivity, stylistic penetration, only in a very few places, among others in the works of Victor Hugo, Emily Brontë, and Dostoyevsky.[16]

The flower girl does not say anything about the reason for her fatal plan; she does not comment on her state of mind, but in her speech she relies on the locution power of the language describing her: "Anyway it will be as I say"[17] And it happened as she said. Her simple declaration is an act in itself, as it wants to become an act. The subsequent developments correspond to this. Since the verbal performance is followed by a performance the theatricality of which cannot be misunderstood. Before hurling herself off the third floor the girl even speaks to the audience, to Sindbad: "Are you down there my Sir?"[18] Meaning: do you see well what is happening with me? Her action is the dramatic continuance and analogon of that language, the medial background noise is weeping, which takes back into itself the player that is unable and not willing to save her subjectivity from the romantic melancholy of her existence, that it makes her invisible by the execution of the suicide, before the white roar of the background view. From below the grey clouds "a white butterfly flittered downwards. A white bird flew downwards in the winter night towards the snow covered field."[19] This saying on the constative level describes an impossible (unperceivable) happening. In the winter night not many things can be seen, and against the white snow the girl in white clothes cannot be

[16] The style and the motivic relations analyzes József PETHŐ, *Szemantikai ismétlések a* Szindbád útja a halálnál *című Krúdy-novellában*, Magyar Nyelvőr, 2001/4, pp. 465–477.
[17] Gyula KRÚDY, *op. cit.*, 59.
[18] *Ibid.*, 61.
[19] *Ibid.*

seen at all. On a white background a white figure has no contours. Attila József similarly moves away from the referential self-perception of the linguistic image in its oft-quoted line: "A transparent lion lives between black walls..."[20]

If the speech act replays texts, then the traces of this naturally cannot be eradicated by the recorded text, even though it imitates announcements that are memorised in verbal forms. In deviation from the Aristotle's concept of imitation — for medial reasons — these memories and their descriptions are still transmitted by written works. This admission is separately referred by some poetic presumptions of *Ladies Day* (1919), e.g., its genre related — architextual — self-knowledge. The motto taken from Byron summons to view "the secret recesses of the spirit of others", and its proemium imitates the epic start, the role of rhapsodes with the so-called indication of the subject: "My lyre speaks about weddings, funeral feasts and christenings, about these three beauties of life..."[21] The figure of the writer rhapsodes is doubtless paradoxical: how may the lyrist of a psychological novel perform in writing — in line with the recommendation of the guest text from Byron — through the language that is to be recorded in the book? He may do so by the narrator comparing the content of the deep-consciousness of the actors to texts that are covered by writings, for the exploration of which it mentions one of the modern metaphors of intertextual

[20] On this pictorialness, see Mihály SZEGEDY-MASZÁK, *Metaforikus szerkezet Krúdy és Kosztolányi egy elbeszélésében = A novellaelemzés új módszerei*, ed. Elemér HANKISS, Akadémiai, Budapest, 1972, pp. 65–71; Gábor KEMÉNY, *Képekbe menekülő élet. Krúdy Gyula képalkotásáról és a nyelvi kép stilisztikájáról*, Balassi, Budapest, 1993; Orsolya ÁRMEÁN, *Képek képtelensége mint nyelvi terelőút a Szindbádban*, Literatura, 2002/3, pp. 306–312.

[21] Source of the quotation of the novels: Gyula KRÚDY, *Nyolc regény*, ed. Anna FÁBRI, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1975. Translated by the author of this study.

reading, the palimpsestic perception. That is, it defines the unconscious as such a hidden writing, which by the removal of the surface layer of paper may be explored by the indiscreet, interested party. Then therefore, "as we scrape away with our fingertips the paper from over them…"

The actors of the novel also speak about themselves with the aid of textual memories, and in this regard even their mistakes may produce an interesting play. For example, about the "singing-gallery song of Ms. Olsavsky", the funeral manager János Cziffra thinks that it is from the *Traviata*. As it is revealed the only truth in this is the fact that the young lady is not contracted by anybody for the role of Violetta, therefore she is forced to perform the "misguided woman" in her private life. That is "Violetta" may be read both as the quoted and as the quoting person. And what János Cziffra interpreted from this by mistake, nevertheless, does completely match her character. The actress herself is aware of her quotation-based existence, and throughout her entire life she carries this citation on to the stage. This operation makes her figure both "misguided" and virgin-like, who — in spite of all appearances — is inaccessible. And whoever performs the two musical intertextual memories — the church memory and the opera memory — in another way, that is, whoever disregards the parallel praxis of these two types of imitations, and whoever tries to approach the young lady only as Violetta, is a dead man — he removes himself from the fiction. The lady would have gone to a rendezvous once in her life, to Matthias Street, "on which occasion the man selected arrived to the place of the rendezvous, dead, killed by a blood stroke." János Cziffra is a careful performer, for this reason he was not brave enough to pay court to the singer, although "all other Budapest people would have read some obscure encouragement from the words of Ms. Olsavsky."

In the *Ladies Day* poor Natalia — in deviation from this — did not recognise at all the citations of the men who paid court to her, therefore she was not able to interpret their words at all. Henrik, from whom she will have a child, presented her the lines of Tennyson, while Mr. Dubli himself resembled the "golden man" of Jókai. But Natalia did not understand even Mr. Dubli, since she did not yet read Jókai's novel.

The anarchist and nihilist of the novel *The Crimson Coach* (*A vörös postakocsi*), Béla Bonifácz, is the "Commissioner of Danton and Robespierre", but the customs guards of Pest recognise him as Mihály Kohlhaas, that is, based on the work of Kleist they saw in him the rebel who will fall in the future. They could be right, because Béla Bonifácz, in spite of his determined revolutionism, taught emotional literature to the wife of a lawyer, to whom he recommended "the sad and golden spider web souled Reviczky, the night chime voiced Tompa and the *Spring Waves* of Iván Turgenev", and he honestly protected her from the "depraved" Pest.

One of the figures of the *Hét Bagoly* [Seven Owls] directly presenting himself as a writer quoted his critics on intertextualism. Josiah and his "work" (the *Book of Courtship*) definitely wishes to negate the text preludes and the gesture of rewriting. "I do not copy anything from old French books, or any of the inventions of other writers." He reads aloud some pages, in order to pay court to Ms. Grace (Áldáska), and he boasts of his originality: he separates his text-based approach to literature from imitation. His intention becomes a fiasco; the refused texts take revenge. Exactly that Guszti Szomjas disturbs the lecture by appearing in the room as a punctuation mark.[22] "In this minute the door opened, and the figure of Mr.

[22] On spaces and narrator contact and the characters in the novel *Hét Bagoly*, as well as on the singularist Szomjas Gusztáv, see István FRIED, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–163. István SŐTÉR stresses style imitation:

Guszti Szomjas wearing a cat hair fur coat, resembling an old letter, moved inside" He brought the news that Sophia awaits Josiah outside, who learnt something from the case, but still not enough. Courting his other lover, Sophia, he explains to her not his own, weakly perlocutionary text, but that of Zsigmond Kemény, however in this case this is not received by the targeted person with due enthusiasm. As so many times, the textual memory is intertwined even in this case with travelling to the venue: with giving up the meta-position of the citation. They travelled with a spring-carriage to Sváb Hill, and upon seeing a building Josiah referred simultaneously to his childhood and the guest texts, for recalling his memories and for achieving a conquering impact. "In my childhood they said that the demented Baron Kemény lived in this house, who wrote his novels in the nights of the late autumn. He was already completely crazy, and dreaded the company of people. [...] Alas, I would like to change places with the demented Kemény, if I would be able to write such novels, as he did. For example the *Grim Times*"[23] (*Zord idők*, sic!). However — who understands this? — for some reason the lifework of Zsigmond Kemény has no impact and not only because of the imperfect citation. Her art criticism means rejection. "I was never able to read a Kemény novel. The Baron was a little bit boring."[24] At the very same time she herself gives a lecture to her friend on the efficiency of the appropriately selected citations. She sings an aria from the *The Barber of Seville* while on the ice of the Danube, however not for the joy of art, but in order to save both of them from the death-trap they are in, by using her ringing soprano voice as

Krúdy és a megállított idő = *Gyűrűk*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1981, pp. 195–208.

[23] KRÚDY, *Nyolc regény*, p. 807.

[24] *Ibid.*

an SOS signal — a speech act of this intention. It is without doubt that the opera of Rossini at this time proves to be a much more successful perlocutionary act than the quotation of a Zsigmond Kemény novel.

In The Crimson Coach Kázmér Rezeda was "raised" by the love of his youth, Berta, with the aid of readings. First she borrowed *Onegin* from him, and thereafter one of Dickens's novels (*Dombey and Son*), which was followed by the fables of Andersen and the novels of Boccaccio. For example, the young chap imitates the Boccaccio novels by climbing from the street into the room of Berta.[25] The husband of the woman, whether or not he read the *Decameron*, nearly shoots the intruder. Shocked by this event, the reader Rezeda becomes a writer. For some time he is not brave enough to imitate the memories of his readings but writes letters instead. And the cultic exercise of handwriting exactly reverses the practice of speech acts, that is, it provides an asylum from the consequences of their performativity. Rezeda writes on a table that has rococo legs, with ink that is mixed with gold powder, and he closes his envelopes with lilac-coloured sealing wax. Occasionally he uses a quill-pen, and he draws red initials on the parchment, and he imitates his idols exclusively in writing: "he wrote as Onegin to Tatiana: he wrote as Sinbad the thousand and one night merchant — he was Henry III the French king and wrote to »Marguerite de Navarre« poste restante to the Water City"[26] He only tries to use again his guest texts for speech acts, when he calms down and he becomes more daring. The starting of the tenth chapter (*Estella*) is again nothing else, but the replay of textual memories, just as the suicide attempt in chapter eleven, imitating Cavaradossi, one of the actors of *Tosca*.

[25] Cf. Tibor GINTLI, *Rezeda Kázmér mint olvasó*, Szabolcs-szatmár-beregi Szemle, 2003/4, pp. 444–457.
[26] *Nyolc regény*, p. 144.

No matter how schematic this review is, it has to be noted by all means that the citing-imitating performance is not an isolated phenomenon as regards history either, that is, it forms such a continuous developmental trend, as any other form-evolution related procedure. This is the way language is passed on generation to generation, which Krúdy imitated from the works of Mór Jókai and Kálmán Mikszáth, and which Sándor Márai imitated from Krúdy.[27] The genre of style imitation may be added to this already generally known literatary history related aspect. The novel *Szindbád hazamegy* [Sindbad goes Home] complements the palette of the genre of pastiche from the side of speech acts. It brings the world to the present with this kind of imitating announcement, which is retained by the memory of the language and which is opened up by the acting character of speech.

In the case of Márai, Sindbad the "sailor" is of course a writer, and at the same time he is the reader, as the novel speaking about him presents the transitions of his writing and reading — of his intertextuality.[28] Exactly in this connection the narrator does explain the imitative role of the aforementioned viola voice. Since this musical instrument appears not only as the metaphor of the tone of the voice of one of the actors, but also as a transmission channel. Sindbad not only relays the messages of the voice, but he also listens to them and then forwards them, being connected to the wavelength of the predecessors. He heard it sometimes, as it "had been heard by each of his ancestors". However, the

[27] Cf. Gergely ANGYALOSI, *A pastiche mint interpretáció. Márai Sándor:* Szindbád hazamegy = *A költő hét bordája*, Latin Betűk, Debrecen, 1996, pp. 57–67.

[28] Sándor MÁRAI, *Szindbád hazamegy*, Újváry „GRIFF" Verlag, München, 1979. Translated by the author of this study. About the legendary life of Krúdy see: Zoltán FRÁTER, *Krúdy Gyula*, Elektra, Budapest, 2003.

ancestors still "supressed the questions of this voice into wine, adventures and music". These rituals had been replaced in his case, a sailor and a writer, by linguistic acting — further telling by citing. This way the voice of the string instrument becomes a medium that transmits the tunes coming from the past, the historic experiences of Hungary.

Sindbad perceives and forwards, that is, he cites and imitates the memory of his ancestors through it: "he heard the voice, he felt he heard all the voices of a Hungary that disappeared in the sink of time and souls. [...] Sindbad heard voices, as if the sound of an invisible viola had brought to life the entire orchestra in his soul, he heard every voice that had been the accompanying music of Hungarian life, [...] as if Hungary were the island of peace and the last province of happiness."[29] It is well known that in addition to the most comprehensively prevailing Krúdy-voice Berzsenyi, Kölcsey, Vörösmarty, Arany, Petőfi, Jókai, Vajda, Tömörkény, Gárdonyi, Lovik, Margit Kaffka, Karinthy, Kosztolányi, Bródy, Géza Csáth, Attila József and many other authors are also heard. This text murmur will become the medium that has to be cited-imitated, from which it is possible to unfold the Hungary of the past, which therefore is already invisible and yet retained in the memory in a visible form. Sindbad "wrote, because in these moments, when the voice came, behind his closed eyes a vision started to evolve, as he saw images, as sleep-walkers. He quickly drafted these images with hurrying hands — with tiny, lilac letters, that are slanted sideways as after-crops in the field, when the wind of the spring ruffles their lines. What did Sindbad see in these moments? He saw the reality, the other Hungary, which lived behind the map and the vision, which was radiated from the reality."[30] The

[29] MÁRAI, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-105.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

citing performance may transform heard things into images, and it may describe the visual spaces of the inherited phantasy, as a Krúdy-vision recorded this way the voice of Jókai manifested by the voice of Sindbad. "There were grey haired men standing there, who saw Hungary with the eyes of Jókai, when pain and poverty did not burn their vision. They saw the Carpathians and the Adriatic Sea, the gold mines of Transylvania and the wheat of Banat. They saw the small towns happily enjoying the sunshine and the large cities that were built with the diligence of Babylon. They saw […] the landscapes of Jókai, the Uplands that chimed in the style of the Medieval Age and the Oriental-like colourful Lower-Danube, the noble feelings of Jókai in the tenderly hearts of the patriotic girls and in the self-sacrifice of the men. They saw the Hungary that Jókai wrote."[31]

Finally, very briefly, it may be noted that citing the textual tradition that is manifested through language with forms of vision naturally directs the critic's focus to the relationships of the speech act and metaphors. In this case, the issue is not a debate which wishes to decide whether the metaphoric intention or its rhetoric can be considered to be a speech act or not. Rather, the issue is whether or not the Sinbad-voice as a metaphor may be also the medium of the citing imitation, strengthening the impression, according to which the comparative sensitivity cannot be separated from the immateriality of the language and of the memory. From Krúdy's use of Jókai to Márai's use of both writers, this is the way in which it is possible to decipher those memories that belong not only to the remains that are recorded as regards

[31] Krúdy's short story, *A magyar milliomos*, was reconstructed by István Fried on the score of the first publication: *Író, irodalom a* Szindbád hazamegy *címû regényben = „…egyszer mindenkinek el kell menni Canudosba". Tanulmányok az ismeretlen Márai Sándorról*, Enciklopédia, Budapest, 1998, p. 61.

antiquity, but which may belong to the present living existence of prevailing Hungarian literature. To sustain this historic continuity is one of the most important tasks of readers of our time.

István Dobos

Parody and Self-Interpretation in Reading *Sindbad*-Texts

Discussing the theoretical aspects of the issue incorporated in the title of this study is possible primarily during the course of *practicing* a rhetorical analysis. At this early stage, it might be necessary for us to highlight among the major conclusions which are deducible from the experience of reading one conclusion that purports a revision of the fundamental interpretation model of morphological structures, which basically assumes the balance of sensual and spiritual, as well as literal and figurative, meanings. Although the conventionally accepted metaphors of reading Krúdy's texts are under the "protection" of a perfect unity of images, words, and sounds, the language-oriented formative devices in the *Sindbad*-stories hardly present their simultaneous perception to be void of barriers.

Metonymy: Puppet or Personality?

As regards the issue of the identity of characters, the basic narrative features of *Sindbad*-stories, regarding the metony-

mical relationship between the narrator and the figures created in the text, are transitions, unmarked viewpoints and switches between parts. In relation to the double readability of metonymy, a reference must be made to the reversibility of the cause and effect relationship between the inner and the outside worlds, which is concurrent with the round and round of the mutual substitutions between the characters. The interchangeability of the personal traits of the characters is one of the signs of the multiplicity of the worlds imagined, i.e., of the fictional stories within fiction itself, which is a distinguishing mark of the *Sindbad*-stories. In fact, Sindbad can choose to have one of three occupations after his death: he could become a tin soldier, a back-comb, or a wooden bead in a rosary.

The short story "Utazás éjjel" [A Journey at Night] (1911) presents an elopement by Sindbad as if it took place in a puppet show, among the props in the scenery of a model railroad. Seen through the train window, the night landscape seems motionless. Observed from the passing railroad car, the signalmen, who stand still and stiff, look lifeless:

> With its red window, a farmstead was running through the landscape, like an image from the puppet theater; at a small station they [Sindbad and Mimi] stopped for a minute, there were two girls sitting in the window, sewing, while a third one was standing under the lamp in the middle of the room in her white underwear, trying to put on a purple skirt.[1]

[1] This short story can be found in the original Hungarian collection KRÚDY Gyula, *Szindbád*, ed. KOZOCSA Sándor, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1985[3], pp. 63-66 „Egy tanyaház pirosló ablakával úgy fut a tájon keresztül, mint egy bábszínházbeli kép; egy kis állomáson, egy percig megállottak, az emeleti ablakban két leány ült, varrtak, a harmadik fehér alsóruhában állott a szoba közepén, a függőlámpa alatt, és éppen egy lila szoknyát próbált felvenni." KRÚDY, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

From the beginning of their journey, Mimi, the girl Sindbad is eloping with, has been sitting silently, hardly stirring, also like a lifeless puppet. Tiring of this game, Sindbad changes his mind and informs the girl that he will take her back to her parents by transferring to the train coming from the opposite direction at the next stop. Mimi does not respond to this proclamation of Sindbad's either. This narrative can be interpreted as a chain of events occurring in the imagination of the person observing the model railroad. At the beginning of the narrative, the listing of a sequence of title variations evokes the announcement of a part or section in a puppet show performed at a fair: "Curly, or the Story of an Actor", or "The Story of Henry Esmond, General of Her Majesty", and, finally, the one considered to be the most expressive of them all, "The Wicked Magician, or the Triumph of Innocence."[2] On the other hand, the story "Utazás éjjel" can also be read as a parody of elopement.

The so-called *performed narrative* is very similar to a drama; in fact, it is a narrative enactment of a play. It is not only the characters in "Utazás éjjel" (1911) who resemble lifeless puppets, who seem to be mere props for the parody of elopement, but the grotesque female figures in "Szindbád és a csók" [Sindbad and the Kiss] (1911), as well as even Sindbad himself, also seem to be such as well. One of these two women practices the "mérföldjáró csók" (verbatim: mile-long kiss) with Sindbad on even days, while the other one does so on odd days: "Julcsa was thirty-nine, while Jella was thirty-eight-and-a-half years old."[3] Not only their ages but also their names and looks are similar too: both of them "were fat, plump, and thirsty for

[2] "*Curly vagy egy színész története*"; "*Esmond Henrik, Anna királynő őfelsége ezredesének története*"; "*A gonosz varázsló, vagy az ártatlanság diadalma*". *Ibid.*, p. 212.

[3] „Julcsa harminckilenc, Jella harmincnyolc és fél esztendős volt." *Ibid.*, p. 65.

kisses",[4] and "they would stick their lips to Sindbad's lips for a long time because of the transience of the fleeting summer of their life.[5] These two female figures are distinguished by numbers, which are connected to them randomly and arbitrarily. The numbers stand for persons, or, rather, the persons are substituted by numbers, as if these characters were mere props with identification labels attached to them.

The third woman flies into the window of our protagonist on Saturdays, like a birdbrained swallow. Sindbad falls asleep next to this innocent creature, who continues to observe his face and motionless body with a frightened and cautious look. Sindbad is disenchanted quickly,[6] and his apathy can also be deduced from his appearance: "Sindbad could quickly cool off, he could quickly forget, and his cold and indifferent look would turn away from the radiation of oft-seen female eyes with icy reserve."

The double readability of metonymic formations based on sheer connectedness makes it possible for the parody of the identity of a person to appear. That is to say, the even and the odd numbers, which are used metonymically to identify as well as to differentiate between the characters, are associated with their bearers quite randomly. The marker is an external one of the entity being parodied. The incompatibility of the constituent parts in the marking process is revealed here exactly by the logic that is supposed to be used for restraining the arbitrariness of the language that establishes untameable connections. The critique of metaphors applied to the figural presentation of people is executed through metonymical structures, but this

[4] „kövérek, puhák és csókszomjasak voltak" *Ibid.*

[5] „tűnő nyaruk mulandósága miatt forrasztották hosszadalmasan ajkukat Szindbád ajkára." *Ibid.*

[6] „Szindbád hamar kihűlt, hamar felejtett, és közömbös, hideg tekintete jeges nyugalommal fordult el sokszor látott női szemek sugárzása elől." *Ibid.*, 62.

operation is not tantamount to reversing the hierarchy of the two linguistic operations. There is no concord between the statement of the lesson related to the difference between the women and its implemented performance either. Metonymy thus excludes the possibility of a psychological approach to the characters, as the analogy between the number and the corresponding character is purely based on an accidental relationship. The metonymy used for naming the characters has a subversive power, yet it does not erase the rhetorical pattern of reversing and substituting from literary language. The impersonal number used for *metonymy* here seems to be the *metaphor of the absence of personality* that would distinguish the character.

What is there behind the external features? Is it possible to state anything more specific about the nature of Sindbad's self? The reiterative occurrence of the variations of the sentence "He was not consoled by the one hundred and seven women who reciprocated his love"[7] in the *Sindbad*-stories reminds us of the Catalog Aria of Leporello in Mozart's opera. Don Giovanni keeps an exact account of women he seduced, whereas it is far from certain that Sindbad's amorous conquests really did take place.[8] According to the preliminary interpretation in the

[7] „Nem vigasztalta a százhét nő, aki viszontszerette."

[8] Kierkegaard discusses the list of the seduced women in great detail. Cf. Søren KIERKEGAARD, *Vagy-vagy*, Osiris, Budapest, 1994, pp. 86–102; especially: pp. 94–99. In Mozart's opera, the power of sensuality itself is what seduces. Don Giovanni lacks reflection, consciousness, and shrewdness. He does not plot, he is driven by momentary desire, and he "enjoys the satisfaction of lust" (*Ibid.*, 97). Kierkegaard even dares to assume that Don Giovanni "does not have time to make a plan beforehand, and he does not have time afterwards either for letting his act become conscious in his mind." (*Ibid.*) His sensuality is musical, and what Kierkegaard means by this is that "it will fade away forever, just like music, which is gone as soon as it is not played, and it is reborn only when

introduction to this story (see "Tájékoztatás" [Information] (1915)), the one hundred and seven women, in fact, lulled Sindbad into a numb reminiscence in his imagination.[9] How does an imaginary event exist in the consciousness of a literary character, and how can that be related in the narrative? The poetical issue of this short story is hardly discussed in the relevant critical literature, just as hardly are the notions of coverage between reality and fiction, or the transformative text-events of becoming a creation. Yet imagination and reminiscence, as well as the fictional and the real, are inseparable from one another when following the self-interpretation of the piece.

Repetition: Irony and Recollection

Due to the double readability of repetitive formations, an interplay between pathos and irony expresses the complexity of the behavior of the reminiscing Sindbad. The iterative structures present the emotional recollections of the past as a piece of parody. In one single, short passage in "A hídon. Negyedik út" [On the Bridge. The Fourth Journey] (1911), there are four different versions of the description of the narrative situation of retrospection: "He remembered a town from his youth; in a valley and with red roofs where, underneath the old arches of the brown bridge, a clean rivulet was rushing over colored pebbles, and Sindbad was dreamily watching the blue forests asleep in the distance from the stone ledge of the bridge.[10]

it is played again." (*Ibid.*, 100) Perfidious speech and retorting do not befit it. As opposed to Don Giovanni, Sindbad seduces his women by using the power of words; he probes the gullibility of women, and feels best when he can foresee the impact of his words.

[9] „képzelődésében kábult emlékezésbe ringatta". KRÚDY, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[10] „Eszébe jutott fiatal korából egy város, — völgyben és piros háztetőkkel, ahol a barna híd ódon ívei alatt színes kavicsok felett vágtat egy

The basic sentence that expresses a desire to return to the past is full of pathos, but the repetitive appearances of the versions drive the recollection from irony towards self-mockery: "the blue forests and the river diligently running past under the lazy arches of the bridge can be seen in the distance", then "a river runs through the town and, from the bridge you can see dreaming forests".[11] In the various repeated versions of these places and/or events, the sequence is continued with the iteration of one of the components of the original sentence, which is sleep or dreaming. Uttering what speaks for itself also approximates the description of the sleeping town to parody. It seems to Sindbad that time has perhaps stopped: twenty-five years ago, he saw the same windows with their closed shutters.

The return of what is not identical to itself offers the semblance of interrelatedness. A basic pastime of Sindbad is to gaze dreamily as if brooding for long periods of time. The closing of the story means returning to its starting point. The iteration of the basic sentence creates a circular structure, which places the narrated story on a revolving stage, as it were: Sindbad "went to the old bridge from where he was looking at the distant dreamy forests in the dusk for a long time, thinking all the while".[12] The repeated versions grow out of the original sentence, but these cannot be regarded as unified and joining elements that would organize themselves around one single focal point in the entirety of the text. The double readability of

tiszta kis folyó, és Szindbád a híd kőpárkánya mellől álmodozva nézte a messziségben alvó kék erdőket." *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[11] „a kék erdőket látni a messzeségben és a híd lusta ívei alatt serényen utazgató folyót"; „egy folyó szeli keresztül a várost, és a hídról álmodó erdőket látni." *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[12] [Szindbád] „a régi hídra ment, ahonnan sokáig elgondolkozva nézte az alkonyatban álmodozó messzi erdőségeket. A folyó fürgén futott a híd álmos ívei alatt." *Ibid.*, p. 56.

the formation of repetition ensures the appearance of parody in Krúdy's nostalgic short stories in search of their subject matters.

One of the basic features of Krúdy's writing is the application of synesthesia as related to recollections. Its iterative occurrence also offers the possibility of assuming a parody of the formation. It is striking how the imagined perceptions of various sensory fields, such as flavors, aromas, images, and forms of touch are connected to one another in Krúdy's comparisons and similes. It is typical that, in the individual *Sindbad*-stories, different sensory organs always come to the fore in the text. For example, in the story called "Az első virág" [The First Flower] (1911), it is the sense of hearing, the laughter of actress H. Galamb Irma, and the joint impression created by these two, that are in focus. The repeated versions of joint perception ironically places the phenomenon itself into the center of attention, during the course of which an impression perceived through one of our sensory organs evokes the memory or the sensation belonging to another. The single distinguishing feature of this character is that she produces strange sounds: "—Ah, is that you?... she exclaimed in a ringing voice, which sparkled in front of Sindbad, like running water in moonlight."[13] Soon after this, the reader can hear H. Galamb Irma again, whose name proves to be a warning sign: "Her voice was now cooing…"[14] This actress knows one of Sindbad's tutors, who specializes in conquering female hearts: "«Tell him I'm sending my greetings… and my kisses,» she added with a soft chuckle, which sounds to Sindbad's ears like the ringing of fast spring rain on the surface of a placid lake."[15] The awkward

[13] „Ah, maga az?… — kiáltott fel csengő hangon, amely úgy csillámlott Szindbád előtt, mint a folyóvíz a holdsütésben." *Ibid.*, p. 310.

[14] „Most már turbékolt a hangja…" *Ibid.*, p. 310.

[15] „Tiszteltetem… És csókoltatom — tette hozzá halk kacagással, amely úgy hangzott Szindbád fülébe, mint a gyors tavaszi eső csengése a nyugodt tó tükrén." *Ibid.*

young man, however, does not hear that the actress has accepted his advances: "«The evening is cool,» she said in a genteel voice typically used in French drawing-room pieces, «Mr. Sindbad, I'll let you escort me…» Sindbad, although he was past the age of sixteen, sometimes said stupid things: «My tutors are sitting in the restaurant Hársfa, and they are probably waiting for me to arrive»."[16] Sindbad is wet behind the ears, as it were: he is hard of hearing, and the experienced H. Galamb Irma has to take cognizance of this using a more and more ordinary voice: "«Strange man,» she muttered softly."[17] The actress makes yet another effort, in a different tone: "«I hope you'll come and have tea and an afternoon snack with me tomorrow?» she said quietly and seriously. «Shall I take Mr. Ketvényi along, too?» asked Sindbad. The small cutie silently swayed her round breasts, like a bird, and murmured indifferently, «If the old geezer wants to come at all?»"[18] If the reader associates meanings with the voices and calls for the help provided by the system of signs used by pigeons, based on the meaning of the name of this female character, this narrative will read like a parody of bird language. The short story, on the one hand, suggests that the reception of courting voices requires a delicate sense of hearing while, on the other hand, it does not refute the assumption either that education can have a benign influence on sensory perception because, as time passes,

[16] „— Az este hűvös — mondta finomkodó hangon, mint a francia szalondarabokban szokás —, Szindbád úr, megengedem, hogy elkísérjen… Szindbád — bár már tizenhat esztendős elmúlott — néha ostobaságokat mondott: — Nevelő uraim a Hársfában ülnek, és bizonyára várnak." *Ibid*.

[17] „— Furcsa ember! — mormogta csendesen." *Ibid*.

[18] „— Remélem, hogy holnap délután eljön hozzám uzsonnázni? — mondta csendesen és komolyan. — Ketvényi urat is elhozzam? — kérdezte Szindbád. Az alacsony nőcske csendesen meghintázta gömbölyű mellét, mint egy madár, aztán közömbösen mormogta: — Ha ugyan eljön az öreg bácsi?" *Ibid.*, p. 311.

Sindbad will become better than his masters. The double readability of simultaneous perception allows for both possible interpretations. What is realized here is a poetics of tautology, insofar as the short story can be considered the extension of a self-evident correlation, which goes: in order to hear a voice, hearing is necessary.

Tautology: The Narrative in Search of its Subject Matter

Krúdy' poetics of tautology manifests itself in expressing the obvious and repeating its variations in the *Sindbad*-stories. In narratives searching for their subject matter, the author presents the activity of narrating on a stage, hence expressing and relating, as forms of action, play an equal part to that of the story. No value appears to be permanent or solid in the worldview of the narrator. Compulsive retrospection creates a safe haven through the language-related activity against the loss or depletion of personal memories. Krúdy's poetics of tautology reveals itself against the alluring nothingness in a *narrative in search of its subject matter*. I do not wish to contend, however, that the *Sindbad*-stories are about nothing, for I think that they are rather about the play of fancy that annihilates nothingness.

In the opening short story called "Ifjú évek" [Early Youth], the story unfolds from the description of a painting. The interruptions of the narrator relate to the ways of expression, to the narrative activity that purports to appear expedient: "Who or what had been the prince before he took his place within the gilded frames in the old monastery? This does not belong closely to this story. Let it suffice that he was there, under an arch, hanging from the wall."[19] It seems as if the presenter/

[19] „Ki volt, mi volt a herceg, mielőtt kopottas, aranyozott rámák között elfoglalta volna helyét a régi kolostorban? — ez szorosan nem

narrator was proceeding in a strictly straight fashion, yet there is an immediate gap between what is uttered and what is contemplated. Soon after it is announced that diversions will be avoided, a detailed description of the figure of St. Anna, visible underneath the decaying plaster of the archway section, is given: "she was seated on a small footstool, her face was touched by antiquity, and only her two pale eyes looked at the students, who would clatter on the cobblestones of the hallway in their boots."[20] Then, the lean narrative, as previously mentioned, turns into a presentation that loses itself in myriad details. The travesty of laconic expressivity grows into full proportion in the reference to the image of St. George: "George was slaughtering his dragon."[21] This piece of information is obviously unnecessary. An image of St. George cannot be of anything else, due to its essence. The narrator is thus verbose, since he explains one issue or notion with the issue or notion itself. Nevertheless, it is exactly this amount of excess that distinguishes Krúdy's art as a writer. There is much more, and also something different, present here than simply the dissolution of the cause and effect principle, or a structure based on temporal connections, or even the lack of pragmatism, as it is unanimously claimed by Krúdy critics and experts.

The way the *Sindbad*-stories are written takes us very close to the genre of parody. Still, it is not the constant transition between reality and absurdity that brings forth the effect of ambiguity but rather the interplay between narration and presentation/performance. The possibility of reading the *Sindbad*-stories as parodies comes from the tension between the

tartozik e történethez. Elég az hozzá, hogy ott volt, a bolthajtás alatt a falon." *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[20] „egy kis zsámolyon üldögélt, az arcát megérintette a régiség, csak két fakó szeme tekintgetett kérdőleg a diákokra, akik a folyosó kockakövein csizmában kopogtak." *Ibid.*

[21] „György sárkányát öldökölte." *Ibid.*

actual utterance and the interpretation of the way markers are used.

The personification of the voice from the past almost automatically pushes the presentation of "Szindbád második útja" [Sindbad's Second Journey] (1911) to the boundaries of parody at the beginning of the 20th century. The name Sindbad is not necessarily supposed to serve the purpose of identifying the character but rather to expand the limits of the self, in order to multiply the personality. It is more of an empty marker than a proper name, which is why it can comprise the most diverse characteristic human features. It is then the exaggeration, the excessive piling up of personal traits, i.e., tautology, that turns the characterization of Sindbad into parody. The conscientiously elaborated and diversely highlighted psychological portrait becomes distorted after a certain point. Verbosity driven by irony turns against its own objective: it does not create unity and continuity in the personality of the character bearing the name. However, tautology is not merely a waste of verbal expression. On the contrary, the description teeming with attributes, comparisons, and other figures of speech directs the attention not to the complexity of the personality but to the richness of language. Here, the wasteful abundance of expressions is the source of enjoyment, not the psychologically nuanced quality of the profile.

> He had seen death, he has seen birth, adultery, and murder in the forest. He even cried once; he cried bloody tears because of money, and he helped the poor in secret. He had prayed in small desolate church buildings, and he had contemplated assassinating his enemies. Then he had been honest, open, and brave, like a mediaeval knight. Then again he had been clever as a snake, and he had tried to interpret inebriated dreams on the days after. He had had friends: haughty lords and fugitive counterfeiters.

> Sometimes he had been an abductor, at other times a couch potato of a family man. [22]

The directionless piling up of elements, working as a parody of enhancement, makes the formation of tautology visible at the climax of the list: "He fought with fighters."[23]

Sindbad sets out to find the memories of his youth. On the path to his memories, he wishes to emulate his young self in order to re-live his youth. Thus, the reader becomes a part of a mirror-play. It is as if Sindbad were the *alter ego* of the unnamed narrator, while the old Sindbad imitates his younger self, and the young Sindbad comes on stage from the perspective of the reminiscing Sindbad. The destination of the second journey is a small town in the Plains region, where the young Sindbad once went to see a young girl at night. The marking of the place and time is tautological: "It was summertime then, and the night was dewy."[24] Uttering what speaks for itself can also be explained through the fact that, to Sindbad's mind, "none of the old thoughts came back."[25] So, the short story creates its own world out of nothing: the lack of subject matter and the awkward search for it provide the reason for the story-teller to put the narrating activity itself on stage as well. The description of the figure of the girl unfolds from several clichés: "Her name

[22] „Látott halált, látott születést, esküvőt, házasságtörést és gyilkosságot az erdőben. Egyszer sírt is, pénz miatt véres könnyet sírt, és titokban segített a szegényeken. Imádkozott elhagyott kis templomokban, és orvgyilkosságot forgatott a fejében ellensége ellen. Majd becsületes, nyílt és bátor volt, mint egy középkori lovag. Majd okos volt, mint a kígyó, és mámoros álmokat próbált fejtegetni a másnapokon. Voltak barátai: gőgös nagyurak és bujdosó pénzhamisítók. Egyszer nőrabló volt, máskor otthonülő családapa." *Ibid*., p. 37.

[23] „Verekedett verekedőkkel" *Ibid*.

[24] „Nyár volt akkor és harmatos volt az éjszaka." *Ibid*., p. 38.

[25] „már semmisem jutott eszébe a régi gondolatok közül" *Ibid*.

was *Irma*, and she was a brunette with big hair, and above her lips there was a feeble little shadow, like with other white-skinned and brown-haired women. Sindbad has experienced this often since."[26]

Another discursive formation belonging to the notion of tautology, known as the rhetorical question, would also seem in Krúdy's writings to be the manifestation of maintaining narration in search of its subject matter: it is a question only so far as form goes, for it does not require an actual answer: "«Gardener Bacsó died last night. A wake is being held now at his place,» said Irma. Is it possible that there is still that wake being held at Gardener Bacsó's bedside in the small garden cottage?"[27] The repeated occurrence in Krúdy's works of a word embedded into a context that brings forth a contrary meaning is supposed to provide glimpses of the reverse extremities of life. The opposition of hot and cold expresses the well-known inseparableness of life and death: Sindbad can feel the kiss laid on the lips of the girl in love and the proximity of the cold dead body laid out next door.

Hot and cold, a *sample of the figure of speech called antonym*, also allows for double readability. It is striking how worn out and cliché-like the opposition under scrutiny is, yet it is exactly due to this commonplace quality that its repeated occurrence functions as a piece of parody. The precondition for this transition, however, is for the reader to be able to find the symbolic sense about the closeness of life's extremities. Having properly perceived the travesty of this figure of speech, the reader is not really surprised at the conclusion of the story: after

[26] „Irmának hívták, és barna volt, nagyhajú, és az ajka fölött gyönge kis árnyék lebegett, mint a fehérbőrű, barna nőknél. Szindbád ezt azóta gyakran tapasztalta." *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[27] „— Bacsó kertész az este meghalt. Most virrasztanak mellette — felelte Irma. Vajon azóta még mindig Bacsó kertész mellett virrasztanak a kis kerti házban?" *Ibid.*, p. 40.

a few months, Irma, who has fallen in fatal love with Sindbad, of whom she thinks fondly and with gratitude, is taken to the cemetery to be buried. The routine explanation for the suicide of the forsaken girl is presented through a parallel whose formation also requires a double reading strategy: Irma poisons herself *after a couple of months*, whereas Sindbad, upon learning of her death, does not feel well *for a couple of days*. It is through the choice of reading the unbalanced quality of the parallel as an expression of antinomy that the reader can recognize the ironic tone describing the hasty mourning of her voluntary death on the part of Sindbad.

Nonetheless, the question of the relationship between parody and self-interpretation is still to be more thoroughly explored in Krúdy-criticism, which is why it is also difficult to answer the question whether the mysteriousness of the personality of Sindbad is open to genuine depths of meaning or simply deceptive and false appearance.

Tibor Gintli

Anecdotism and Associative Text Editing

Gyula Krúdy belongs to the circle of writers in whose oeuvre poetical innovation is combined with the application of narrative forms of the 19th-century Hungarian epic. In most of his works this innovation does not only imply that new and traditional narrative methods exist side by side, but it also means that it is carried out largely by the transformation and reinterpretation of certain narrative traditions. The evocation of the adventure story, the picaresque, the historical novel, and the tale is a well-known method of this type of fiction, however, the evocation of the 19th-century tradition of anecdotic narration is even more relevant and significant. Previous Krúdy interpretation, with some exceptions, generally avoided the issue related to anecdoticism as it shared the common approach depreciating anecdotic narration. Since anecdoticism was considered outdated Krúdy's interpreters rather emphasized his moving away from such forms.[1] Consequently, an interpretation of his literary career was constructed which

[1] Anna FÁBRI, *Ciprus és jegenye. Sors, kaland és szerep Krúdy Gyula műveiben*, [Cyprus and Lombardy Tree. Fate, Adventure and Role in Gyula Krúdy's Works], Magvető, Budapest, 1978, p. 23.

principally connected anecdoticism to the so-called early works, while in his late writings it was related to a weakening of his creative power.[2] The one-sidedness of this approach can easily be seen if we recognize the presence of anecdotic narration in the case of works put in the centre of Krúdy's oeuvre, as the tradition of anecdotic narration appears with great frequency in the texts written in the 1910s. Nevertheless, in the last decade of Krúdy's life [or: writing period], interpreted by some critics as the period of his decline, outstanding novels such as *Boldogult úrfikoromban* [In My Happy Youth], or the so-called culinary short stories (discussed so often by literary criticism), in which anecdotic narration also plays a structural role, were written.

In this study my aim is to argue that anecdotic narration can also be found in the much-appreciated Sindbad stories, and the innovative solutions of these texts often account for the inventive application of anecdotic narration. To prove this, I intentionally chose a text that is well known and esteemed by literary critics, "Ifjú évek" [Early Youth].

The short story consists of three main parts that are separated by a space. The third part tells the story of two decisive days in the life of the adolescent Sindbad in chronological time order. Sindbad wants to boast of Róza Kacskó's love towards him to his hunchback friend, who is called Pope Gregory by his pupils when amongst themselves. However, in the course of Sindbad's visit, Róza does not show any signs of her emotions, treats the boy disdainfully, then humiliates Pope Gregory by hitting on his back and shouting: "Just look at this boy. He has a hump like a camel."[3] (369)

[2] Béla CZÉRE, *Krúdy Gyula* (Nagy magyar írók) [Great Hungarian Writers], Gondolat, Budapest, 1987, pp. 224–234.

[3] Here and further on I am referring to the edition: Gyula KRÚDY, *The Adventures of Sindbad*, transl. by George SZIRTES, Central European University Press, Budapest — London — New York, 1998, p. 7.

Sindbad goes to Poprád with his friend, perhaps to console him, who feels so secure in Sindbad's company that he leaves hold of the wooden timber of the barrage and drowns. This part of the text has a plot that can be easily summarised: the narrator tells the events in tight chronological order revealing the cause and effect context. Considering it separate from the other parts, it seems to be applying the possible tools of metaphorical text structuring. The second part can be regarded as a transition between the last and the first parts. It leads the reader into the Kacskós' house by showing an anecdotic genre, and refers to the three Kacskó girls humorously in order to come to the brief description of Róza and Sindbad's relationship eventually.

The first big part of the story is built around the anecdotal figure Prince Lubomirski, for a painting depicting him connects the three parts of the story. The painting, which can be seen in the corridor of the monastery, is evoked in the dream of the elderly Sindbad one autumn night. All the past events that are told by the narrator in third person correlates to Lubomirski's portrait in a way, although this connection does not focus on the plot and is not of a causal nature. To put it more precisely, certain text places connect metaphorical meaning to Lubomirski's portrait and this metaphorical denotation net holds tight together the story's three parts appearing to be very different from the aspect of the narrative strategy. The description of local beliefs and customs related to Lubomirski's figure, the first part of the story, in a way constitutes the antecedent of the story of Sindbad, Róza, and Pope Gregory, though not on the level of the plot. The short

Where a reference page number is not given, I am using my own translation of the text. "Nini, ennek a fiúnak púpja van, mint a tevének." Gyula KRÚDY, *Az álombeli lovag. Válogatott elbeszélések 1909-1911*, [The Knight in the Dream: Selected Short Stories] ed. András BARTA, Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1978, p. 369.

anecdotal stories structured around Lubomirski's picture reveals the associative operation of remembrance despite the fact that the narrator sets out his own part not as the narration of the memory of the grey-haired Sindbad. For a brief moment the first paragraph visualizes the grey-haired Sindbad set in the situation of remembrance. Lubomirski's portrait of this text appears as the character's memory:

> Once upon a damp and moonlit night a man with greying hair was watching the autumn mist from figures of chimney-sweeps on the rooftops. Somewhere in the monastery at Podolin, he was thinking, there is, or there was, an old painting, showing a shaggy-haired figure wild upcurled moustache, a thick beard, red as woman's hair, two big round eyes with elongated pale blue pupils, and a complexion as ruddy ad the colour on white tablecloth when light passes through a full wine glass on a sunny winter moon. This man was Prince Lubomirski.[4]

In the second paragraph however, the narrative strategy emphasizing the transmission of the character's remembrance comes to an end. From this point on, the plot time of the story is not the time dimension in which the elderly Sindbad is visualized any more but that of the student years spent in Podolin, while the tone of the narration is that of the narrator talking to the reader.

> Who he was, what kind of man, before he found himself among other worn gilt frames in the old monastery, is not strictly

[4] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 7."A podolini kolostorban — gondolta magában egy őszes férfiú, éjszak, ősz felé, odakint a háztetőkön ködből való kéményseprők jártak a holdfényben — volt vagy van egy régi kép, a képen torzonborz ember, a bajusza boglyasan felfelé kunkorodó, mint a hősöké, a szakálla tömör és rozsdaszínű, mintha egy göndörhajú nő hajából való volna, a szeme két karika, benne hosszúkás, világoskék szemgolyó, az arca pedig piros, mint a bor fénye napos téli időben a fehér asztalon: az volt herceg Lubomirski." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 365.

> relevant to this tale. Suffice it to say, he was there on the wall beneath the vault where peeling plaster revealed faint traces of a mural of long dead saints amusing themselves.[5]

From this point on the short story essentially removes the character of the remembering Sindbad; the narrator does not make any references to his transmission of Sindbad's memory. How do we interpret the relationship of the narrator to Sindbad from this point on? This is really a matter of what the approach of the interpreter is like. We can consider the relationship with a rather common analogy: the narrator visualizes the situation of the remembrance, yet after the indication of this, he turns away from the character's perspective and narrates the events by enforcing his own omnipotent focus. Another option is the assumption of an alterego-like relationship between the character and the narrator. In this context the story can be read as the narrator's hidden autobiographical narrative, and the narrator's relative omnipotence can be interpreted as the consequence of the retrospective perspective. The narrator can take up the word from the character in the course of narrating the story because he actually tells his own story. Should we decide on either interpretation, it seems evident that the focus of the first and the second paragraph, i.e., the perspectives of the character and that of the narrator, are very close to each other.

The emphasis on Sindbad's aging suggests an elegiac mood, while the evoked picture of Lubomirski in Sindbad's memory is both attractive and ludicrous. In the second

[5] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 365. "Ki volt, mi volt a herceg, mielőtt kopottas, aranyozott rámák között elfoglalta volna a helyét a régi kolostorban? — ez szorosan nem tartozik e történethez. Elég az hozzá, hogy ott volt, a bolthajtás alatt a falon, amelynek lehullott vakolatán még itt-ott látszottak a nyomai a falra festett képeknek, amelyeken a régen megholt szentek játszadoztak egymás között." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 365.

paragraph the mood shows similar complexity and the elements can be related to each other. The elegiac and the comic tonality is interlinked here too: Saint Anne's face, which is touched by time, and the mentioning of saints who died long time ago, both suggest the melancholy of death, while the phrase "Saint George, meanwhile, was busily killing his dragon", or the image of saints playing with each other, is humorous, just as is the meaning of Anna's presumed look: "only her two bleary eyes still staring enquiringly at the students who clattered down the cobbled passageway in their heavy boots. The good woman was eternally solicitous about their education.[6] Lubomirski appears from two perspectives too, which is indicated by the humour of the iconography: his picture can be seen in a peculiar triptych-like composition between Saint Anne and Saint George, in a place where the main figure is usually shown. Placing a human being before the saints suggests a humorous conceit, however, Lubomirski's former power is also expressed in this peculiar setting.

The character's voice of remembrance and the narrator's part seem to be getting even closer due to certain rhetorical configurations which unify these voices. The first three paragraphs are closed by epiphora-like repetitions of syntagmas. The character's remembrance finishes by this: "This man was Prince Lubomirski", this is replied to at the end of the two paragraphs of the narrator's part: "Prince Lubomirski took his place in the middle"[7], and "they respectfully raised their caps

[6] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, pp. 1-2. "György sárkányát öldökölte"; „Mintha állandóan a leckék megtanulásáról tudakozódott volna a szent asszony." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 365. (The latter quotation in construing translation is as follows: "As if the saint woman was always calling the pupils to account for learning their homework."

[7] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, pp. 1-2. "ez volt herceg Lubomirski"; "a középen helyet foglalt Lubomirski úr" *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 365.

to the wine red complexion of Lubomirski." As you can see, the narrator's part is also linked to the character's language of remembrance by transforming the metaphor there ("a complexion as ruddy as the colour on a white tablecloth when the light passes through a full wine glass on a sunny winter noon") into its metaphor variant here ("wine red complexion of Lubomirski").[8]

The first sentence of the second paragraph suggests that the narrator will not tell Prince Lubomirski's story. He will not actually do it, nevertheless, almost the two thirds of the story is related to Lubomirski's figure. A traditional anecdotal narrative would have likely summarized the peculiar life of Prince Lubomirski by inserting a humorous anecdote at least, or would have told of a remarkable case characterizing his extravagant personality. Instead of this, there are five paragraphs linked to each other more or less closely, showing anecdotal characteristics, which relate the particular manifestations of respect towards his figure. The short genre-like story fragments associate various meanings to the figure of the prince, all of which will be the elements of the metaphoric structure of the story. As the priests frighten the non-paying pupils of Lubomirski, one implication of the picture of the prince can be identified with self-consciousness and fear. On the other hand, in some paragraphs, his figure is placed at the intersection of death and a sort of strange eternal life: "so even after his death he retained a certain interest in the disciplining of errant students."[9] The young ladies of Podolin put bunches of flowers into his picture frames and they "prayed before the prince's image precisely as they did before pictures of the

[8] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 2. „az arca piros, mint a bor fénye napos déli időben a fehér asztalon"; „a piros arcszínű Lubomirski" *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 365.

[9] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 2. "a túlvilágról is beleszólás volt a hanyag diákok megintésébe." *Az álombeli lovag* 365.

saints."[10] "In this manner Lubomirski remained lord of the manor well after his death". He almost rose to the eminence of God as "on the day of Corpus Christi on the square before the town hall the guard would fire the mortar by in honour both of the old God and of George Lubomirski. (True, they used only half as much gunpowder for the latter.)"[11] The issue of death was first presented by showing the greying Sindbad in the story. Lubomirski's figure, which passed away but did not disappear from life, completely impersonates remembrance itself too, because the past's way of existing as evoked in the course of remembering recalls that of Lubomirski: he is still there, although he does not exist anymore. The humour related to his figure, and oscillating between irony and humour, may also refer to the vain efforts of remembrance, a vain attempt to regain lost youth. Lubomirski thus casts a shadow on the aging Sindbad's figure as well. (The recipient strategy presuming an alter ego-like relationship between the character and the narrator may also enable us to attribute the narrator's self-reflexion to Lubomirski's portrait and his strange life after death.) Lubomirski's figure nevertheless implies vitality, eroticism, and male potency as well. A paragraph tells of the time when Mr Lubomirski was alive and the women of the town "would give birth to red-bearded and shaggy-haired kids" His sexual activity is even enforced by a note in brackets: "the prince would delightedly remove his buffalo skin gloves in the presence of ladies kneeling at this

[10] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 2. "úgy imádkoztak a herceg képe előtt, mint a többi szentek képeinél"; "Ilyenformán még halottaiban is Lubomirski volt az első úr a városkában." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 366.

[11] "Úrnapján a városháza előtti térségen nemcsak az öreg isten, de Lubomirski György tiszteletére is elpukkantotta a hajdú a mozsarát. (Igaz, hogy csak felényi puskaporral.)"*Az álombeli lovag*, p. 366.

feet.[12]" Then the erotic humour of the quotation is subdued by the following sentence evoking death: "But he was long past removing his gloves now."[13] Thus the first passage of the story makes Lubomirski's portrait the emblem of guilt, eroticism, and death.

The continuation of the short story first relates to the metaphoric meaning of fear resulting from a guilty conscience. We learn that Sindbad showed moderate respect towards Prince Lubomirski's portrait because his tuition fee was always paid by his parents despite other pupils. The adolescent Sindbad thinks he does not have to be afraid of Lubomirski, or of getting fired owing to the wealth of his family. Thus Sindbad, like a pupil, links guilty conscience to the failure of learning, and due to the described circumstances, he believes he has nothing to do with it. The last paragraph of the first passage details lengthily and with calmness the reasons for Sindbad's feeling secure, and in the course of this, the story arrives at the theme of love, which is depicted between Róza Kacskó and Sindbad almost unperceived.

> Sindbad's parents, let it be known, were punctilious in paying his fees to the monastery and on more than one occasion sent barrels of wine as a contribution to Holy Communion, over which Sindbad officiated, wearing his red surplice and rattling off the Confiteor at the speed of light, before ceremoniously and becomingly ringing his bell, as if the novices in the rear pews were only waiting for this word of command before they could get down on their knees. It was in this office one Sunday, while wearing his red surplice that he succeeded in seducing Anna

[12] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 2. "csupa veres szakállú és torzonborz külsejű gyermeket hoztak a világra"; a herceg szívesen lehúzta a kezéről a bivalybőr kesztyűt, ha fehérnép térdelt a lábához." *Az álombeli lovag*, pp. 365-366.

[13] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 2. "De most már soha többé nem húzza le a kesztyűt." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 366.

> Kacskó, who had become to mass along with a few friends of hers. How did all this happen?[14]

The love theme is not introduced on the basis of causal connections either but by associations linked rather loosely to each other: the reference to the tuition fee implies the evocation of another form of contribution than of the altar wine. In relation to the mass, the figure of Sindbad serving at the altar in a red robe appears, then the red dress as a condition triggering love metonymically evokes the notion of the love affair. After the rhetorical question closing the first passage, the reader educated on 19th-century fiction would expect that the presentation of this particular love conquest follows. To the contrary, the narration of the "story" of love is suspended and returns to the theme of Sindbad's moderate respect towards Lubomirski. We learn that Sindbad as a pupil was staying at the house of the town magistrate. This implied a social rank within the local relationships of the small town, which even increases Sindbad's feeling secure, that is undisturbed by his failure at school duties. The story will later not either tell of that holy mass where Sindbad conquered Róza's heart. However, it will depict in an anecdotal genre the quarrel of the "pan" magistrate and his wife, so that following one of their replicates leading to a joke about the story, seemingly randomly, would continue with the presentation of

[14] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 3-4. "(Szindbádért ugyanis szülei pontosan megfizették a tandíjat a kolostornak, sőt egyszer-másszor hordó bort is küldöttek a szentmiséhez, amelynél Szindbád piros szoknyában ministrált, a Confiteort szélsebesen mondta, és ünnepélyesen, tekintélyesen rázta meg a csöngettyűt, mintha tőle függött volna, hogy a hátulsó padokban üldögélő diákok most térdre ereszkedjenek. Ugyancsak a ministráló ruha piros palástjában hódította meg Kacskó Annát, midőn Anna vasárnap a szentmisére a barátokhoz jött.) Hogy is volt ez a dolog teljes bizonyossággal? " *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 366.

the Kacskó girls. The atmosphere of Róza and Sindbad's calf-love is again evoked by a genre: Róza is cheerfully pulling Sindbad's hair while playfully mocking him: "— «Study!» — she cried, her eyes sparkling, «or else, as God my witness. Lubomirski will fail you.»"[15] This phrase gains significance in determining the narrative structure of the story by making apparent that references linked to Lubomirski's portrait in the first passage are sustained by later passages as well, i.e., the metaphorical connotation set up at the beginning extends to the entire story.

The first scene of the third passage depicting Pope Gregory's visit is also interlinked in this metaphorical network. The continuation is even more apparent as with the case of Róza, who again recalls Lubomirski's figure: "I wonder that Lubomirski tolerates such a hopeless student at the monastery."[16] Her exclamatory tone has however changed essentially, as instead of the playful jape earlier, Róza now rudely snaps at Sindbad. Within the context of the scene following Pope Gregory's visit, this changed tone can be interpreted as the sign of jealousy and anger due to jealousy. Lubomirski's figure thus represents not only the idyllic side of love in the plot narrating passages of the story but also the commanding, harsh desire of possessing. In further scenes in the third part of the short story, Lubomirski's figure is recalled in the adolescent Sindbad's consciousness in close context to the fact that Sindbad's former feeling secure vanishes. When Pope Gregory does not come up from under the water, Sindbad desperately starts to run towards the bridge leaning over River Poprad: "He brushed against people who shook

[15] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 5. „ – Tanulj – kiáltotta csillogó tekintettel –, mert bizony isten megbuktat a Lubomirski." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 368.

[16] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 7. " – Csodálom, hogy a Lubomirski megtűr ilyen rossz diákot a kolostorban." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 368.

their heads at the pale little boy in full flight. Sindbad seemed to hear them muttering the name of the mysterious Lubomirski."[17] The meaning of Lubomirski's portrait begins to transform in the adolescent Sindbad's consciousness. The bad consciousness which he related to the failure of learning is now connected to Gregory's sinking, an event the effect of which Sindbad cannot escape, and the shocking experience of which cannot be compared to the discomfort felt due to the failure of doing the homework. Sindbad recalls Lubomirski's figure for the second time when he glimpses Pope Gregory's dead body in the river:

> Sindbad wiped his sweating brow and, for the first time, fully understood what had happened. The hunchback had drowned and would get the blame. The image of Lubormirski would finally step out of the frame, in fact, he was already advancing on him with his red beard. Somewhere in the far away distance Róza was standing under the dark boughs of the further shore,, her hands joined back, morosely, furiously glaring at the stars as she had done the night before… The river seemed deep, mysterious and terrifying as he rode after the corps. Eventually he managed to catch hold of the hunchback Gregory's feet, weeping and whimpering, he succeeded in hauling him into the boat.[18]

[17] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 9. "Emberekkel találkozott útközben, akik fejcsóválva néztek a sápadtan futó kisfiú után, é szinte hallani vélte, amint a titokzatos Lubomirskit emlegetik." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 370.

[18] *The Adventures of Sindbad*, p. 10. "Szindbád megtörölte verejtékező homlokát, mert ebben a percben érezte meg, hogy mi történt valójában. A púpos fiú vízbe fulladt, érte majd őt okolják, Lubomirski végre csakugyan kiszáll a folyosóbeli képrámából, és már közeleg is tömött, vörös szakállával. Nagy messzeségben, valahol a túlsó part sötét bokrai alatt áll Róza hátrafont kézzel, és komoran, haragosan néz, mint tegnap este a csillagokat nézte… Végre elkapta a púpos Gergely lábát, és erőlködve, nyöszörögve, sírva a csónakba emelte." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 371.

Lubomirski's figure at the close of the short story definitely links the feeling of fear and guilty conscience to the encounter with death. Sindbad, who once respected Lubomirski only moderately, now encounters the meaning of the prince's picture, which was referred to by the narrator in the first part of the short story, i.e., his life after death reminds of the vain efforts to surmount death. Sindbad realizes only now that the face of death is even apparent in the ruddy-faced portrait of the prince.

How could Lubomirski become the central figure of the metaphorical connotation of the short story? On the basis of what I have outlined above, it does not seem a groundless assumption perhaps that the third person narrator transforms the associative operation of the character's remembrance into his own narrative part. Although, with the exception of the first paragraph, there is no reference to what order memory is recalled in the consciousness of the elderly Sindbad, the meanings of guilty conscience, fear, death, love, eroticism and youth can manifest in Lubomirski's figure because the picture of the prince was evoked for the young Sindbad in cases which relate to such experiences. An associative relationship exists between the experiences gained and Lubomirski's picture, and this relationship is perhaps the most characteristic solution of the Krúdy texts depicting the process of remembrance. For that very reason, it is not impossible that the remembrance situation depicted in the first paragraph is not closed down as the third person narration realizes the principle of the operation of remembrance in a latent form. The narration does not depict the process of remembrance directly, however the structure as set up reflects the associative movements of remembrance. The narrated events of the past were somehow connected to Lubomirski's figure. Thus could Lubomirski's picture manifest for the elderly Sindbad all what the years of youth mean.

József Keserű

Theatricality in *Sunflower*, a Novel by Gyula Krúdy

Interpreters of Krúdy have frequently pointed out that the theatre, theatricality, and role-play have an important role in several of the writer's works. On the first hand, there are often longer texts in which the theatre and the profession of acting appear as a central theme (i.e., *A francia kastély* [French Chateau], *The Crimson Coach /A vörös postakocsi/*, or *Bukfenc* [Somersault]), on the other hand there are several other writings which do not explicitly concern the theatre but still push different aspects of theatricality to the forefront: theatrical gestures that divert attention to the bodily communication of the characters, or theatrical emphases which raise issues of stylization and linguistic staging, and last but not least there are the text passages which offer different opportunities for role-play. Therefore, it can be assumed that phenomena connected to the theatre, respectively theatricality itself, constitute an important element of Krúdy's prose.

This assumption, of course, is not new. Krúdy's reception includes several observations that interpret the phenomenon of theatricality — many times differently. If we

wish to examine the nature of theatricality in Krúdy's works, it is worth referring briefly to some interpretive arguments that emerged in his reception in connection to the examined phenomenon.

First, we could mention the argument that interprets life as a role in Krúdy's works. For instance, in his book *Közelítések Krúdyhoz* [Approaches to Krúdy], László Fülöp writes the following: "Understanding human life as a role — it seems — is one of the distinguishing features of Gyula Krúdy's attitude to life."[1] Although we cannot judge whether this is a truly distinctive feature of Krúdy's worldview, it is definitely sure that this thought appears in several Krúdy texts. More recently, several critics have been pointed out that certain Krúdy characters (from Kázmér Rezeda through Pistoli to Ninon de Lenclos) often create their behaviour and way of thinking following literary examples. In addition to the concept of theatricality, in these cases we can also talk about romanticality, the role of which cannot be neglected. It is enough just to think of the significance of representing the novel character as a novel character in the narration. Without completeness, it can be claimed that the idea of life as a part on one hand operates as a kind of conceptual metaphor in several of Krúdy's novels, which determines the thinking of the characters; on the other hand, it pushes the self-reflexive and fictional nature of the texts into the foreground.[2]

Another recurring idea in the Krúdy-reception is that theatre as art functions as the ennobler of life. This opinion is

[1] László FÜLÖP, *Közelítések Krúdyhoz* [Approaches to Krúdy], Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1986, p. 305.

[2] Vö. Tibor GINTLI, *Olvasás és önértelmezés* [Reading and Self-Interpretation] = *„Valaki van, aki nincs". Személyiségelbeszélés és identitás Krúdy Gyula regényeiben* ["There is someone who does not exist". Personality Narration and Identity in the Novels of Gyula Krúdy], Akadémiai, Budapest, 2005, pp. 37–66.

shared for example by Ágnes Szikra, who states: "[In Krúdy,] [t]he theatre and the novel are connected to each other by the idea that the theatre is the ennobler of life, the theatrically behaving heroes all want to transform their lives into art."[3] The above assumption — which is made by the author in regards to the analysis of *The Crimson Coach* (*A vörös postakocsi*) and *Bukfenc* [Somersault] — again can be thought further in several directions. In the background there lies the idea that the loss of values is a basic experience in various Krúdy works, and the characters of these works often respectively escape from the bleak present into memories, fantasy, or to their dreams, and they express themselves through gestures which in their externality recall an old (better) world. It is worth pointing out that in many cases this does not equate to feeling nostalgic, but — on the contrary — creating an ironic relationship to the past. Also in this case, theatricality appears as one of the determined modes of perceiving the world. Seeing, speaking, and acting equal to seeing, speaking, and acting in a determined — theatrical — mode. This allows another conclusion: Krúdy's characters are not far from what we can call the aestheticization of reality. There are some Krúdy protagonists who imagine themselves to be the heroes of the novels they read, and there is one who goes through Pest deliberately ignoring the changes that have taken place in the recent decades, while in his mind he projects an imaginary (and partially long gone) Pest before himself. In this behaviour we can find the practice of an aesthetic understanding of reality — or more simply: the aestheticization of reality. In

[3] Ágnes SZIKRA, *Színház és teatralitás Krúdy Gyula epikájában* (részlet) [Theatre and Theatricality in Gyula Krúdy's Epic (part)], Árgus, 2004/9.

such cases, memories are contaminated with fantasy and this affects the mode of perception as well.[4]

The above sketchy remarks might be enough to legitimize the approach to Krúdy that tries to interpret his works from the perspective of theatricality. The concept of theatricality provides an opportunity to further develop assumptions presented so far with new ones and to interpret theatricality in Krúdy's works not just as a theme or as a conceptual metaphor, but as the determined mode of text functioning as well as the semantic process. This requires the clarification of the concept of theatricality (or at least an attempt to clarify the concept). In this regard, it is worth noting that the practice of theatricality goes beyond the scope of the theatre, and even arts too, and turns up in many areas of life. Erika Fischer-Lichte claims: "Theatricality [...] can be defined as a certain mode of sign usage, which is bound to a certain perceptual mode, or as a special type of semiotic processes, in which special signs — this is human bodies and the objects of the environment — are used as the signs of signs by their creators and receivers [...]. If the semiotic function of acting, like the signs of signs is dominant in a certain behaviour, in a situation or in a communication process, then the given behaviour, situation, and communication process can be considered as theatrical."[5] (This is exemplified excellently by making the Krúdy figures act as novel characters — the characters of other novels, as I have already mentioned.) However, Fischer-Lichte adds that this kind of shift in dominance outside the theatre is never objectively

[4] More about this in: József KESERŰ, *Különös idők. Idő, emlékezés és képzelet Krúdy Gyula* Nagy kópé *című regényében* [Strange Times. Time, Memory and Imagination in Gyula Krúdy's Novel *Nagy kópé*], Kalligram, 2011/7–8., pp. 76–83.

[5] Erika FISCHER-LICHTE, *A színház mint kulturális modell* [The Theatre as Cultural Model], Theatron, 1999 spring, Vol. 1., Nr. 3, p. 76.

given, therefore "theatricality as a concept in a certain sense remains definitely blurred".[6] Similarly, Péter P. Müller emphasizes that "theatricality is ultimately ungraspable, due to its evanescence and continuous (trans)formation it continuously slips from the (conceptual) net of interpretation."[7] A slightly different view is taken by Samuel Weber, who claims that the concept of theatricality is related to the concept of performativity. For Weber theatricality "is determined by being like quotation, not by identical repetition, which is radical spatial and temporal openness."[8] He explains: "»Theatricality« results when the impossibility of self-containment is exposed by iterability as a *scene* that is inevitably a »stage«, but which, as such, is determined by whatever surrounds it, by what we call a »theater«."[9]

Weber's concept of theatricality might divert attention primarily to the event-like nature of the text. Not to the complete meaning read from the text, but to the process that makes the creation of meaning possible. In the following I will try to demonstrate the event-like nature of Krúdy's novel *Sunflower* with the help of Weber's concept of theatricality. I have chosen *Sunflower* not only because it contains many conspicuous references to theatricality and role-playing, but also because in my view it brilliantly implements what István Dobos calls narrative performance: "By *narrative performance* I mean that certain type of 20th-century novel which attempts to transcend the boundaries of linguistic expression when it

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[7] P. MÜLLER, Péter, *Test és teatralitás* [Body and Theatricality], Balassi, Budapest, 2009, p. 18.

[8] György FOGARASI, *Performativitás/teatralitás* [Performativity /Theatricality], Apertúra, 2010/autumn, p. 5. http://apertura.hu/2010/osz/fogarasi

[9] Samuel WEBER, *Theatricality as Medium*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2004, p. 341.

stages the body's phenomenon as an *event* by using certain elements of drama."[10]

When examining the theatrical nature of the *Sunflower*'s text, its performative nature takes the foreground, since — and here I refer to Samuel Weber again — theatrical action always means the practice of designating boundaries and relocation, while it continuously reflects on this practice. Designating boundaries and their continuous relocation is evident in various levels in *Sunflower*, most obviously perhaps in connection to the characters. "The transformation, recreation of the novel character" — claims István Dobos —, "is the typical performative event of the body."[11] The characters in *Sunflower* are in permanent transformation, which makes it difficult to view them as sovereign people who can be grasped and characterized. Rather, we see them as respectively evolving, constantly transforming doers. As has already been assumed earlier — in a different context —, Sindbad is not one person (rather an "empty" signifier), therefore it can be claimed that the characters of *Sunflower* are not personalities either, in the common metaphysical sense of the word. Eveline, Kálmán Ossuary, Miss Maszkerádi and Pistoli show a newer and newer face to the reader every time they come to the scene. Eveline's figure is blurred with the old Eveline: the narrator sometimes refers to her as a witch, other times he compares her to the Virgin Mary, and she also appears as a naïve and sentimental soul who is engrossed in reading novels. This practice — the practice of constant transformation — I believe is more than mere role-playing. On one hand it is

[10] István DOBOS, *Performativitás a XX. századi magyar regényben = Tanulmányok a XX. századi irodalom köréből*, [Performativity in the 20th-Century Hungarian Novel = Studies from the 20th-Century Literary Circle] eds. László IMRE, Mónika GÖNCZY, Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen, 2009, p. 7.

[11] *Ibid.*, 9.

striking that in the text there are a number of passages that describe the opportunities of role-play in a critical way (or even deny it); on the other hand, it is as if the characters themselves handle the thought of role-play with certain irony. This is indicated by — among others — the question Eveline addresses to Miss Maszkerádi — "You mean to tell me you have alteregos?"[12] —, which can be interpreted as a reference to other texts of the oeuvre.

This constant transformation does not only apply to the characters, but also to other phenomena of the novel's material world. In the following quotations, we can read of vagabonds who first turn into trees, then back.

> But cock's crow signals the arrival of those never-glimpsed vagabonds who stand stock still under your window in the dead of night, with murder in their hearts, guilt and terror in their eyes. Come morning, they regain their original shapes and turn into solitary trees at crossroads or hat-waving, curly-haired young travellers with small knapsacks and large staffs, humming a merry tune and marching bright-eyed toward distant lands to bring glad tidings, fun and games, new songs and youthful flaring passions to small houses that somnolently await them.[13]

Although the text talks about "original shapes", it is origin itself that becomes questionable in the quoted passage; since it is not even clear it is the vagabonds who turn — in a metaphorical sense — into trees or the trees into vagabonds. We encounter a similar solution in the much-quoted scene where Miss Maszkerádi has an intimate contact with a willow.

> The old rogue pretended not to notice last year's lover, Miss Maszkerádi. Indifferent and cool, he stood his ground by the

[12] Gyula KRÚDY, *Sunflower*, translated by John BÁTKI, with an Introduction by John LUKACS, Corvina, Budapest, 1997, p. 93.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

> vanished creek whose bed had perhaps drained off his very life, never to return, flighty foam, playful wavelet, rain-bow spring.
> "Here I am, grandpa," Maszkerádi whispered, sliding from her saddle.
> She beheld the ancient tree's inward-glancing eye, compressed, cold mouth, thick-skinned, impassive waist, and pocketed hands.
> "I am here and I am yours," she went on, after embracing the tree as an idol is embraced by some wild tribeswoman who can no longer find a mate that's man enough in her own nation.
> The old willow's knotted gnarls and stumps, like so many hands, palpated all over Miss Maszkerádi's steel-spring body. The mossy beard stuck to the frost-nipped girlcheek already quite cool to start with. Who knows, the old willow might even have reciprocated her embrace.[14]

In this passage the tree ("the old rogue") is embellished with human characteristics: it has hands and a beard, it looks and embraces. The difference between this and the previously quoted passage is that instead of the arbitrary interchangeability of the identifier and the identified, the processes of anthropomorphization and deanthropomorphization come to the foreground, which are rhetorical figures beloved by Krúdy.

The theatrical transformations of the novel's characters highlight the question of the body's performativity. It can be observed that in the novel the body does not always retain its integrity. The transformation of the figures appears not only as a change of their physical features, but the particular body parts are detached from the body and start to live an independent life. It is striking that the majority of reflections on the body in the novel in fact are directed to particular body parts: especially erotic body parts (breasts, shoulders, nape, toe, and even "the mound, not unlike the mons veneris", which, according to the narrator, "[can be] found in buxom

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 91–92.

women below their neck vertebrae"),[15] and (mainly in men) to bodily oddities and distortions. Then, the detached body parts are often anthropomorphized. "Beauteous feminine necks, as self-possessed as if they led their own swanlike existence, and seemingly without the brain's overlordship, execute their fairylike motions; they see and hear, speak, rise and humbly, submissively bend — such necks have been known to send the brains of many a man into his bootlegs."[16] Presenting body parts in this way is not only the specificity of *Sunflower*, however I will discuss the possible auto-texts, respectively the examination of the grotesque nature of the mentioned phenomenon on another occasion.

The theatricalized body is in constant motion (or rather formation) while it designates boundaries. Among others, it designates the boundaries of subjectivity, which — not surprisingly — does not finish at the body. Through its action the body tears out parts from the space (it occupies space, which is in fact the basic mode of creating space). By this, space becomes intimate space, which bears the traces of the subject's presence (and even its gender). The novel's plot starts in Eveline's flat, which appears as *par excellence* female space (with a bed suitable also for reading, a boudoir, etc.). In contrast, the pub visited by Kálmán is a typically masculine space (visited mostly by men, who worship manly passions). Although these spaces do not remain separate to others, it is remarkable that the members of the other sex always appear as incongruous intruders in them. Kálmán breaks into Eveline's flat and disturbs the idyll; Ninon follows Kálmán to

[15] *Ibid.*, 52.
[16] *Ibid.*

the pub, by which she manages to embarrass the man. Both remain foreign elements in the space confined by the subject.[17]

Entering the space of subjectivity, of course, does not always take such a violent nature. The novel stages the philosophical problem of intersubjectivity brilliantly, when it portrays it as the interweaving of the characters' bodily worlds. At the end of the third chapter, Kálmán walks along the curvy downtown streets towards the hotel, while he dreams about Eveline:

> Only rarely did he [Kálmán] see her as a tousled, scatter brained schoolgirl (one of the students at an Inner City boarding school where Eveline had spent her youth) — and that had been a while back, when Kálmán was still at the height of his energies, and was capable of making decisions on the girl's behalf as well. However, the slender girlchild with the dreamy, far-off look soon saw through things — *she could actually see* what Kálmán did when he was alone, *she could actually see* Kálmán's thoughts, how he lived, walked the streets and whom he met.[18]

Initially, the passage provides an external point of view — we see Kálmán as he wanders along the streets deep in his thoughts —, which is soon replaced by the character's internal point of view: we find out how the man saw Eveline at the time. However, after this, the point of view suddenly becomes unstable: after the dash we can already read about how Eveline saw Kálmán. Although the perspective is emphasized also by the usage of italics in the text, it is worth pointing out that it talks about things that Eveline cannot have seen. Let us summarize: Kálmán is walking in the street and in his thoughts sees Eveline as the girl sees him walking in the street. It is more than confusing. We see Kálmán and in him, more

[17] József, SÁNTHA, *A lakatlan jelen. A* Napraforgó *világa* [The Uninhabited Present. The World of *Sunflower*], Holmi, 2009/6., pp. 817–828.
[18] KRÚDY, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

specifically in his fantasy, we see Eveline at the same time, and simultaneously we see Eveline watching — though more probably only imagining — Kálmán. The presumed boundaries of the subject are dissolved, respectively liquefied. In the space of intersubjectivity, the proximity of another person always reveals that the other person is not only the part of the same world, but also someone who lives on — in a certain sense — in us, in our thoughts, emotions, and body.

The problem of how the body is viewed is another important element of the body's theatricalization. This incorporates the well-known idea that the body is not only an internally experienced body, but a physical body with a visible surface. In this regard, the body is theatrical when it appears as a sight/spectacle or — simply speaking — if someone observes it. The characters of *Sunflower* play roles for each other very frequently. Andor Álmos-Dreamer lies down in a coffin — by which he ritually repeats his ancestor's deed —, however, he does not do it alone but with other people watching him. Eveline leans down to kiss Kálmán's footprint after he has fled, but in the meantime she remembers that Kálmán might be watching her. These theatrical gestures might seem to be poses; however, it is not so. Theatricality in *Sunflower* is not identical to acting; as I have already mentioned, it is supported by several text passages wherein acting appears with a negative undertone. The fact that the characters behave theatrically does not contradict this viewpoint. Rather, their deeds can be understood as the manifestation of a behaviour that treats acting, the multiplication of signs and the continuous removal of boundaries, as special modes of perceiving reality and grasping the world.

Gyula Krúdy is definitely one of the most confusing (or (ontologically, and otherwise) complex) authors; he is the kind of writer who generates more and more discussions and

encourages constant re-reading. This obviously has more reasons, including features of his works such as the impossibility of totalizing meaning, questioning representation, or from time to time the sentences' lack of reference. The examination of the phenomenon of theatricality — which is certainly not independent of the current issues and directions of literary scholarship — points out something that we cannot consider as the text's hermeneutical aspect.

Earlier, I tried to argue that the theatre in Sunflower is not only a theme, just as role-play is not exclusively a conceptual metaphor either, and that the theatrical behaviour of the characters is beyond the scope of representation. Among other things, it is the concept of theatricality that makes the characteristic feature of Krúdy's works more visible, which is perhaps one of the most confusing features: the constant shift in meaning, respectively its continuous redirection. Understanding Krúdy, I believe, also means to be able to face what is not understandable, to face the indeterminacy of being.

András Kányádi

Krúdy and Dickens: A Ghost Story

Krúdy is mad about ghosts: his early novel, *The Ghost of Podolin*, already spotlights this fantastic creature, Sindbad, his eternal hero, who becomes a ghost after death. And how to forget *The Book of Dreams*, this strange dictionary, where an important entry also deals with a ghost?[1] Therefore, it seems quite natural to stumble upon phantoms in Krúdy's writings during the so-called "visionary" period.[2] By the regular use of this motif, the Hungarian author follows a rich literary tradition which goes back to Antiquity, or at least to the gothic novel.[3]

Krúdy is mad about Dickens, too: Kázmér Rezeda's very first steps in society are shaped by the lecture of *Dombey and Son*, Eduárd Alvinczi's crimson coach reminds one strangely of Mr. Pickwick's vehicle, and the British writer becomes a fictional character in an outstanding short story focusing on the power

[1] *A podolini kísértet* [The Ghost of Podolin], 1910; *The Adventures of Sindbad*, CEU Press, 1998; *Álmoskönyv* [Book of Dreams], 1925. According to this entry, seeing a ghost in a dream brings good luck.

[2] His literary activity between 1919–1922. See Béla CZÉRE, *Krúdy Gyula*, Gondolat, Budapest, 1987.

[3] See Gero von Wilpert, *Die deutsche Gespenstergeschichte. Motiv – Form – Entwicklung*. Kröner, Stuttgart, 2001.

of inspiration.[4] Dickens's working method is also a model, because he publishes serialized fiction, just like his Hungarian colleague does.

This double spiritual fascination gives birth in that visionary period to a novel that brings together the aforementioned two favourites. A Dickensian ghost rises in *Ladies Day*[5] stirring up a considerable intertextuality. It seems then highly interesting to examine how Krúdy rewrites A *Christmas Carol*[6], his main source of inspiration. By time Krúdy wrote *Ladies Day*, there were several Hungarian translations of Dickens's text at his disposal. The very first one dates back to 1846, but the most popular version, released in his youth, is that of 1875, despite its (now) obsolete language. By the end of the First World War, two other translations were published in a more contemporary Hungarian, one of which shows surprising textual similarities to *Ladies Day*.[7]

Both fictions present an initiatory journey through human misery. Dickens describes the transformation of an old pinch-fist who refuses to celebrate Christmas and rejects the idea of charity, but following a ghost procession, he radically changes his villainous nature. Krúdy also shows an arbitrary character, an undertaker whose existence will be upset by a meeting with his alter ego, a phantom. Moral improvement due to a super-

[4] *The Crimson Coach (A vörös postakocsi)*, 1913, and *Dickens úr barátai* [Mr Dickens's friends], 1907.

[5] Gyula KRÚDY, *Asszonyságok díja*, Rácz Vilmos, Budapest, 1919.

[6] Charles DICKENS, *A Christmas carol in prose being a Christmas ghost story*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1843.

[7] *Karácson-éj: kísértetes beszély*, translated by Péter NAGY, Tilsch, Heckenast, Kolozsvár, 1846. *Karácsoni ének prózában levén voltakép egy karácsoni kisértetes beszély*, translated by Gábor BELÉNYESI, Budapest, Franklin, 1875, 2nd ed. 1907. *Karásonyi ének*, translated by Zoltán HARASZTI, Érdekes Újság, Budapest, 1917, 2nd ed. 1918; *Karácsonyi ének prózában* translated by Ernő SALGÓ, Athenaeum, Budapest, 1919. The latter has several lexical loans.

natural encounter is the central theme of both texts; the British palimpsest, transparent in a series of amazing details, unfolds Krúdy's complex imagery. Let's examine its constitutive elements: the paratext, the narrative space with its accessories and, of course, the ghosts themselves.

Paratext spirit and genius loci

Dickens's preface denotes a delightful enjoyment:

> I have endeavoured in this Ghostly little book, to raise the Ghost of an Idea, which shall not put my readers out of humour with themselves, with each other, with the season, or with me. May it haunt their houses pleasantly, and no one wish to lay it.[8]

This rather mysterious ghost refers to Christmas, the celebration of which had been compromised by Cromwell's puritanism, whose rehabilitation would have a lasting effect. Dickens's attempt turned out to be successful: A *Christmas Carol* unchained a charity wave in England and revitalised the holiday.[9] Krúdy's foreword also wishes long-term viability to the holiday:

> Today my lute sings of wedding, wake and christening, that trio of life's pleasures even more entertaining than love, of which you can never have enough. We all attend weddings and wakes, funerals, feast and dances, christenings and grim courtrooms. So that this book may even teach something about fashions, manners and

[8] Charles DICKENS, *A Christmas Carol*, p. 2. We use the edition of the New Oxford Illustrated Dickens, *Christmas Books*, Oxford University Press, 1960, pp. 1–77.

[9] Ruth GLANCY, *Dicken's Christmas Books, Christmas Stories, and Other Short Fiction*, Garland, Michigan, 1985.

> mores, about how to live our days on earth to the limits of longevity.[10]

These are the teachings of an Epicurean philosopher whose wisdom perceives celebration as a mystery of life, a sacred, cosmic communion. Instead of pragmatic British Protestantism, a heathen, Dionysian profession of faith emerges. The designation of the genre reflects two different authorial intentions. Dickens speaks of a "carol in prose", specific to church music, which he transcribes in narrative. Composed of "staves", *A Christmas Carol* conserves its musical origins, in particular the spiritual gradation. Although defined as a novel and having chapters, in conformity to the genre, *Ladies Day* consists of "diminutive decals lined up in a row: images that show one thing on their face and quite another when your fingertips peel away the backing."[11] The reader can clearly see that the Hungarian author formulates, a long time before Gérard Genette, the palimpsest theory, at least *in nuce*. Unlike Dickens's tight structure, the "decals" hit by their imagery, and so a childbirth grows to a cosmic dimension. In this regard, Krúdy's text shows similarities to Byron's visions; no wonder that he borrows the epigraph of *Ladies Day* from *The Corsair*: "Behold — but who has seen, or e'er shall see/Man as himself — the secret spirit free?" [12]

In *Ladies Day*, the plot takes place in the capital, more precisely in two districts of Pest: Ferencváros and Józsefváros. The description of the latter presents a dismal picture:

> Half-naked people in shirtsleeves awaited the lighting of the gas lamps. Girls pulled low shows on their bare feet and linked arms to stroll downtown to hear the latest hits played at the corner cafe

[10] Gyula KRÚDY, *Ladies Day*, translated by John Batki, Corvina, Budapest, 2007, pp. 7–8.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

> by the handsome Gypsy violinist whose face was bathed in pomade and sweat. Janitors wives, sprawled on small stools, fluttered handkerchiefs over their enormous swaying bosoms, fanning a pungent odor of perspiration into the street. A stale, sour smell of human emanated from wide-open windows.[13]

This passage calls to mind the last expedition of Scrooge:

> The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.[14]

Krúdy's Józsefváros looks like a merciless portrait of London's suburbs depicted by Dickens: visual and olfactory convergences stress the affinities. By entering this gruesome space, Czifra and Scrooge begin a descent into hell. The spectral tour requires crumbling houses:

> They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed.[15]

This habitation, far from being unique in England, is highly symbolical for Scrooge: it reminds him of his own undigested past. Czifra also comes near to a bleak house:

> The building, like every other one belonging to Jeremias Frank and Spouse, was a dank, ramshackle structure with a dark inner courtyard. Perhaps it had been built that way, old and decrepit

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[14] *Christmas Carol*, p. 61.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

> from the outset […] The house could have been lifted from a Dickens novel, but János Czifra had no knowledge of that.[16]

The playful allusion indicates the British source of Krúdy's novel. Furthermore, the edifice is a brothel, a crucial point of reference in Krúdy's universe, a gathering place where all the actors of the "Pest Fair" meet to unravel their sexual pathology. And here lives also the novel's female protagonist, the parturient Natália.

Krúdy's interiors are definitely British, too. Czifra's living place accommodates a parrot, which is another allusion to Dickens:

> The gloom settling over the house in the early afternoon hours made the undertaker's parrot fidget. He doted on this caged bird, proud of its mastery of English. In this afternoon gloaming the bird began to swear in English, imitated a baby's wails; then, to the owner's utter amazement, spoke up Hungarian, squawking out names recalled from the past.[17]

Scrooge rediscovers with astonishment the bird of his childhood:

> "There's the Parrot!" cried Scrooge. "Green body and yellow tail, with a thing like a lettuce growing out of the top of his head; there he is! Poor Robin Crusoe, he called him, when he came home again after sailing round the island. 'Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you been, Robin Crusoe?' The man thought he was dreaming, but he wasn't. It was the Parrot, you know. There goes Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloo! Hoop! Halloo!"[18]

The Hungarian parrot astonishes his master by his linguistic competence; the British bird stuns by literary erudition. In both

[16] *Ladies Day*, p. 58.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[18] *Christmas Carol*, p. 28.

cases, literary allusion is decisive. Dickens frees the spirit of a great classic locked up in a book (Defoe's); Krúdy recreates the English atmosphere at the home of his own Dickensian hero, ready to receive the ghost heralded by the fowl.

If the topography of the city is primordial, food also occupies a distinguished place in the universe of both authors. Once again, the bird plays a key role. Christmas culinary arrangements seize the attention of the Dickensian children:

> Master Peter, and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession. Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course—and in truth it was something very like it in that house.[19]

In this modest household, meat is served only on great occasions, which explains the supernatural aura of the goose. And what about Czifra's food? A dinner is offered to him in the brothel:

> Tonight there was roast goose for dinner. The lady of the house offered János Czifra and friend the drumstick, sliced fresh bread, and popped the cork of a bottle of champagne, all the while bustling about in her kitchen.[20]

This is also a festive meal, since the story in *Ladies Day* takes place on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. And this date, like Christmas, has an obvious symbolical meaning: in popular belief, it is the beginning of the harvest, a turning point in human life. Czifra's decay seems inevitable; only nativity can change its course. This scene is particularly interesting when compared to the Dickensian passage. First, because the English

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[20] *Ladies Day*, pp. 59–60.

characters are transformed: Master Peter and the Cratchit twins become Czifra and his alter ego, who meet on the fatidic day of Peter and Paul. The linguistic loan strikes as well: in the Hungarian translation of Salgó, we have «sürgés-forgás» (bustle), a suggestive word which figures also in the "bustling of Jella: «sürgölődött»". It is a movement combining quickness and lightness; in other terms, a ghost attribute.

Towards a ghost poetry

The paratext of *A Christmas Carol* indicates a "ghost story". Dickens keeps his promise and introduces already in the first stave one of the most famous ghosts in English literature, that of Marley. Scrooge's former partner comes back from the afterworld in order to advise his companion to change his behaviour. He emphasizes his speech by sending three other very convincing spirits. Even if since the Age of Reason nobody believes in ghosts, the premonitory signs of their arrival are self-evident:

> And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change—not a knocker, but Marley's face.[21]

The narrator's digression cannot hide the phantom that looms through the lock. Krúdy's visitor sends many disturbing signs:

> The furniture seemed to be acting up: the armchair refused to slide into its place of twenty-five years standing, dependable wardrobe locks failed to open and dresser drawers remained stuck fast. A hassock that had not stirred from its spot by the window […]

[21] *Christmas Carol*, p. 15.

> reared up the way a sleeping dog springs up to snap at a passerby's heel.[22]

Like in Dickens's text, the lock takes part in the event, and transformation seems imminent, since the hassock, an inanimate object, suddenly produces animal behavior.

The next step is the noise of the arrival, characteristic for ghosts. Scrooge's visitor seems to be quite rude: "The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door"[23]. In the case of Czifra, the phantom is rather mocking: "Now a window tore open in the neighboring room, and the wind laughed uproariously in the street."[24] The British ghost comes from the deep cellar step by step, the Hungarian one, less solemn, teases the windows and hesitates to appear.

The confrontation with the ghost is undoubtedly the decisive moment in these kinds of stories. The British master displays humor: "His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind."[25] Marley does not want any confusion; he wears his working clothes, permitting to his partner instant identification. The last spirit is more classic, nevertheless fashionable: "lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him."[26] Krúdy mixes the two ghosts in a fully transparent manner:

> But this shadow was different from anything he had ever seen before. It was dark and amorphous, like a gravedigger at bottom

[22] *Ladies Day*, p. 11.
[23] *Christmas Carol*, p. 17.
[24] *Ladies Day*, p. 14.
[25] *Christmas Carol*, p. 17.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

> of a yawning pit in the deepening dusk of a winter afternoon. It was disembodied like the vaporous exhalation of pain and torment swirling in a room from where the dead body has been removed [...] and it was terrifying, like the undead shambling back from the graveyard to roam noiselessly in the house were strangers are already trying on the trousers or skirts left behind. It was neither dead nor alive.[27]

The shadow topic is an excellent occasion for Krúdy to unfold [one of his major stylistic trump cards, the simile, and to seize the strange permeability of borders between life and death. The ironical transparence has changed' Marley's waistcoat is relayed by the tragic sense of vestmental usurpation.

The ghost will appear in a rather classic scenery: the encounter with the alter ego. In his youth, Krúdy has read several E.T.A. Hoffmann texts and if the German author elevates the alter ego to a narrative principle, the Hungarian writer considers it as a herald of death.[28] In the present novel, the ghost, invisible at the beginning, will take the shape of Czifra and shows up in the already mentioned dirty street:

> Suddenly the undertaker recognized himself standing by a palisade fence some distance from the streetlamps and all the turmoil. That was him, standing there in the dark, same clothes, same face, same hat — and in an instant he and the unknown man, the stranger he had never seen before, became inseparable. [29]

This alter ego becomes Czifra's Virgilian guide in the call house and, like Dickens's ghosts, will urge him to charity. The shivery encounter is already outlined in *A Christmas Carol*:

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[27] *Ladies Day*, p. 13.

[28] See Gábor KEMÉNY, *Alakmások és önarcképek Krúdy prózájában* [Alter egos and self-portraits in the prose of Krúdy]. Filológiai Közlöny no. 21, pp. 434–443.

[29] *Ladies Day*, p. 47.

> Scrooge looked about in that very place for his own image; but another man stood in his accustomed corner, and though the clock pointed to his usual time of day for being there, he saw no likeness of himself among the multitudes that poured in through the Porch.[30]

The hero from London, unlike his cousin from Budapest, knows that the future will be shown to him, but fails to find his *doppelgänger*. For Dickens, alter ego is less spectral, even Scrooge and Marley are alike — "two kindred spirits" — and often mistaken for each other: "Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him."[31]

Like his Dickensian model, Czifra is haunted by professional thoughts: "could his profession be the same as mine? flashed through his mind."[32] The choice of the profession is not fortuitous. One could think of a possible autobiographical inspiration or basis: Krúdy's father-in-law was an undertaker in Ferencváros. But the main fascination consists in its close border to the afterworld, the trade with death; even the family name of the hero bears its mark (*cifra* mean "pompous" in Hungarian). If somebody lives permanently in the neighbourhood of death, can he still be sensitive to its presence? And has he the right to remain indifferent? As an undertaker, Czifra decides about the rehousing of the dead. Therefore, it is a natural consequence that the uncanny invades his home: "One fine day Demon, the fiend possessing dominion over the whole world, showed up in Budapest and found a hiding place in an undertaker's house."[33] Krúdy's incipit is very ambiguous, because the "Demon" could be everybody: the Prince of

[30] *Christmas Carol*, p. 60.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[32] *Ladies Day*, p. 49.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Darkness, the Freudian Id as well as Death itself. Taking the shape of Czifra, the author calls it Dream; it becomes a kindly person, just like the ghosts of Dickens, who come with a didactic purpose. Dickens's incipit is also ambiguous, because a fantastic event will be related. And the English novel mentions Czifra's profession: "The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner."[34]

Not to believe in phantoms is a dangerous conviction. At first, both heroes deny the supernatural. The undertaker expresses this in a dialogue with himself: "Well, Mr Czifra, do you believe in ghosts? asked the undertaker aloud, like a teacher quizzing a student, then answered his own question, No, I don't believe in ghosts. They don't exist."[35] Scrooge, instead, has the same dialogue with his former partner: "You don't believe in me," observed the Ghost. "I don't," said Scrooge.[36] Their refusal lies in their deeply rational nature; the indifference of the two heroes shows again many textual analogies. Consider Scrooge:

> External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.[37]

This challenging impassiveness won't be tolerated by the ghost world. Czifra has the same chilly temperament as Scrooge:

[34] *Christmas Carol*, p. 7.
[35] *Ladies Day*, p. 14.
[36] *Christmas Carol*, p. 18.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

> He was never bothered by the weather or depressed by anxieties, he paid no heed to an afterlife he did not believe in: drank his wine in moderation, went to bed early, never knew insomnia, could never recall ever being sick.[38]

Krúdy's hero is a solid, atheistic character, but after the ghostly night his insensitivity will disappear.

Christmas approaching, Scrooge grumbles more than usual because he is compelled to dismiss his employee and impede the joy of the others. Not to speak about the charity harassments that he abruptly refuses: "It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!"[39] Having dispatched his unwelcome visitors, he receives great satisfaction. Krúdy's hero has to cope with a strange entreaty: a poor widow asks him to bury her even though she is alive. The refusal is as firm as Scrooge's: "Madam, I must emphasize, we specialize in military funerals […]. No, Madam, I simply cannot do it. Upon my word, I cannot."[40] All things considered, both actions are morally indefensible; the needy person's request is manhandled. The Hungarian hero makes amends only because the rejected women dies and returns as a ghost to insist on her funeral.

Dead people are supposed to rest in graves, but this is not always the case. Ghosts often come back to haunt because of their unresolved affairs. If the tombs illustrate a vanished terrestrial existence, in both of the visionary texts here under discussion, they are landmarks of the future, forecasting the destiny of their respective heroes. Assisted by the spirit of the time yet to come, Scrooge discovers, horrified, his own sepulcher:

[38] *Ladies Day*, p. 12.
[39] *Christmas Carol*, p. 12.
[40] *Ladies Day*, pp. 16–17.

> Am I that man who lay upon the bed?" he cried, upon his knees.
> The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.
> No, Spirit! Oh no, no! [41]

In Krúdy's novel, the same desperate cries are repeated by Natália. When about to give birth, she remembers an old graveyard with anonymous tombs where underground voices whisper the words of her dead mother:

> The wind sighed and soughed and murmured overhead, and once more she heard that voice as warm as the south wind: «My sweet little daughter, my darling!» — No, no! Natalia cried out with a desperate sob and grasping a fistful of fallen twigs from the grave pressed it against her heart, as if snatching her child from the horrible cold of this funeral world — and from this moment she loved her unborn child more than life itself.[42]

Scrooge's protest has a personal reason, at first sight egoistic: he is afraid of death and would do anything to cancel his name from the grave. But this fear, increased by the appearance of the last ghost, misty and dumb, discloses the metaphysical dimension of his existential anxiety, that of disappearing from this world like a miserable wretch. Following the spectral exemplification, the old misanthrope finally realizes the importance of human dignity. Natália, the fallen girl and imminent mother, has a different kind of revelation: the ghostly wind spurns her to protect the life of her unborn child, to the detriment of her own, against a hostile and cruel world. In her case, human sacrifice stands above all, and she can feel its metaphysical import.

Scrooge's education leads to the radical conversion of the miser. He takes up with his family, saves his employee's child

[41] *Christmas Carol*, p. 70.
[42] *Ladies Day*, p. 173.

from abject poverty, and never forgets to honor the birth of the Redeemer. He makes peace with his former enemy, the world:

> He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge.[43]

Czifra, the spectator of Natália's torments, also changes his life due to his spectral alter ego. Unlike Scrooge, he is unable to defeat the death which takes away the girl, but as his literary model, he makes good by adopting her newborn child. Thus, death surrenders to birth; having fulfilled his mission, his fantastic companion vanishes at dawn. By contrast to the British phantoms, the Hungarian spirit keeps staying close:

> He looked around to check if Dream was by his side. Would that mysterious stranger approve his words? But only a tardy ghost whistled aloud in some side street.[44]

Finally, we should mention two essential components of Krúdy's poetry related to ghosts. The first concerns his humor and reflects again a British influence: it is about the evenescent nature of the ghosts. Marley arrives with great pomp at the home of his former partner but cannot stay long beside the stove.

> But how much greater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear indoors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast![45]

[43] *Christmas Carol*, p. 76.
[44] *Ladies Day*, p. 189.
[45] *Christmas Carol*, p. 19

This clumsy fellow is the forerunner of *The Canterville Ghost*. In the Hungarian bordello, Czifra and his alter ego lend aid to an old man through a secret hole in this extraordinary scene:

> The little old man knelt down in front of the three thousand year old woman and, as a token of his devotion, removed his nose and handed it to her. Then he did the same with one of his legs: he unfastened it and laid the orphaned limb in her lap. [46]

The two actors, both of them fabulous and supernatural, remain hilarious due to their love ritual.

The second aspect is connected to Krúdy's narrative technique: embedded stories and the multiplication of narrators, without differentiating the narrative voices. It is a heritage from the *Thousand and One Nights*. In *Ladies Day*, the story of Czifra is recounted by an omniscient narrator, recounted later by Natália's recollection, then continued by yet two other narrators, without counting the occasional intervention of several characters, each of who are telling different stories. One of the narrator-actors of Natália's misfortunes is called Palaczki. This is a speaking name; in English it would make "Bottled". Considering his demonic nature, it is easy to recognize the «genie in a bottle» motif. Palaczki's death announces Natalia's death, which leads to the disappearing of Czifra's alter ego as well as the end of the novel. The ghost as metaphor of the narrative is one of Krúdy's ideas following his reading of the *Christmas Carol*; may it haunt then pleasantly the reader's house and no one wish to lay it.

[46] *Ladies Day*, p. 69.

Tibor Gintli

Admirers of Saint Hermandad

Early in Krudy's critical reception, it was noticed that a major feature of Krúdy's writing is its evocation of literary works and genres. The most important element of his narrative effects is the diversified relationship set up with the evoked text worlds that vary from imitative forms suggesting identification, through to irony and parody. Several elements of the inter-textual reference system appearing in Krúdy's fiction have already been analysed with significant results; however, the systematic review of his inter-textual reference system has not been carried out yet. While the evocation of certain works, genres, and oeuvres are well known even to wider audiences (e.g., *Thousand and One Nights*; *Onegin*, *The Three Musketeers*, *The Lady of Camellias*, or the tale, the adventure fiction, the anecdote, the operetta, or Jókai, Mikszáth, Andersen, Dickens, Dumas, Turgenev, etc.), the intertextual reference system has only partly been revealed through the mere mentioning of the fact of evocation.

The lack of a systematic review of Krúdy's narrative playground based on imitation may be understandable from a certain aspect. It is quite well known that Krúdy's oeuvre is rather extensive, which implies an obstacle to overcome for any

type of review or research. On the other hand, since the evocation of several genres and works are mixed up in the Krúdy-fictions, it is difficult to carry out an isolated analysis and further pursue an intertextual imitation reference in the oeuvre. Nevertheless, it may be misleading if we do not consider in our interpretation the interaction of solutions based on evocation. The sporadic and transposed feature of these references should also be mentioned. In Krúdy's novels references to other texts in most of the cases are casual/accidental and local; they do not refer to the evoked relationship all throughout the text; they soon drop the line and pursue another one. A further difficulty is due to the fact that these references do not usually evoke particular text places but rather broadly specific fictions, a genre, or the narrative style of a particular writer. Moreover, these text references often highlight features that have been quasi folklorized, or are commonly known. (In the preface to *The Crimson Coach (A vörös postakocsi)*, in the letter addressed to József Kiss, the "Pest fair" evokes thus the text of *Vanity Fair*.) In the case of such references reminiscent of aphorisms, which have almost become *locus communis*, we can raise the question as to what extent the interpretation of such evocations may extend the semantic potential of the text. From this perspective, we could even consider whether we should rather stop at consciously recognizing the existence of such references instead of an analysis focusing on specific authors, works, or genres, that is to read Krúdy's works in view of this ever-present evocation of literary texts, and not expecting too much of the systematic development of each individual reference. Is not there a danger of gaining rather modest results after extensive research if we assess its efficiency in terms of how differently we read Krúdy's works after reviewing the specific references of the imitation?

Personally, I presume we cannot disregard the systematic review of the gestures of evocation; however, we should be

careful when assessing the significance of the revealed references. We should consider the danger of over-interpretation in the course of both the assessment of the denotation modifying effects of the imitative gestures of a specific text as well as summing up the more general consequences of these gestures in respect to reading Krúdy. That is to say, we should consider before undertaking such a subtask that the picture of Krúdy's narrative might become richer by only some shades as a result of philological research.

Considering the above concerns, I will turn now to my closer topic, i.e., the interpretation of the evocation of the picaresque novel. I will certainly not undertake to review the whole art d'oeuvre from this aspect; however, I will aim to cover works which are considered among the significant ones in Krúdy interpretation. I assume that two variants of evoked picaresque elements can be distinguished in Krúdy's narratives. One is the variant that closely relates to the Spanish picaresque tradition that primarily reaches Krúdy's fiction via two novels by Le Sage, i.e., *The Lame Devil* and *The Story of Gil Blas de Santillana*. References to both novels can be found in the writer's books, for example in *The Crimson Coach*. A further text reference is the paraphrase of the police by mentioning Saint Hermandad repeatedly. The Brotherhood Saint Hermandad, also functioning as a police organization, is a constant protagonist in Le Sage's *Gil Blas*. Even in 19th century Hungarian literature, the police are mentioned as Saint Hermandad (examples can be found in several of Jókai's novels). Below I will proceed through the short story entitled "Margaret of Navarra" to reveal the impact of the picaresque novel that evokes the site, characteristic figures, and certain plot elements of the picaresque besides the name of Saint Hermandad.[1] Then,

[1] In Krúdy's works Saint Hermandad is mentioned several times. However, there is no such saint known of; the expression Saint

following the mentioned narrative elements, I will take three short stories and some parts of two novels into the analysis of the imitation of the picaresque novels in which the intertextual relation is generated exclusively from these elements.

The other variant of picaresque evocation in Krúdy's novels relates to the Spanish picaresque tradition via the later genre of simplicissiáda. Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* and its continuations respectively take inspiration from the Spanish picaresque, however they represent a separate genre or genre variant. The novel taking place during the time of the Thirty Years' War and the novel entitled *Ungarischer oder Dacianischer Simplicissimus* written by Daniel Speer primarily inspired Krúdy's mercenary stories. Since the aforementioned novels had not been translated into Hungarian during Krúdy's time, the indirect takeover can be considered almost absolutely definite. The Jókai-related philology pointed out long before that the most important source for the novel entitled *Szép Mikhál* [Beautiful Mikhal] was the text of *Magyar Simplicissimus* [The Hungarian Simplicissimus], and also clarified that the genre of simplicissiáda significantly inspired several of Jókai's novels. Consequently, it is likely that Krúdy knew the simplicissáda through Jókai's novels. This version of the picaresque is also evoked in such significant novels aside from mercenary stories like *Sunflower* (*Napraforgó*), which evokes the image of the mercenary related to the figure of Pistoli in addition to several other literary references, or *Mit látott Vak Béla Szerelemben és Bánatban* [What Did Béla the Blind See in Love and Sorrow], which refers to the elements of simplicissiáda via the events taking place in the town of Moz. Hereafter I shall disregard any

Hermandad simply means: "Sacred Brotherhood". The society specialized in undertaking police duties is therefore not named after a saint, however "sacred" functions as an adjective for society in this case.

further development of the picaresque simplicissiada and only focus on the examination of the intertexts related to the proper picaresque.

The picaresque tradition is recalled in the most explicit way in the short story entitled "Navarrai Margit" [Margaret of Navarra] (1913). The name of the title heroine highlights the fact mentioned earlier that different intertextual traces are stratified in Krúdy's works. In the short stories of *Heptameron* for example, the picaresque elements do not play any part and only a very few stories take place in Spain. A main character of the short story, the heartbreaker Eszkamillo, may call *Carmen* to mind, and considering either Mérimée's novel or Bizet's opera opens up the context of Romantic literature. Going back to the picaresque elements, particularly the place, the time period of the action, and the positioning of characters are to be emphasized. The story takes place in Madrid during the reign of King Philippe, the acts of the characters, often depicted ironically, are motivated by love, jealousy, and revenge. The evocation of the picaresque tradition seems rather obvious if we consider that the most well known text of this genre, the story of *Gil Blas* by Le Sage, happens during the reign of the Kings Philippe the 3rd and the 4th, and the most important place is just Madrid. The circle of suspicious figures constitutes of concubine actresses and high ranked courtesans. As a parallel to this, Margaret of Navarra, referred to as "the woman from Navarra" by the narrator, is implied to be a brothel-keeper for her profession lies in such a "small deep street" where "swords and knives often twinkled". The other main character of the short story is a swindler who is always in love and who often falls foul of the law.

The text of "Navarrai Margit" has several similarities to the rightly appreciated and well-known short story entitled "Sindbad's Dream" ("Szindbád álma") (1911) within the cycle *Szindbád utazásai* [The Voyages of Sindbad]. I assume that

"Navarrai Margit" can be interpreted as a rewriting of a section in the "Sindbad's Dream. If convincing arguments could be made for this assumption, it would also mean that traces of the picaresque tradition become recognized in the Sindbad short story, which became even more prevalent in the later short story. If we examine the parallels in setting up the two male characters, the seducer nature of both of them seems very apparent: Sindbad was the "the star of two or three women at the same time"[2] while "Eszkamillo continuously had four lovers including his lawful wife"[3] Margaret of Navarra shouted out of her window in "a loud and commanding voice"[4] at men killing each other in the street. Majmunka, "like a cheerful fiacre driver shouted from the fourth floor to Sindbad",[5] who at once recognized her voice, because "she was the only person in Hungary whose voice sounded half like a hunting horn and half like a rattle."[6] Sindbad's girlfriend is a retired Orpheum singer who does not live an active love life any more, and sins in thought only by reading Paul de Kock's novels. We also learn that Margaret of Navarra "has been living to give commands for ten years, she did not cook love potion any more."[7] By her own admission, Majmunka lives on catering the dancers of dance halls, however, her activities may cover other areas. We

[2] Quotations have been translated by the author of the essay. "Két-három nőnek volt a csillaga egyszerre" Gyula KRÚDY, *Az álombéli lovag*, ed. András BARTA, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1978, p. 471.

[3] "Eszkamillónak négy kedvese volt állandóan – törvényes feleségét is beszámítván." Gyula KRÚDY, *Szerenád. Válogatott elbeszélések 1912-1915*, ed. András BARTA, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1979, p. 191.

[4] "harsány parancsoló hangon" *Szerenád*, p. 191.

[5] "mint valami jókedvű fiákeros, lekiáltott a negyedik emeltről" *Szerenád*, p. 474.

[6] "mert Magyarországon csak neki volt olyan hangja, amely félig a vadászkürt, félig meg a kereplő hangjához hasonlított" *Ibid.*

[7] "A királynő már tíz év óta csupán a parancsnoklásnak élt, szerelmi bűvitalt többé nem főzött" *Szerenád*, p. 191.

can conclude this from the following words, which could be said even by a madame: "They [i.e., the dancers] come to me shabby and poor and leave well-dressed and rich."[8] The narrator describes the woman of Navarra as follows: "it was her who commanded the dancers of golden heels in old twisting streets, the girls from Andalusia singing lecherously and Saracen women fluttering their veils."[9] The dramaturgy of the plot in both texts is based on the old girl-friend making complaints to the man for his infidelities while the unfaithful lover denies this routinely: "Sindbad raised his hand to swear",[10] while Eszkamillo turns away the suspect by saying: "I swear, not a single word is true".[11] On one occasion Majmunka makes a scene during lunch with Sindbad when she realizes that he schmoozes with a dancer under the table. Margaret of Navarra "was just making lunch" when Eszkamillo turns up and almost hits him on the head with a pot. In Margaret and Majmunka's behaviour there is another common feature: they both like to call their ex-lover "villain". On the basis of these similarities it seems fairly justified to highlight the elements evoking the picaresque in Sindbad's story. In his character, consequently, not only do the features of the gentleman, the bohemian, and the adventurer or the romantic hero take part, but also the tramp, moreover the type of the gigolo.

This feature of Sindbad's character is elaborated on in the short story "Szindbád titka" [The Secret of Sindbad] (1911), not primarily by the plot but through the figure of Mrs Morvai. According to the story built up by a mosaic-like series of events,

[8] "Rongyosan, szegényen kerülnek hozzám, és meggazdagodva, kiöltözve távoznak." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 480.

[9] "Ő parancsolt a hegynek kanyargó, régi utcácskában az aranysarkú táncosnőknek, a buján éneklő andalúziai lányoknak és fátyolukat libegtető mór nőknek." *Szerenád*, p. 191.

[10] "Szindbád esküre emelte a kezét." *Az álombeli lovag*, p. 475.

[11] "Esküszöm, hogy egy szó sem igaz." *Szerenád*, p. 192.

Sindbad raises ambitions in the local innkeeper's daughter to become an actress, and one day she visits him in Budapest with naive faith. Although Sindbad does not help her start her theatrical career, he seduces her, then gets bored of her, and she eventually poisons herself. Sindbad therefore asks Mrs Morvai to look after her. The elderly lady is described by the narrator like this:

> The sailor […]rented a flat for the "little bird", and asked an old woman who once nursed him sometime to look after her, and who had come to Pest several times from a small farway village when Sindbad called her to watch, guard or even catch women in the act… Mrs Morvai […] in her home village in Nyírség dealt with contracting servant girls. Sometimes she happened to contract the young village girls to houses that were not particularly the most civil, but she did it with the parents' consent.[12]

Mrs Morvai's figure is apparently rather suspicious as she functions as a snooper, jailer, and private detective in one person, which shows her client under a special light. The narrator also leads the reader to believe that Mrs Morvai mediates village girls to brothels through the guise of servant contracting. The two short stories connect Majmunka and Mrs Morvai in several respects. Majmunka says that she loves Sindbad not as if she was „his thrown away, left and forgotten lover" but as if she was his mother. Sindbad's ex-nurse became one of the first lovers of the grown-up Sindbad, thus love and motherly affection are combined in her figure as well. Both

[12] "A hajós […] lakást bérelt a „kismadár"-nak , és egy öregasszony felügyeletére bízta, aki valamikor Szindbádot dajkálta, és már többször Pestre jött a messzi kis faluból Szindbád hívására, amikor nőket kellett lesni, őrizni, esetleg tetten érni… Morvainé […] odahaza, a kis nyírségi faluban cselédlányok elszerződtetésével foglalkozott. Néha megesett, hogy nem a legpolgáribb házakhoz adta el a falubeli fiatal lányokat, de ez többnyire a szülők beleegyezésével történt." *Az álombéli lovag*, p. 453.

women make him tell of his love affairs and try to persuade him of the admired woman's deceptiveness, and both take into consideration the possibility of poisoning the women in question. These repetitions presented above provide a further example of how intertextual traces are scattered by recurrent inner variations within the ouevre.

The scene depicted in "Sindbad's Dream" has a variation not only in "Navarrai Margit" but also in the seventh chapter of *Ladies Day*. The funeral director gains insight into people's private lives in the same way as does the main hero of *The Lame Evil*. Therefore, he can see the scene that takes place in the brothel's kitchen between dame Jella and her young fancy man. Although the text makes mock of the suspicious figure by mentioning the "Waverly novels", it also mobilizes another intertextual context, thus the evocation of the picaresque is not deleted beyond trace. The buffalo-headed young man is a typical rogue, "a trouble-making tramp who joined demonstrations for or against the government without thinking, immediately joined a street fight, helped policemen stop fighters or attacked the police station to release someone not ever seen before."[13] The connection to "Sindbad's Dream" remains palpable in this short story as well; nevertheless, in the very text of "Sindbad's Dream" we have just identified, the prefiguration of "Navarrai Margit", the ultimate source of picaresque references are there elaborated so spectacularly. The correspondence is even made more apparent by the scene between dame Jella and her darling in mixing all of the elements that refer back to "Sindbad's Dream" and "Navarrai Margit",

[13] "aki gondolkodás nélkül elegyedett tüntető körmenetekbe a kormány mellett vagy a kormány ellen, nyomban beleavatkozott a verekedésekbe, segített a rendőröknek a duhajok megfékezésében, vagy ostromolta az őrszobát egy soha nem látott ember kisza-badítása érdekében." Gyula KRÚDY, *Asszonyságok díja = Pesti nőrabló. Regények, kisregények*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1978, p. 403.

respectively as its direct antecedent. In the preceding one Majmunka makes complaints to Sindbad about not having been taken by Sindbad anywhere for years, even though she has been asking him for ten years to go to the circus. Sindbad terminates the complaints by suggesting the idea of a spring excursion up to János Mountain. Dame Jella's complaints last longer as there is a visit to the City Park requested in vain and several other excursions to Zugliget, Buda, Cinkota and Nagyitce on the list of sins of the buffalo-headed young man. Here again a promise stops the flow of complaints: "At midnight we are goint to walk along the Stefánia Road. But not farther as the Rudolf statue, not another step further." Eating chicken consommé is a common element of all three novels; however, complaining about the ingredients is present only in the texts of "Navarrai Margit" and *Ladies Day*. In both cases it is the man who raises the issue: "The marjoram, my rose, you have obviously forgotten to put in the soup." Or: "What is this talk for? I can not find the kohlrabi int he soup."[14]

Besides "Navarrai Margit", it is *The Crimson Coach*, written by Krúdy also in 1913, in which the most expilicit picaresque references appear. The letter addressed to József Kiss inserted by the author as if it were the preface to the novel functions as a self-interpretation. Consequently, the reference to Le Sage's novel characterizes the narrative itself: "Gents and ladies are coming up and down without any clothes, the lame devil is looking through the house roofs, the dead did it very well that they had escaped from town."[15] The slightly

[14] "A majoránnát, rózsaszál, természetesen kifelejtetted a levesből." *Szerenád*, p. 192.; „Mit ér ez az egész beszéd! Nem találom a kalarábét a levesben." *Pesti nőrabló*, p. 405.

[15] "Az urak és hölgyek ruha nélkül közlekednek, a sánta ördög benéz a háztetőkön, a halottak igen jól tették, hogy elszöktek a városból." Gyula KRÚDY, *A vörös postakocsi = Utazások a vörös postakocsin*, I, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1977, p. 9.

moralizing tone addressed here, though it can also be related to the unveiling rhetoric of 19th-century novels, is not distant from the picaresque novels according to the stabilizing pattern of which the picaro, already on the right path, tells of his former acts in the framework of a retrospective narrative. The amusing adventures are interrupted by shorter and longer moralizing contemplations. In Krúdy's novels the moral criticism appears in a slightly similar position as in picaresque novels because it does not become a consistently sustained voice. The Krúdy texts sometimes tend to make moralizing rounds, nevertheless this does not hide the basically relativist aspect, which is not convinced of the existence of obvious values at all. As picaresque novels cannot generally resolve the contrast between proclaimed moral principles and the amusing feautures of often immoral adventures, so do moralizing rounds become isolated in Krúdy's works. The split of values which remain unreflected in the picaresque novels often become thematized, thus moral judgement presuming obvious values is restricted to a local role as the experience of relativism eliminates the bases of definite judgement. Therefore it is not surprising that the definiteness of moral criticism addressed in the preface soon lessens. In the figure of the retired courtesan evoked as the witness of a deteriorated love life, attractive and comic features are mixed up, moreover comic features can even be related to the lady's moral indignation:

> "I wonder how men can get married when I am the only honourable woman in Pest" —said at a night questioning a woman still quite pretty and desired, but retired from love, whose profession was exactly to cast and harvest love. She looked over

> Budapest as if it was her own estate, and deleted all saints from the calendar with the exception of Saint Hermendad.[16]

A central figure of the novel is Madame Louise, the famous demi-monde, the proprietor of the most elegant "friendly house". As regards her figure, the story definitely emphasizes the positive characteristics more; nevertheless, irony is visited upon her character as well. This implies that the text of the novel enforces the moral perspective much less than the introduction. It is worth mentioning that another impressive evocative line of picaresque elements is built around the figure Madame Louise. The distinguished demimonde lady is preparing to perform a scene written by Szilveszter, Alvinczi's vassal at her private evening party. Although Gil Blas, as the title in the text refers to the piquant French magazine, and in accordance to this the scene starts with the appearance of a Parisian grisette waiting for an omnibus, the presence of the picaresque remains palpable. It is partly because the title of the erotic magazine refers to Le Sage's novel, and partly because the type of courtesan is represented almost exclusively by rich actress mistresses and distinguished courtesans in the picaresque of the French writer. Madame Louise embodies both types in one person. The text at the same time offers another intertextual playground by often mentioning Eduárd Alvinczi's girlfriend as "the white lady of camellias". The younger Alexandre Dumas's novel both in regard to the spot and the character stands nearer to the situation depicted than Le Sage's

[16] „«Csodálom, hogyan nősülhetnek meg a férfiak, mikor én vagyok az egyetlen tisztességes nő Pesten» – mondotta egyszer éjszakai kihallgatáson egy még elég csinos és kívánatos, de szerelemtől visszavonult asszonyság, akinek éppen az volt a mestersége, hogy szerelmet vessen és arasson. Budapesten úgy nézett végig, mint a birtokán, és St. Hermandadon kívül a többi szenteket törölte a naptárból." *Utazások a vörös postakocsin*, I, p. 10.

book. Madame Louise like Margaret of Navarra is a part of the variation series. As if she was the distinguished pair of Dame Jella, she has a young lover too, the tellingly named Gyoko, in the non-public rooms of her house. An additional figure of the variation series is Aunt Róza, who appears to be a close relative of the couple of Madame Louise and Gyoko with her young lover Bimy.

Instead of listing additional relatives of Majmunka, Margaret of Navarra, and Madame Louise, I would mention a male character whose figure is shadowed by the picaro similarly to Sindbad. This is Herman, a key figure in *De Ronch kapitány csodálatos kalandjai* [The Marvellous Adventures of Captain De Ronch] (1912), who unifies the characteristics of the romantic lover, the adventurer, the artist and the cad in one person. He is a magician, a dance teacher, a director of amateur theatre performances and an amuser of insane gentlemen, however he is "most of all a poet". He is a dubious figure who makes holes in the wall of the ladies' swimming pool, but peeps into the homes of undressing women as well. He teaches fencing, he wields the sword "like a bravo", knows all secret feints. He often has to escape from his station because "he taught girls how to escape from home across the fence and also trained how to open door locks". He gets involved in fistfights with the wheelmaker, plans the romantic elopement of a girl but, being afraid of fulfillment, he tries to safeguard himself by stating that love is an illusion. In the course of telling of his previous lovers, he talks to his friend Captain De Ronch about several highlights, which show parallelism to the text places examined above. He and his first wife, Immakuláta, who performed in the Henry Circus, planned to move to the village. Later he lived with Henriette, who "traded with girls, transported dancers and singers to Moscow."[17] Taking the

[17] Gyula KRÚDY, *De Roch kapitány csodálatos kalandjai* = *Szerenád*, p. 24.

above into account, Herman can be considered a parodistic version of Sindbad, which is emphasized directly at a certain point in the text. Herman tells of what words he used to court his lover: "I told her that I am the Count of Monte Cristo [sic!], that I am Sindbad from the thousand and one nights, I am Julián the famous poet, fencer, musician, magician, the accursed prince."[18] In addition, it is worth mentioning that at Madame Louise's parties the pseudonym of Eduárd Alvinczi is Monte Christo thus Herman can be related to two emblematic Krúdy figures at the same time.

After presenting some characteristic examples of picaresque traces, I have to briefly answer the question as to what way these type of intertextual references enrich Krúdy's fiction. It definitely extends the range of grotesque effects. Boundaries between the romantic lover and the gigolo, the gentleman and the cad, the bohemian, the artist and the tramp grow dim. Figures, situations, and values lose their definite judgeability; they become complicated and subtle. Ironic indexes are connected to the romantic myth of the artist-bohemian and thus the elevated concept and romantic pathos of literature becomes invalid. Besides Krúdy, Viktor Cholnoky, and the author of Esti Kornél, Dezső Kosztolányi applied this method of profaning literature.

[18] *Ibid*., 17.

Clara Royer

Krúdy in the Shtetl of Móz or Stylization As a Montage

Gyula Krúdy's unfinished novel *Mit látott Vak Béla a Szerelemben és a Bánatban* [What Did Béla the Blind See in Love and Sorrow] was published in instalments in 1921 in the Viennese periodical *Új Könyv* [New Book]. According to its author, the novel aimed at resurrecting the "memory of a vanished city", that is, Budapest at the time of the Double Monarchy. Yet, the first part of the novel leads us far away from the Hungarian capital as we follow its main character in a small provincial city (2nd chapter), then at the border of "Poland", in the town of Móz, which turns out to be a stereotypical Galician shtetl (3rd chapter). Móz is the location where the main protagonist, Béla, who so far has been named "the evil-eyed one" (*a rossz szemű*) due to his ability to see the dead, becomes blind—a crucial turn of events which accounts for the title of the novel.

As with the previous chapters, chapter III starts with a title framed as a straightforward question: "How did he go blind?" ("Hogy veszítette el a látását?"). The answer given in the following pages comes with an inflation of stylistic devices. Krúdy presents the reader with a gothic scene in line

with the Romantic tradition as he describes a procession of ghosts reminiscent of medieval *danse macabres*. However, the tragic tale of Frimet's fate and Béla's loss of sight unfolds hyperbolically. Namely, they correspond to horror caricatures disclosing the tonality of the current episode in both satire and a taste of the grotesque. Undermining the literary and aesthetic realism of his narrative, Krúdy generates instead a symbolic network, dovetailing Hungarian and European traditions in literature, music, and painting.

Indeed, rather than leaning on an identifiable literary source, Krúdy's use of intertextuality spreads from *montage*, a process usually associated with both intermediality and film editing. Nevertheless, one should ask whether *Béla the Blind* is the metaphorical tale of linking seeing (*látás*) to writing (*írás*)—especially in this Móz chapter, in which a series of visions unfold with the fortitude and resilience of classical *enargeia*. This study aims at showing how *Béla the Blind*'s third chapter plays with a collective cultural and intermedial memory, turning the text into a stylized montage with an exceedingly modern impact.

The Imitation of the Romantic Tradition

Frimet embodies the so-called *belle juive*, or rather, all the declensions of this European mythical figure. As a scarlet woman, Frimet is a Magdalene, who worships the "evil-eyed" man as her Lord, and offers to wash his feet with "scented oils" and to wipe them with her hair.[1] The Jewish girl is already at the verge of christianity, for she confesses to having nurtured a wish to convert already from childhood, renounc-

[1] Gyula KRÚDY, *Mit látott Vak Béla Szerelemben és Bánátban*, Kalligram [What Did Béla the Blind See in Love and Sorrow], Pozsony, 2009, p. 337.

ing out of devotion to her father. Nonetheless, her desperate quest to find her stillborn child (who was taken away) brings to mind the *mater dolorosa* figure. Yet, Frimet is also Salome, as she tells the main protagonist she will dance "barefoot" in his honour. She is also Esther, with her "languid, pale nose" like those of "Eastern queens".[2]

Engaging the *belle juive*'s pictorial and literary motifs, revitalized by fin-de-siècle exoticism and Secession style, Krúdy does not relate to naturalist and symbolist representations as devised by Guy de Maupassant or Oscar Wilde. Instead, he endorses the Romantic tradition starting with Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820).[3] Young Frimet is indeed reminiscent of two Romantic Esthers: Honoré de Balzac's and Miklós Jósika's.

Jósika's 1853 novel *Eszther* takes place in "the Polish homeland" under the reign of King Kázmér, and conveys the renowned love of the king for a beautiful Jewess called Esther. One of its chapters even depicts a deserted church next to Krakow as "a lair of ghosts", where "a whole army of evil spirits gather in the midnight hours to celebrate their *Shabbat* with the music of the nearby owls". Krúdy was familiar with Jósika's novel, as his short story "Autumn Legs" published in 1915 in the *Magyar Tükör* [Hungarian Mirror] testifies. This piece depicts the crowd of Budapest Jewish women on the day of Yom Kippur:

> The silk dresses of the gorgeous Jewesses rustled, as if they had stepped out of Jósika's novel *Esther*; Orient was swagging in their gait like the scent of lascivious roses under a firmament filled with Asiatic, dark blue stars. […] Singular fabulous figures from the *Thousand and One Nights*, Old Testament waists, wavy-haired

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 327.

[3] See Clara ROYER, *Krúdy Gyula és a szép zsidó nő. Irodalmi klisé és etikus fantázia között*, Helikon, 2013/3, pp. 283–295.

> heads, on which one could picture, instead of the fashionable hat, a jug of water, and the legs, neither tiring nor turning into a vain roaming in the desert: they are walking the streets of Pest. We are in the East, at noon, for a whole hour.[4]

Krúdy's *belle juive* is much more an Eastern woman than Jósika's ever was. She's actually more akin to Balzac's Esther, in whose eyes the Orient itself glistens, and whose looks preserve the "sublime type of Asiatic beauty":

> Only those races that are native to deserts have in the eye the power of fascinating everybody, for any woman can fascinate some one person. Their eyes preserve, no doubt, something of the infinitude they have gazed on. Has nature, in her foresight, armed their retina with some reflecting background to enable them to endure the mirage of the sand, the torrents of sunshine, and the burning cobalt of the sky?[5]

It is evident, and beyond any doubt, that behind Krúdy's exotic representation of Jewish women lies the idea in which the Jews, and especially the Galician Jews, remained faithful to their indigenous people. Frimet claims the lineage and dis-

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[4] Gyula KRÚDY, *Őszi lábak* = *Magyar tükör. Publicisztikai írások 1894–1919*, ed. András BARTA, p. 105.
http://mek.oszk.hu/06300/06384/index.phtml:
"Gyönyörű zsidónők selyemruhái suhogtak, mintha az Esther című Jósika regényből lépkedtek volna elő; a lábak lépésében Kelet imbolygott, mint a buja rózsaillat, sötétkék, ázsiai csillagokkal kirakott égboltozat alatt. […] [Az] *Ezeregyéjszaka* különös mesealakjai, ótestamentumi derekak, hullámos hajzatú fejek, amelyekre a divatos kalap helyett a vízmerítő korsót lehet elképzelni, és a lábak, amelyek nem fáradtak, nem durvultak el a pusztában való bolyongásban sem: mennek a pesti utcákon. Keleten vagyunk, délben, egy óra hosszáig."

[5] Honoré DE BALZAC, *Scenes from a Courtesan's Life*, translated by James Waring,
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1660/1660-h/1660-h.htm.

ciplines of her ancestors, the Biblical Jewish women: "I did learn the religion well. I know from the Bible how obedient these women, of whom I descend from, were."[6] But as Frimet turns into the "Mother of the World" (*Világ Anyja*), she also reminds one of Gérard de Nerval's quest for a "motherland" (*terre-mère*) bathing in the "black sun of melancholia". Early 19th-century typical *belle juive* orientalist representations enhance authenticity and fidelity to antique origins.[7] In Krúdy's eyes, Biblical women are closely associated with Orient and Eastern beauties. Thus, it is no wonder that Frimet, as she senses her encounter with Béla will bring her life to its end, compares herself to "the women in the *Thousand and One Nights*", who were to die after telling their tale.[8]

Frimet's portrayal is therefore not devoid of biological clichés. That is why Béla tells the fourteen year-old girl: "You cannot deny that you are a Jewish woman, for only in Jewish women do bosom, chest, and shoulders bloom so early."[9] Krúdy did not yet part from the prejudice, in which Jewish women have early menstruation and are more fertile than their Gentile counterparts. Hence, he shared the same view of

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[6] Gyula KRÚDY, *Mit látott Vak Béla Szerelemben és Bánátban, op. cit.*, p. 337: "Én jól megtanultam a vallást. Tudom, hogy a bibliába mily engedelmesek voltak azok a nők, akiktől én származom."

[7] Next to Honoré de Balzac, see Arthur DE GOBINEAU's description in *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* [1853–55], Éditions Pierre Belfond, Paris, 1967, vol. I, p. 132.

[8] Gyula KRÚDY, *Mit látott Vak Béla Szerelemben és Bánátban, op. cit.*, pp. 331–332: "Bocsáss meg, egyetlenem, hogy hosszú mesékkel traktállak, mint az *Ezeregyéjszaka* hölgyei az ő szultánjukat. Valóban te vagy az én szultánom, az én királyom, mert te hozzásegítsz ahhoz, ami egyetlen vágyam az életben… Aztán meghalok".

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 327: "Nem tagadhatod, hogy zsidó nő vagy, mert csak a zsidó nőknek van már korai ifjúságukban ilyen telt nyakuk, keblük, válluk".

Arthur de Gobineau, whose work was familiar to him.[10] Along the stereotype of the smart but weakly-built Jewish man, Jewish women's hypersexuality was a widespread cliché in Europe.

Krúdy's *belle juive* embodies both the wound and the knife: tragic and destructive as Frimet evolves from medieval times, indicating Krúdy's well-known fascination with the Middle Ages. She appears as a witch of the Dark Ages, living in a "den" in a "medieval Poland". Her love terminates: one night a young man, who followed her to the cemetery, died a horrible death as he fell into a pit—a warning naturally not heard by the main character. However, the danger Frimet personifies is stressed by the beginning of the chapter through the image of the hairlock, one of Krúdy's fetishist motifs:

> The hair curled up around their ears tinkled like a knell, whose toll brings back in the dying's mind the best days and years they had. If they secretly placed a strand of their curly hair on the forehead of a man in his slumber, he would wake up bewitched, unburdened, oblivious of things past and present.[11]

Frimet encompasses numerous feminine figures: she is a mother, a child, a lost woman and a queen, simultaneously. She represents the juncture of sin and sanctity, attracting the main protagonist in the wake of her martyrdom aura.[12] Utilizing her character for the narrative's schema, Krúdy constructs a typical *montage*: a patchwork of several types of

[10] DE GOBINEAU, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[11] KRÚDY, *Mit látott Vak Béla Szerelemben és Bánátban, op. cit.*, p. 321: "A fülük mellett fodorított haj úgy csilingelt, mint a lélekharang, amelynek hangjára a haldoklónak legszebb napjai és évei szoktak eszükbe jutni. Ha titkosan nőtt hajukból egy göndör szálat alvó férfi homlokára tettek, az felébredt, megszerelmesedve, megkönnyebbedve, múltat és jelent elfeledve".

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 325.

femme fatale at the threshold of transforming into a vampiric creature, as Frimet "looked so deeply in the eyes of the evil-eyed one that it seemed she wanted to take him with her to the next world."[13]

As mentioned above, Krúdy places the events of chapter III in a town, where time has been suspended and even doubly suspended, since at night, in the cemetery, the dead replicate the daily hustle of the living during daytime—i.e., dead Jews continue to trade while the living are asleep. This stylized medieval frame falls within Romantic literary codes. Krúdy dabbles with Romantic folklore, and especially with superstitions: first, the legend of the *sixth finger*, to which I will refer later, but also the beliefs associated with ghosts. Krúdy even seems to recollect a comic passage from Sándor Petőfi's *János Vitéz*, when the protagonist falls asleep in a graveyard (XXII), although his treatment of the same motifs is quite different: neither the evil spirits' dancing and singing, nor their threats on János's life, awaken the sleeping protagonist, but as in Krudy's novel they eventually vanish with the crowing of the cock. However, it is also likely to assess Krúdy's inspiration from more modern writers as well, such as Sándor (Sarolta) Vay (1859–1918), whose personality fascinated him (he wrote several times about her), and who dedicated a short story to similar topics in "The Season of Superstitions".[14]

In 1925, Krúdy mentions the superstitions related to ghosts in his *Book of Superstitions*: "According to the superstitious belief, if they have unfinished business on earth or if

[13] *Ibid*., p. 352: "olyan mélyen nézett a rossz szemű szemébe, mintha tekintetét magával akarná vinni a másvilágra".

[14] Sándor VAY, *A babonák szezonja = A királyné és más elbeszélések* [The Queen and Other Stories], Országos Monografia Társaság, Budapest, no date, pp. 21–23. http://mek.oszk.hu/10100/10196/10196.htm#6

they hold a grudge against someone, the dead can sometimes raise from their grave around midnight but they have to go back by the crowing of the cock". Nevertheless he adds: "The house-haunting spirit especially can be come upon in the superstitions of every people but the Jewish."[15] And indeed, Krúdy doesn't draw upon Jewish folklore (in which only the Dibbuk—the possessing spirit—is relevant, not the ghost). Being completely familiar with the denial of Jewish ghosts, it is important to question why Krúdy did cling to them anyway.

A Stylized Horror Story or the Intrusion of Grotesque

In this chapter Krúdy constructs a classic horror story founded on an escalation of visual and sound effects pertaining to the Gothic novel. Móz is a town engulfed in fog (*köd*), with its "dark, rusty [houses], which were closed as if overcome by the everlasting fear that the town would be of assailed by an enemy".[16] Its description summons the lexical field of witchcraft and crime ("robbers, brigands, hangman, devils's daughters", and so forth). After the first apparition reveals itself in a mirror, a topical scene in horror fiction, Krúdy lingers on sounds, from knocks to knell through cracks, shouts and whistles:

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[15] Gyula KRÚDY, *Babonák = Álmoskönyv. Tenyérjóslások könyve*, ed. András BARTA, Mercator Studió, [Szentendre], 2005, pp. 213–214: "A babonás hit azt tartja, hogy a holtak, ha valamely munkájukat itt a földön nem fejezték be, vagy valakivel haragban voltak, akkor visszatérnek néha éjféltájban a sírból, de kakasszóra ismét vissza kell menniük."

[16] KRÚDY, *Mit látott Vak Béla Szerelemben és Bánátban, op. cit.*, p. 323: "sötétek, avasok, zártak, mintha örökké attól tartanának, hogy ellenség rohanja meg a várost."

A *faint knock, increasingly growing*, could be heard by the window. The *knock reverberated* its horror in the obscurity. Murderers used to knock this way at the window of their victims on dangerous nights. It's the kind of terrifying *pound*, which awakes from the deepest slumber, a *strike* that makes the friendly cart clatter on the faraway national road fade away, suddenly silencing the vagrants below the window, who until then went their way with a comforting mumbling. When surprised by such a *knock*, one feels lonely without a friend in this world, fighting the nightmares solely […] in vain does one try to grab with one's hands the hands of the living, one will always find the bones of Death.
The *knock* became more and more impatient as if a ruthless obstinacy drove a monstrous hand in its sinister work. Only deathwatch beetles work with such inexorability at the bottom of deathbeds.
[…] From the corners an unexpected *crack* could be heard. The door of the wardrobe with its sinister shadow was forcefully opened. […] In its wake a *wild shriek* could be heard that sounded like an old goat bleating as its competitor thrusts its horns in its flank. The *shriek resounded again* […] and the threatening, cruel face vanished in the shadow of the mirror as when a head chopped by the blade of the executioner disappears. […]
A *sharp whistle pierced* the night while a *knell rang* the midnight hour in a distance, and its *toll sounded like the brass-wind instruments in a music band*. The *whistle renewed* as if the dead from the neighbouring graveyard had learnt it from the mournful wind, and that the corpse on the corner was warning his artless companions of their approach.[17]

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 338-339: "Az ablakon halk, majd *egyre* erősbödő *kopogás* hallatszott. A *kopogás* borzadállyal *visszhangzott* a sötétben. Gyilkosok *kopogtatnak* így veszélyes éjjelen áldozatuk ablakán. Ez az a borzadályos *kopogás*, amely felriasztja a legmélyebb alvót is, erre a *kopogásra* múlik el a barátságos szekérzörgés a távoli országúton, ettől hallgatnak el hirtelen a vándorlók az ablak alatt, akik idáig biztató dörmögéssel mentek útjaikon. Erre a *kopogásra* érzi a meglepett, hogy egyedül, társtalanul van a világon, egyedül kell megküzdenie a rémekkel […] és hiába kapkod kezeivel élő kezek után, mindig a halál csontjaival találkozik.

This acoustic escalation matches a stylistic gradation, with the proliferation of the lexical field of horror, the use of superlatives and privatives ("impatient" — *türelmetlen*; "ruthless" *kegyetlen*; "inexorable" — *kérlelhetetlen*) that gives anxiety an absolute turn, notwithstanding the comparisons and repetitions, through which the metaphor of echo is even more activated.

But by creating such an emphatic horror story, Krúdy distances himself from the plot at the same time. Hence the insertion of ironic elements: the description of the little town of Móz and of its inhabitants, whether Jewish or Christian, dead or alive, is for instance pledged with irony: "The town was called Móz, and it had been famous since the medieval times for its thieves and wench creatures."[18] The latter places the reader both in a macabre story along with its lexical field of evil, but also in a caricature, as the onomastics of the town's name betrays it, for a town called Moses obviously never existed in Galicia. Having the ghosts and the gravediggers tell

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A *kopogás* mind türelmetlenebb lett, mintha kegyetlen makacsság hajtaná e szörnyű kezet ijesztő munkájában. A haldokló ágyának lábában dolgozik a szú ily kérlelhetetlenül.

[…] A sarokban váratlan *roppanás* hallatszott. Erőszakosan felnyílott az ijesztő árnyékú szekrény ajtaja. […] Az ajtó alig nyílott fel, az árny kisurrant. Ezután nemsokára *vad kiáltás* hangzott fel, mint az öreg bika elbődül, midőn fiatal versenytársa oldalába döfi szarvát. A *kiáltás ismétlődött*, küzdők léptei *robogtak*, és a fenyegető, kegyetlen arc hirtelen eltűnt a tükör homályában, mint eltűnik az a fej, amelyet hóhér bárdja metsz el. […]

Éles *fütty* metszette át az éjszakát, midőn a távolban elkongatta egy *harang* az éjfélt, és a *harangszó* hasonló volt a rezesbandák bombardóinak a hangjához. A *fütty megismétlődött*, mintha a szisszentő széltől megtanulták volna a közeli temető lakói, és a sarkon levő halott figyelmeztetné gyanútlan társait a közeledőkre." (Stressed by me.)

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 320: "Móznak hívták a városkát, és már a középkor óta híres volt tolvajairól és repedtsarkú nőszemélyeiről."

anecdotes and crack jokes is as scary as it is comical. In addition, the nearly sociological description of the cemetery depicting its various quarters is situated by the narrator under the auspices of carnival (*farsang*).[19] Let's only focus on the grotesque motif of rich Jewish women, who keep on growing fat post-mortem:

> In the wealthy quarter the women under the biggest stones lay idly as in their lives in their downy beds. They seemed to have grown fatter since they had moved out of town. Most of them were old women, who with their floppy bellies looked like these marsupial animals one can find in Australia.[20]

The comparison to kangaroos is obviously burlesque, since it brings together two discordant geographical realities. However, the living women of the town also share the same characteristic: "fat ladies in feather hats would stick in their fleshy fingers so many abundant pastries that it felt their existence's only purpose was to become only fatter"[21]—the narrator's irony therefore lends a satirical modulation to the horror story.

Irony nevertheless at times animates some aesthetical fascination for the horror filling the eye and ear: "Children were gazing out the shabby windows, and those tortured by fever were the most appealing. The lout spoke all kinds of

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

[20] *Ibid.*, 345: "Az asszonyok a gazdagok negyedében, a legnagyobb kövek alatt, most is oly henyélve heverésztek, mint életükben, pelyhes ágyukban. Mintha azóta is híztak volna, mióta a városból elköltözködtek. Többnyire öregasszonyok voltak, akik lelógó hasukkal hasonlítottak ama erszényes állatokhoz, amelyek Ausztráliában találhatók."

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 323: "kövér, tollas kalapú asszonyságok oly bőségesen dugják vastag ajkaik közé a süteményeket, mintha létük egyetlen célja volna, hogy minél kövérebbek legyenek."

animal languages to each other. They were most successful in mimicking the frog's croaking."[22] Krúdy's sensitivity to the decay and decadence shows his affinity for symbolist poetry. Horror, as depicted here, is linked to the aesthetical exaggerations pertaining to the horror story: the narrative oscillates between the grotesque and the supernatural in a pervasive symbolic system.

The Stylization of Symbolism

If symbolism rests on the belief that the real world is but an appearance and a poet's task is to reveal its hidden mysteries, *Béla the Blind*'s third chapter indeed seems to point to the representation of such an invisible mystery. First it is built on the haunting motif of the border and the margin: both geographical (the Polish border) and sociological, since the main character enters the town of Móz through the post office station, where he spends some time watching the farewells of the townspeople spreading all over the world.

The evil-eyed one spent the day at the post office, where the most chequered assembly was waiting the departure of the mailman. This was the place where the Mozian people left from to try their luck at the four corners of the world. They had dressed themselves as Spanish hidalgos and Brazilian planters, they had shaved their beards and moustaches, they had pocketed American passports. Here countesses, princesses, and dancers going to Paris were preening themselves, here the singer, who would soon make her audience burst into tears at the Russian opera, was scrutinizing her thick eyebrows

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 335: "Gyermekek bámultak ki a rossz ablakokon, és azok voltak a szebbek, akiket a láz gyötört. A suhancok mindenféle állati nyelven beszélgettek egymás között. Legsikerültebben a béka brekegését utánozták."

in her pocket mirror, and the ballerina, soon to perform in the Summer Theatre of Baden-Baden, was swaying her slender legs. Here the languages of every nation was spoken, the currency of every country was known, and every address in Europe, where former Mozians had found a friendly home and protection, was familiar. Those who stayed at home had come with the travellers to the post office in their simple, everyday outfits. Long kaftans swayed on men, their faces framed by dark beards, their eyes had a wild gaze, and the hands tucked in their pockets were always clenched in fists. The women were enshrouded in their colourful shawls so that only their noses and dark eyes could be seen. They didn't envy those who left far away from here, but surrounded their relatives with all the sacrificing love and affection known by this race.[23]

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 321–322: "A rossz szemű a nappalt a postaállomáson töltötte, ahol a legtarkább gyülekezet várta a postaszán indulását. Innen mentek el a móziak a világ négy tája felé, hogy kipróbálják szerencséjüket. Felöltözködtek spanyol hidalgónak és brazíliai ültetvényesnek, leborotválták a szakállukat és bajuszukat, amerikai útlevelet tettek a zsebükbe. Itt illegették magukat a Párizsba induló grófnék, hercegnék és táncosnék, itt nézegette kis tükrében sűrű szemöldökét az énekesnő, aki majdan az orosz operában könnyekre fakasztja hallgatóit, karcsú lábszárain lengett a balerina, aki a baden-badeni nyári színházban fog fellépni. Itt minden nemzet nyelvén beszéltek, minden ország pénzét ismerték, minden adresszt tudtak Európában, ahol már a régi móziak is barátságos otthont és pártfogást leltek. Az itthon maradók egyszerű, mindennapi öltözetükben kísértek az elutazókat a postaállomásra. A férfiakon hosszú kaftánok libegtek, arcukat komor szakállak környékezték, szemüknek vad tekintete volt, és zsebre dugott kezük mindig ökölbe volt szorítva. A nők tarka kendőikbe úgy beburkolóztak, hogy csak az orruk és sötét szemük látszott. Nem irigyelték azokat, akik innen messzire elmennek, hanem ennek a fajnak minden feláldozó szerelmével és szeretetével vették körül atyafiaikat."

This symbolical description of what has been known as "out of the ghetto" is elaborated by the contrast between the traditional world and the assimilated life (beards, cloaks, wigs and their counterparts). All of which belongs to the symbolism of the border. This corresponds to the path taken by the couple—Frimet and Béla—across the streets of Móz, as they reach the suburb, then "follow never-ending fences as if the sawmills stretched out until the end of the world", before arriving to Frimet's den, a den which already symbolizes the pit where they will eventually mate. Lastly, the border is embodied by the two main protagonists: Frimet is the town's outcast, despised and rejected by all, she already lingers at the border between life and death, and is actually moribund; the "evil-eyed" man is a dead seer (*halottlátó*).

The symbolics of the border assigns the crossroads of eros and thanatos, past and present, reality and dream, grotesque and sublime. Had not Krúdy already linked the figure of the ghost to the allegory of the Dream in his previous novel, *Ladies' Day* (*Asszonyságok díja*)? The couple mates in the midst of a donkey's braying (p. 348) next to a "procession of ghost" (p. 349), in a half-dug pit, as Frimet is already dying, literarily unfolding the scene beyond the grave. However, instead of depicting what happens in the *here and now*, alluding to the couple's sexual encounter, the reader is presented with the visions of the past frustrations of the main protagonist. As Frimet gives herself to him in the tomb, the "evil-eyed" man recalls all the women he desired but never scored in his life. Or rather, all the body parts of women he lusted for: legs, eyes, noses, ears, waists, hands and voices. Such a vision of body parts is actually introduced by an

allusion to madness: "A forest of legs was appearing before him as on the ceiling in the bedrooms of the lunatics."[24]

Krúdy's sentences turn into a litany, a rosary of desires as metonymies, repetitions, anaphoras and plurals form an erotic mosaic, assembling the narrative as in a stain-glass window, before ending up in the last paragraph with a vision of archetypal women: from Biblical Eve to Parisian blondes, through medieval dames to holy women and rococo ladies.[25]

This hyperbolic vision, with its blazing intensity, hints at a mystical experience. It can only lead to a divine punishment: blindness. Blindness was a turn-of-century topical Symbolist motif, recurrent in the plays written by Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, and Maurice Maeterlinck. It is safe to assume that Krúdy had known well these playwrights since their dramas were gradually becoming popular and were often performed on the stages of Budapest theatres from the beginning of the 20th century on. Thus, in Strindberg's *Ghost Sonata*, the Student is a dead seer, who will eventually lose his sight after truth is revealed to him; Ibsen's ghosts are also linked to going blind; and in Maeterlinck's *Intruder*, the blind grandfather character is an otherworldly visionary, who can see Death.[26] Blindness

[24] *Ibid*., p. 349: "Még sok-sok láb tünedezett fel előtte, mint akár az őrültek felett a szoba mennyezetén."

[25] *Ibid*., pp. 349–352.

[26] I would like to thank Prof Mihály Szegedy-Maszák for mentioning the possible intertextuality of this chapter with a short-story written by Dezső KOSZTOLÁNYI, *Vakság* [Blindness], Tolnai Világlapja, year XI, n 17, 23rd April 1911, p. 1013–1015. Kosztolányi very well knew of European symbolism: he saw Ibsen's and Strindberg's plays at the Vígszínház in the years prior to WWI. See his theatre criticism on Max Reinhardt's shows, such as: *A németek* (*Reinhardték a Vígszínházban*) [The Germans (The Reinhardts at the Vígszínház)], A Hét, n 19, 8 May 1910, pp. 308–309; *Haláltáncz*. (*Reinhardt haláltáncza*) [*Danse Macabre*. Reinhardt's *Danse Macabre*], A Hét, n 22, 1 June 1913, pp. 358–359.

always seems to betide as the consequence of a dazzling revelation, and in this chapter it is turned into an erotic apocalypse. It is important to note the Greek myth behind blindness: Tiresias, the divine seer, was stricken blind for feeling pleasure both as a man and as a woman. Hence prominent mythical and psychoanalytical symbolics are strengthened by the place where the couple mate: in the pit which will be used as the final repose of Frimet's own father, a new symbolic complication of this multi-layered chapter.

In fact, the chapter's efficiency depends on the superstition of the sixth 'finger", which Krúdy associates with the figure of shamans (*táltosok*) in his *Book of Superstitions*. Indeed, the chapter concludes with these words, answering the question of the title: "And it was only now that he thought he had noticed only too late that Frimet had a sixth finger on one of her hands. That sixth finger had taken away the light from his eyes."[27] Krúdy therefore overlooks realism and cartesianism for the sake of irrational logics. Questioning Béla's authenticity of a man gifted with hypervision, and whom the narrator even stresses between brackets that "(he could see so clearly all that there was to see it seemed he felt tonight was the very last time he was seeing the world around him, the world he could reach)"—the reader might not believe a seer like Béla hasn't noticed the most crucial detail about Frimet. Thus Béla is being punished with blindness because of his emotional sightlessness. This reflective symbolical circle borders the notion of insight, which is at the core of the novel's second part.[28] Nonetheless, the last sentence closing the

[27] KRÚDY, *Mit látott Vak Béla Szerelemben és Bánátban, op. cit.*, p. 353: "És most már csak arra gondolt, hogy későn vette észre, hogy Frimet egyik kezen hat ujj van. A hatodik ujj vitte el a szeme világát".

[28] On this motif, see Tibor GINTLI, *„Valaki van, aki nincs." Személyiségelbeszélés és identitás Krúdy Gyula regényeiben* ["There is

chapter conveys casual implications: the writer actually mocks his gullible reader.

Stylization as a Montage

The town of Móz is most probably located at the border of Galicia and the Szepesség (Spiš) region—an assumption we can make based upon the premise of some of Krúdy's short stories, such as "The Eye of Poprad" ("Poprad szeme"), published in *Világ* (The World) on the 3rd of May, 1905, in which the metaphor of the eye already unfolds in a supernatural frame. (The Szepesség region, with the town of Lőcse, who became renowned by Mór Jókai, are usually associated with the supernatural in Krúdy's world). Frimet was the victim of a pogrom: this pogrom actually forms the true horror story of this chapter. However, on the contrary to Russia and the Vistulaland (that is Russian Poland), Austrian Galicia didn't know of any pogrom. It is in Russia that the horrid events in Kishinev and Białystok took place in 1903 and 1905. The historical exodus of Galician Jews to Hungary in order to flee and avoid anti-Jewish massacres goes back to the Cossack wars and Bogdan Khmelnitski's 1648 rebellion in the midst of the conflict between the Uniate and the Orthodox Churches—which may explain why the narrator alludes to "Lithuanians" stopping the massacres led by "revolted peasants, army deserters, scampering priests, sooty outlaws" (but not the allusion to the "fire-eater gypsies", which denotes the circus and betrays here once again Krúdy's taste for exaggeration).

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someone who does not exists". Personality Narration and Identity in the Novels of Gyula Krúdy], Akadémiai, Budapest, 2005, pp. 96–98.

Still, the pogrom in which Frimet falls victim unfolds with modern music: when Frimet arrives in the garden of a rich parent where she seeks refuge, "a fantasy by Tchaikovsky could be heard."[29] The choice of such an air is not insignificant, since the peaceful garden turns out to be an illusory haven. Krúdy, who had been very sensitive to the waves of refugees from Galicia during the Great War, therefore thinks also of them. He had defended their right to find peace in Hungary in the daily *Magyarország* [Hungary].[30] Two different historical episodes are therefore interwoven here.

The historical montage matches the intermedial montage already hinted at from a musical point of view with the reference to Tchaikovsky's fantasy. Krúdy's chapter is not a mere text, but already a show that summons various art media. The medieval motif for instance summons painting,[31] literature (that is, Lőcse's literary tradition as described by Jókai),[32] but even already cinema as well. Before the war *Das Mirakel* was a very successful film, on the grounds of the international tour created by Max Reinhardt. It had been projected in Budapest in 1912. *Das Mirakel* tells the story of a sister named Beatrix, who gives in to the temptations of love, elopes with a horseman, and goes into utter decline. Such a plot recalls Frimet's assertion that she always "imagined [she]

[29] KRÚDY, *Mit látott Vak Béla Szerelemben és Bánátban, op. cit.*, p. 335.

[30] See for instance Gyula KRÚDY, "Asszonyom" [My Lady], Magyarország, 14th of August, 1914; "Pesti levelek. Zsidók" [Pest Letters. The Jews], Magyarország, n 170, 20th of June, 1915, pp. 9–10.

[31] KRÚDY, *Mit látott Vak Béla Szerelemben és Bánátban, op. cit.*, p. 322: "Bizonyára itt vannak azok a selymek, bársonyok, ékszerek, fegyverek, gyémántok, amelyekben a középkori Lengyelország pompázott, amelyeket manapság csupán festményekről ismerünk."

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 330: "A bitófa alatt is könnyezik a hóhér, ha nekünk fájdalmat okozott."

would become a nun, since it was always [her] desire growing up as a child, and that her liberator would come to her under the guise of a bear-footing soldier."[33]

Krúdy pieces together various textual, pictorial, and musical elements, from Tchaikovsky to the "invisible choir" of childless mothers, to the "sad songs" sung by the wanderers, which come as a melodic prolongation of the music of the blind gypsies Béla listens to in the first chapter.[34] Krúdy also uses intertextuality with his own previous texts: some episodes of this chapter have already formed the topic in previous works of his. A 1915 short story entitled "The Eyes of Children" (*A gyermekek szeme*), pertaining to the Sindbad cycle, already foreshadows the motif of the exchange of sepulchres between the dead, which we find in the beginning of the Móz chapter, as Béla's mentor gives his grave to a wandering poet so as to travel back to Móz.

The notion of montage is deeply associated with the category of the grotesque and the representation of historical violence, which leads the narrative structure to burst. Therefore, it is quite appropriate to qualify Krúdy's composition. In the face of History's violence, only characters as peculiar as Béla the Blind and Frimet can be conceived of to face such a monstrous reality. Fragment, close up, and details are constitutive elements of the montage. When the couple is attacked by the ghosts in the tomb, they are assaulted not by disembodied spirits but by body parts, mutilated stumps:

> A legless chest to which a pock-marked, red bearded-head belonged, crawled to the edge of the grave as an abject toad and once there shouted that the evil-eyed man's two legs had to be

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 340: "azt képzeltem, hogy apáca lettem, mint gyermekkoromban mindig vágyam volt, és a medveléptű katona alakjában eljött értem megszabadítóm."

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 324.

> chopped off so that he would never be able to come out of the pit again. An envious one-armed body waved its truncated arm toward the evil-eyed man's arms. Then a blind man tottered down the grave. He had a bell knotted around his neck, which now dolefully rang out in the cemetery. He stretched his long skeleton fingers toward the evil-eyed man's eye sockets.[35]

The description can bring to mind a post-war Expressionist painting. The style of the chapter under scrutiny is best characterised by these metonymies and fragments.

Cinema relies on montage, with its association of visual, textual, and auditory elements. In the beginning of the 20th century, cinema was very close to the theatre, and this third chapter also infringes on a theatrical performance (see for instance the dialogue between the "evil-eyed" man and Frimet, in which stage directions are playfully left by the narrator). Some episodes of the chapter share a dream-like quality very close to the aesthetic impression raised by cinema, with its spectral quality—e.g., when Frimet proceeds in the snowy streets: "The drifting snowflakes surrounded the girl's figure as she hastened under the red streetlamps, where some entertainment, some show was offered to the people."[36]

The concept of montage corresponds to texts whose elements do not appear heterogeneous, obliterating the crude

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 347: "A lábatlan törzs, amelyhez ragyavert, veres szakállas fej tartozott, utálatos varangyként a sír széléig mászott, és onnan kiabálta, hogy el kell venni a rossz szeműnek a két lábát, hogy ne jöhessen ki többé a sírgödörből. Egy félkarú a csonka karjával irigykedve hadonászott a rossz szemű karjai felé. Majd egy vak ember tántorgott a gödörhöz, akinek csengettyűje volt, amely nyakába volt kötve, most is búsan szólt a temetőn. Hosszú csontváz ujjait kinyújtotta a rossz szemű szemgödrei felé."

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 325: "A szállongó hópelyhek körülvették a leány alakját, amint gyorsított lépésekkel ment el a vörös lámpások alatt, ahol valami mutatványt, szórakozást kínáltak a népnek."

effect that belongs to collage.[37] Montage rather interweaves citations instead of juxtaposing them.[38] Hence Krúdy places his work in a network of pre-existing art works, which he quotes, borrows from, and uses at will, provoking an effect of modern stylization, which makes perfect sense in a novel where vision and representation are crucial elements.

[37] Jean-Pierre MOREL, *Montage, collage et discours romanesque dans les années vingt et trente* = A. BABLET (ed.), *Collage et montage au théâtre et dans les autres arts durant les années vingt*, Lausanne, 1978, p. 47.

[38] See Hanne MÖBIUS, *Montage und Collage: Literatur, bildende Künste, Film, Fotografie, Musik, Theater bis 1933.* Munich, W. Fink, 2000, p. 198.

Zoltán Fráter

Gyula Krúdy: *Autumn Races*

Krúdy's novella *Őszi versenyek* [Autumn Races] was published as part of the Small Hungarian Books series of Pegazus Publishing House in 1922. The plot, to start with the most essential feature, can very easily be summarised. Ben, a jockey who has been dismissed from his job, is feeling desperate and miserable, both physically and mentally. Because of this, he has been roaming around Stefánia Road and the City Park for two years looking for an appropriate tree on which he can hang himself.

In the City Park he unexpectedly and with frightening speed becomes acquainted with Rizili, a woman previously married several times, who is ending her relationships with a poet, soldier, and clergyman before Ben's very eyes so as to make him her new lover. She takes Ben to her place, gives him food and drink, and finally makes love with him. However, suddenly, the former lovers show up, and after they beat up Ben, he finds himself in the street again. The following day he finds Rizili taking a walk in the City Park and falls down on his knees before her, but the woman does not want to recognise him and chases him away indignantly. At that point Ben knows exactly on which tree he will be hanging himself.

What follows is the story's background, a prologue.
Finish, a short story written by Zoltán Ambrus, was published in 1896, then included in the collection of short stories "Ninive pusztulása" [The Destruction of Ninive], the 41st volume of the Best Books series of *Érdekes Újság* [News of Interest] in 1919. The protagonist, James Riderhood, is a successful jockey who suddenly retired at the height of his glory. At the age of 48 — a borderline age for a jockey — he has a wonderful and strange dream. In his dream he can see himself riding across the Elysian Fields when he is outridden first by his old masters and idols, then by all of the other jockeys, who look like ghosts turning back to urge and challenge him, little Riderhood, to follow them. The aging, former prize-winning jockey suddenly senses the nearing of his death, which he accepts. He calls his three sons and asks them one by one about their career choices. He is dissatisfied with their replies since the boys are aiming for political, clerical, and scientific careers, which he believes "do not develop one's character". His last hope rests with his youngest son, Ben, whom he has to call again since he is busy with watering the horses in the stable. He gives the following advice to the monkey-like boy of short stature:

> You haven't chosen a career yet, my dear boy. I want you to make a smart choice, unlike your brothers. I won't tell you that if you make a big mistake your wealth will make up for it. You will never make big mistakes. Whichever career you follow you will live up to it; but I want you not only to be a successful man but a happy one at the same time, someone who is not a drag on himself. […] Ben, why don't you become a jockey? It is the finest profession in the world, since it is the only man-size job. It requires you to be in your right senses with your heart in the right place all the time. You must have strong arms, steady and ready hands, and have power and art in your legs. It requires your body and soul to be in harmony and it requires you to have neither lack nor surplus concerning your health.

It is probably not surprising that Ernő Osvát, who considered individuality and art the most important things on earth, chose *Finish* as his favourite short story already in his early youth. He even quoted the basic statement of *Finish* frequently: Life is a game, let us play it well. The words of James Riderhood reveal a certain understanding of life: it is only worth choosing that one single career, which requires you to commit your whole life to the venture. "Become a jockey, Ben, become a jockey."

And Ben indeed became a jockey. We meet him again in Krúdy's novella *Autumn Races*, though now as a former jockey.

We have every right to assume a connection between Krúdy's novella and Ambrus's *Finish*.

Firstly, Ben, who follows his father's advice and becomes a jockey then gets fired, is the protagonist of both short stories. Secondly, at the beginning of Krúdy's short story, the narrator hints at Ben's English parentage when Ben is thinking more and more of "a shrivelled, old woman with a white kerchief on her head", who would pack chewing tobacco in the depths of the London store of Mr. Sidney and Mr. Monkey, and who must have been Ben's mother. Thirdly, in both stories, dream has a key role in the storyline. Finally, there is a trichotomy in both texts regarding the career choice of the brothers and the profession of Rizili's wooers. In Ambrus's text the career choice of the three brothers tends towards politics, church, and science respectively, which per se can be compared to the professions of Rizili's three wooers in Krúdy's *Autumn Races*: the poet stands for science, the soldier for politics, and the priest for the church. Last but not least, the theme of the finishing leg or final lap undoubtedly connects the two texts, as well making us witness both Riderhood's last supreme effort before his death and that of Ben at his own autumn race in preparation for suicide.

Apart from Imre Bori, who concerns himself to a certain extent with the story, Anna Fábri, who beautifully and convincingly analyses the role of imagery in Krúdy's oeuvre, or Dezső Kozma, who underlines the role of mental disunity and silent resignation, it is the works of Béla Czére, Gyula Herczegh, and particularly Gábor Kemény that are worth mentioning.[1]

So far, the most prominent controversies have been triggered by the question of whether Ben's adventure with Rizili really happened or whether it was just a dream. Even the narrator himself, whose perspective and knowledge stands closest to Ben's, seems uncertain about whether making love with Rizili and getting beaten up in the aftermath really happened, as Gábor Kemény points out in the aforementioned paper. According to him, the course of events is actual and real, except for the lovemaking and getting beaten up. As to the latter, because of its bizarre character, this seems quite reasonable. However, there are a few sentences articulated by the narrator that create doubt regarding whether or not that scene is a dream. After the "submissive old servant" has thrown him out, "Ben stood there in the middle of the street, in the villa district of Pest. He rubbed his eyes. Was it all just a dream? But the bruises on his body told a different story."[2]

Ben, after having made love with Rizili, dozes off on the couch and is awakened by "being beaten on chest and back. He felt the strikes of the stick on all possible parts of his body.

[1] Gábor KEMÉNY, *Szindbád nyomában*, Linguistica series a studia et dissertationes, 7, MTA Nyelvtudományi Intézet, Budapest, 1991, pp. 75-78).

[2] "[o]tt állott Ben az út közepén, a pesti villanegyedben. Szemét dörzsölte. Álmodott talán? Ám a testén sajgó botütések, az arcán égő pofonok csakhamar felvilágosították, hogy korántsem volt álom, ami vele történt." Gyula KRÚDY, *Őszi versenyek* = Gy. K., *Aranyidő*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1978, 189.

They thrashed him, like never before in his life.[3]" But what is it they are beating and thrashing him with? The poet threatens him with a ruler that he holds high in the air, the priest slogs him with a stuffed handkerchief. About the soldier, however, we are only told that he "attacked him with such a violence, as if he was in a war".[4] The whole scene resembles a burlesque fight in a classroom rather than a real altercation. The show of outrage and ridiculous weapons add to the dreamlike nature of the event. However, if we assume that the last series of images, which end with cursing and pursuit, and which seem to echo the closing scene of a burlesque silent movie, are to be placed in the world of dreams, then how is it possible for Ben to feel the painful strokes all over his body and for his face to endure a burning sensation?

If we were to assume that the narrator relates the real parts as a dreamlike, grotesque vision, then the logical consequence would be to consider everything as a dream, which is presented within a realistic framework without any irony or grotesque images, or that everything that he describes with realistic detail is actually a dream. In my opinion, what is involved is a far more coherent form of narration, which can be best approached if the well-known case of dream within a dream is postulated. It is similar to that everyday experience when the dreamer knows in his dream that he's actually dreaming, so that he can even enjoy the fact that everything he is living through is still just a dream. Freud calls this dream criticism, even though the phenomenon is often simply an antecedent to awakening. (Indeed, Ben soon wakes up, recovering his senses after his dreamy state.) Otherwise in this

[3] "javában dögönyözik a mellét, a hátát. Botütéseket érzett teste minden elképzelhető részén. Csépelték, mint még soha életében."*Ibid.*, p. 188.

[4] "olyan hevesen támadott, mintha háborúban lett volna" *Ibid.*, p. 189.

scene the narrator reveals himself most clearly, so much so that we can suspect that the story-teller increasingly cast the main character in a way whereby he himself cannot decide what is reality and what is a dream, what is actually happening and what is the product of imagination. The narrator simply says that Ben sat down on a bench and "mulled things over". The narrator almost identifies with the main character, the fired jockey. Hence there are two possibilities. Either we are dealing with some kind of unreliable narrative or — and in my opinion this is the more convincing standpoint — merely with the narrator's position whereby the story-teller is distinctly close to his hero, placing himself as it were in his consciousness. That is to say, it's not a case of narrative superficiality, inconsistency, and self-contradiction, but a way of speaking on the part of the narrator, whereby he consciously leaves the reader in doubt, almost misleading him or her in relation to the actual events, since the depicted hero himself is not sure about what has happened. That is so because the dream or illusion or "mulling over" has a dual nature — in the imagination the events in the dream are happening all at once (since accompanied by all kinds of feelings we live through them and dream them with experience and recounting) and yet they still don't happen. At least according to the rules of wakefulness, we surely only imagine and dream them.

According to my naïve conception, recounting the real happening is just a small element of Krúdy's novella. Not only is it the eating, drinking, and love-making with Rizili, and later Ben's being beaten and thrown out, that I consider imaginary, a dream — in a daring manner I assume that the length of the illusion or dream is much longer and lasts in its entirety from initially sitting on the bench to sitting on it again. In this version of interpretation, when Ben cannot sit on his usual bench in the City Park, since Rizili and the poet are

occupying it, he sits down nearby. He soon falls asleep and everything which then happens — the appearance of the soldier and the priest, getting acquainted with Rizili and what takes place in her apartment — is all in Ben's imagination, in his dream. The hungry and from every respect starving Ben, who is thinking of suicide, imagines everything; he simply sleeps and dreams throughout the day and the night. The long illusion, the half-awake daytime dreaming or slumber can be partly interpreted as escaping from his own situation, and if he's dreaming that only confirms that in reality the dream is the guardian of sleep, as Freud says, namely it is not rare for us to dream because our organism has a need of it, so that we can sleep longer. The next time we return to tangible reality is when Ben again sits on the bench and, seeing that Rizili is approaching, without thinking, he prostrates himself before the woman, but she — whom he knows intensely only in his fantasy or long dream — surprised and startled, sternly scolds him, saying she has never seen him before. The motif of sleep, otherwise a mode signifying the state of the characters, appears in the description of the environment too, for example when "the bronze figure of Anonymus was quietly dozing [in the park]."[5] More evidence of the narrator's way of speaking like Ben is also related to the blurring of the borderline between dream and waking. When Rizili moves among the bushes to relieve herself, we know that Ben "was ready to believe that the entire scene was a dream, as soon as he started to follow the elegant lady from a distance."[6] For the suspicious reader, these are signs that point out the role of the dream, the half-awake illusion and the dreamt reality which almost dominating everything.

[5] "Anonymus bronzfigurája csendesen szendergett." *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[6] "hajlandó volt álomnak hinni az egész jelenetet, amint messziről az elegáns dáma utána lépkedett." *Ibid.*, p. 166.

The fact that Ben fell in love with the unknown woman at first sight can be a consequence of his nights spent in a barely warm bed of fast lovers using unkempt, low-grade hotels, and of his denuded, uncared-for, uneventful love life. And it's also worth noting other such stylistic qualities, especially some parallels with the use of adjectives, which, to say the least, can be regarded as arguments confirming the enlargement of the dream or illusion. When the jockey looks at Rizili "his glance" meets "the woman's glance giving off the appearance of opium smoke". Ben skulks on the bench as if "incapable of making any move" until the woman looks at him. According to the narrator, the woman has a hypnotic look and the jockey is referred to as "bewitched".[7]

From the start, the narrator presents Rizili as rather dreamlike: "Maybe in her youth she set off from a poet's verse on her dragon-fly wings."[8] Moreover, Rizili's poetic dreamlike quality is placed in the centre of the narrative so that the strolling woman is characterised by a text about autumn — what is more, using the sentence construction of Petőfi's poem *At the End of September*, "the sun is still shining … the road is still dusty … the head is still held high … still waiting for those kisses … still like the belly of the lustful May beetle … but the already soft autumn breeze blows around the woman's clothing …"[9]

This same dreamlike poetic quality and poetic dreamlike nature return in the priest's imagined, reproachful words, as seen through the narrative viewpoint of Ben: "The plump

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[8] "Lehet, hogy ifjúkorában egy költő verséből kelt útra szitakötőszárnyakon." *Ibid.*, p. 171.

[9] "még ragyog a nap […] még porzik az út […] még emelt a fő […] még várja azokat a csókokat […] még hasonlatos a buja cserebogár potrohához […] de már halk, őszi szél fújdogálja körül a hölgy ruházatát." *Ibid.*, pp. 107-171.

priest thus studied the woman threateningly, as if saying with his look «You'll still need me … you'll search for a good spiritual father later … there'll still be time … the day will come … sobbing, you'll still implore your god … you'll sit around under a thick veil … I'll hear your painful voice in the quiet of the sleepless night…»"[10]

Certain textual structures of Krúdy's works are compared to well-known poems by Imre Bori in connection to *Autumn Races*[11] and in relation to *Seven Owls* by István Fried[12].

Further evidence of the illusion or dreamlike quality of the novella is Rizili's unexpected, absolutely quick intimacy with, confidence in, and even love for Ben. After getting rid of the priest, the woman, from a distance, even with a certain mournfulness, "looked Ben in the eye for a short time, then resolutely approached him and took his hand. — To date I've had to pay dearly for every new love. If I wanted to strive for something, I've had to suffer a lot. But no love has been as costly as you. How many darlings have I got rid of for your sake, among them, the most secret one, my spiritual father. Are you worthy of this great sacrifice, my little fellow? — mumbled the lady."[13]

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[10] "A kövér pap tehát fenyegetően végignézte az asszonyt, mintha azt mondta volna pillantásával: »Még lessz rám szükséged […] Még keresnéd majd a jó lelkiatyát […] Még lesz idő […] Még jön nap […] még zokogva kéred a te istenedet […] Még üldögélsz sűrű fátyol alatt […] Még hallom panaszos szavad az álmatlan éj csendjében f…]«" *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

[11] See Imre BORI, *Fridolin és testvérei*, Forum, Novi Sad, 1976, p. 296.

[12] Cf. István FRIED, *Szomjas Gusztáv hagyatéka*, Palatinus, Budapest, 2006, p. 155.

[13] „[b]izonyos mélabúval nézett egy darabig Ben szeme közé, majd határozottat hozzálépett és megfogta Ben kezét: — Eddig minden új szerelmemért drágán meg kellett fizetni. Sokat kellett szenvedni, ha valamit el akartam érni. De egyetlen szerelmem se volt oly drága, mint te. Hány kedvesemen adtam túl a kedvedért,

Moreover, Ben's problem not only concerns Rizili and her three suitors, since what is at least an equal burden is the change brought about by being dismissed from his position, which has been dominating his life for two years. Yet — with reference to Ambrus's short story — he chose the profession of jockey not for want of anything better, but because he was born a jockey. His life and calling were one and the same, but due to his dismissal he has lost this unified aspect of his life. He lives as a jockey only in his memories, and is not capable of breaking with the past, according to the narrator's consistently applied comparisons and memory-quoting orderly associations.

Anna Fábri has analysed the role of images that frequently recur in Krúdy's writings with very thorough and convincing reasoning, showing in detail their environment-creating nature.[14] The story of Ben's dismissal can be reconstructed from these images, as if from mosaics — as did Gábor Kemény, who put the fragments of Ben's memory in sequence, thereby demonstrating...[extend the thought; idea not developed]. The images of *Autumn Races* not only depict Ben's life as a jockey as background, but call to mind the precisely formed story to a significant degree and build it into a world of images. In connection to Rizili, the narrator systematically employs the imagery of fillies and horse racing. But for rendering the changes in Ben's state of mind Krúdy uses the imagery of prize-winning races and the world of animals. For example, Ben "was small, shrunken and starved like a monkey which had escaped from the zoo", or "Ben stood under a tree shattered, as if after the 1899 10,000-forint steeplechase …", or "Ben was in such a paralysed state as

köztük a legtitkosabbon, lelkiatyámon. Vajon megérdemled ezt a nagy áldozatot, te emberke? — rebegte az úrnő." *Ibid.*, p. 173.

[14] Anna FÁBRI, *Ciprus és jegenye*, Magvető, Budapest, 1978, pp. 28–39.

when following a certain noted autumn horse race the Jockey Club banned him from the course".[15] The particular character of *Autumn Races* is that the bulk of the images in connection to Ben are negative and grotesque, as exemplified by the examples just quoted. They are of the type that Anna Fábri, based on examples from the Krúdy's short stories, especially those written while he was young and prominent (such as in his *Sunflower*), has called degrading imagery.[16]

Dezső Kozma is right when he describes *Autumn Races* as one of Krúdy's most disciplined works.[17] We can add that the discipline cannot just be traced to the intertwining of events, not only to the structural features, and not only to the framing of the planes of memory, but to the playful orderliness and systematic playfulness of the useful parallelisms as the main pillars of structure. In addition to the impressionistic parallel between the environment and character, the multiplicity of larger textual units is striking in Krúdy's novella. The parallel of sentence construction between the lines of *At the End of September* and the 'monologue' of the priest's glance has already been noted, and the comparison of certain characters induces the bold reader to further consideration. The narrator compares Ben and Rizili's suitors, which suggests the possibility of a metonymical relationship between Ben and the other three, and even possibly that the suitors embody possible projections of Ben's suppressed self.

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[15] "olyan kicsi, fonnyadt, kiéhezett volt, mint egy állatkertből megszökött majom." *Ibid.*, p. 167. "Ben oly megrendülten állott egy fa alatt, mint az 1899. esztendő tízezer forintos versenye után..." *Ibid.*, p. 170. "Ben oly megdermedve állott helyén, mint azon bizonyos őszi kancadíj lefutása után, amikor a lovaregylet igazgatósága kitiltotta a versenytérről." *Ibid.*, p. 173.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[17] Dezső KOZMA, *Krúdy Gyula postakocsiján*, Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1981, p. 124.

In his *Interpretation of Dreams* Freud writes that if an unknown character appears in a dream you can calmly presume that with the help of identification your own ego is lying hidden somewhere behind the unknown figure: "I have the means to complement my ego."[18] The relation between Ben and the suitors is reinforced, at least in part, by different narrative signs. The poet sits with Rizili in Ben's place, "on his bench". The comparison of Ben and the soldier is demonstrated by the narrator when Ben, "in lieu of anything else, held a long, yellow blade of grass in his mouth", and at the same time when the soldier rolled a cigarette for himself "from a long hunk of yellow tobacco", and perhaps also that Ben slept in the low-grade hotel due to the benevolence of the concierge, while the soldier — similarly availing himself of temporary accommodation — took his afternoon slumber in lodgings. There is a comparison made between Ben and the figure of the priest, since the priest views Rizili as a horse, just like Ben: the priest "scrutinised the woman for a while, like a handsomely covered mule". In addition, we know that Ben "didn't fear the priest", moreover that the priest "surveyed the woman's figure with covetous eyes". Ben initially wasn't hungry for the woman's body, rather literally hungry, since "his eyes gleamed with hunger", but — knowing his lifestyle — his hunger also had a sexual dimension, even if an empty stomach provoked it. In the following short phrases the word "mumbled" also produces a comparison: "«She no longer loves me» —the priest mumbled in a shocked manner," and note the words of the suffering, almost swooning Ben: "«Rizili», — he mumbled, like a dying man."[19]

[18] FREUD, Sigmund, *Álomfejtés*, trans. István HOLLÓS, Helikon, Budapest, 1985, p. 229.

[19] "egyéb híján egy hosszú, sárga fűszálat tartott szájában"; "hosszú szálú sárga dohányból" *Ibid.*, p. 168. „egy darabig szemügyre vette az asszonyt, mint egy csinos takarójú öszvért" *Ibid.*, p.

There is a consistent comparison in the images of Rizili and horses, at least it is somewhat striking that the narrator, who is close to Ben's viewpoint, consistently associates the memory of a filly in a horse race with the figure of Rizili. Without claiming to be complete, here are some examples. When Ben's glance first meets that of the woman and he immediately falls in love with her, according to the narrator, the jockey "felt himself to be in the 3000-metre National Cup, when near the finish his horse Matschaker changed his gallop, broke his leg and Ben flew out of the saddle." When Rizili went among the bushes to relieve herself, Ben was embarrassed "like in the 900-metre Sprinters Stakes, when he bet all he had on the filly and in the middle of the race to his greatest surprise the horse started to be in heat."[20] When Rizili unexpectedly approaches Ben and while hardly even being acquainted, immediately declares her love for the jockey: "Ben stood petrified, like after a certain autumn Hungarian Oaks, when the Jockey Club dismissed him from the race."[21] However, after their lovemaking, according to the narrator: "Ben was happy, like on the most beautiful day of his life after he and his horse, which was one of the favourites, won the Autumn Cup by a head on a filly called Feodora."[22] While

171."A paptól nem félt"; "éhes szemmel méregette az asszony alakját" *Ibid.*, p. 172. "szikrázott a szeme az éhségtől; "Már nem szeret — rebegte megrendülve a pap"; " Rizili — rebegte, mint egy haldokló." *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[20] "mint akár a kilencszáz méteres villámdíjban, amikor egész vagyonát feltette egy kancára, és a verseny közben legnagyobb meglepetésére a kanca sárlani kezdett." *Ibid.*, 166.

[21] "Ben megdermedve állott a helyén, mint azon bizonyos őszi kancadíj lefutása után, amikor a lovaregylet igazgatósága kitiltotta a versenytérről." *Ibid.*, p. 173.

[22] "Ben olyan boldog volt, mint élete legszebb napján, mikor rogyásig megfogadott lován, egy Fedóra nevű kancán az őszi díjat fejhosszal megnyerte." *Ibid.*, p. 188.

wandering in the park the name of a horse comes to his mind — Rizibizi — on whose back he won the Grand Summer Handicap, and note that in his dream he encountered a woman called Rizili. A well-known phenomenon of dreams or daydreaming is substitution, when the object of desire is exchanged by something near, a known, acceptable object. With Ben it is a case of reciprocity. Desire for the woman is substituted with his memories of horse racing, while the desire for the horse is substituted with his love-making fantasies, mixing both with the imagery of competition and competitiveness.

Nature is strongly stressed, comparing the yellowing autumn park and the woman, the forty-year-old fading Rizili. "The red and yellow trees, the green bushes turning pale, airy meadows, the wilting park heartily embraced the figure of the woman. The woman was also wilted, however briskly she was stepping. A floating spider's web clung to her hat and embedded itself in her curls, like autumn hair."[23] The comparison of bright colours truly sticks out in the text. The red-blue-gold Madonna image and the picture of Saint Anna and Saint Elizabeth, which the priest brings to Rizili, prefigure and prepare the image of the "red and black-ringed" eyes of the old women in church, the blue and pink colours of the church windows, the gold of the house named after the Gold Baker, the Christian girls' petticoats festooned with red and blue, which the narrator itemises only so that the red, purple, and yellow flowers in Rizili's garden would refer to the former desire for Christianity of Rizili, who refused to be converted.

[23] "A piros és sárga fák, elhalványodott zöld bokrok, levegős rétek, a hervadó liget barátságosan fogadta ölébe az asszony alakját. Hervadt már ez a nő is, bármily ropogóan rakosgatta egymás után lábait. Az úszó pókfonál belekapaszkodott kalapjába, és kondor hajában úgy helyezkedett el, mint ősz hajszál." *Ibid.*, p. 170.

No wonder that after amassing so many flowers and colours the lady of the house "appeared in a flowery dressing gown, […] with a sweet smell"[24] in front of Ben in the villa.

The narrator also draws a parallel between locations. He compares the window of the Alag Hotel looking out to the red woodbine in the garden to the sight of another garden surrounding Rizili's villa. There are also the parallels of metaphors and metaphor construction in the text: "A long-haired, white dog guarded the home of rich people",[25] but correlating to the starving Ben, it becomes a metaphor such as hunger "has remained outside at the gate and expects Ben's return in the figure of a ragged, dirty canine".[26] Elsewhere he uses the image of contrast to connect the threatening dog to its wiry hair running alongside the horse and carriage with the "big, black dog of sorrow",[27] which does not fit in the tiny window protecting the intimate family atmosphere of suburban houses. *Autumn Races* features the parallel of larger units and scenes: the scene when the soldier, Ibolyka, and Rizili spy on each other, jump out of a window and give chase (which recalls the jumping out of a window in *Seven Owls* as a self-intertext) can be compared to the beating up of Ben due to the intensely burlesque character of the two scenes.

Ben's sitting on a bench and "thinking" — "He has found a new bench and again he has only been thinking" — can be compared to his sitting on the bench the following day when the "trees and bushes were still thinking about yesterday's story", yet at the same time "without thinking" Ben prostrates himself before Rizili. The beginning and the

[24] "virágos háziruhában, [...] illatozva jelent meg" *Ibid.*, p. 187.
[25] "Hosszú szőrű, fehér kutya őrizte a gazdag emberek otthonát" *Ibid.*, p. 186.
[26] "odakünn maradt a kapuban, és egy rongyos, piszkos alakjában várja vissza Bent" *Ibid.*, p. 187.
[27] "a bánat nagy, fekete kutyája" *Ibid.*, p. 175.

end of the insignificant action also features a parallel: the very first lines show that Ben walks around in the neighbourhood of Stefánia Road with a halter in his pocket and at the end of the story he already "knows" the tree where he will hang himself and is heading there. The many applications of comparisons may again prove that certain events take place only in Ben's imagination, his "thinking". In his *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud talks about a primary mechanism, pre-rational thinking, which expresses a more archaic form of communication and a secondary procedure as developed rational thinking. The primary mechanism also prevails in the language of myths and dreams. Parallelism is suitable for expressing the analogies hidden from our consciousness and connects what is at the same level in the unconscious, while the outside observer naturally is well aware that parallels are not the same as identification.

The jockey races only in his dreams but in his imagination, his dream, he must also defeat Rizili's suitors. He does that symbolically when, before love-making, Rizili offers him food and drink. It is boiled beef, the poet's favourite dish — "Eat this beef, little fellow,"[28] Rizili encourages him. Then come half a dozen hen's feet, the soldier's favourite, and meat scones made from a mixture of lamb and pigeon, which is the priest's favourite food. (It is significant from an analytical perspective that all three are meat dishes.) All this is extended when Rizili offers Ben the poet's favourite drink, Schwechat beer, of which the poet always gulped down several jugs, then green liqueur, absinthe, which the priest preferred. Ben actually consumes the food and drink of his competitors so that with this act of symbolic cannibalism, he would consume Rizili's former suitors, and with this incorporation he achieves and fulfils his desire to acquire his competitors' attributes.

[28] "Edd meg tehát az ő marhahúsát, emberke" *Ibid.*, p. 193.

After all, he is only "a narrow-minded, little educated jockey, who was even dismissed from his job".[29] Yet he does not become and cannot be like the suitors, even by consuming their dishes and drinks, which he substitutes for his being beaten by his competitors (namely his losing the horse races).

What does this peculiar daydreaming serve? What does it warn Ben of? It certainly raises the assessment of his own situation, rethinking the role of the fired jockey and the question of self-identity. The dream indicates that Ben is no longer able to perceive himself as a goal and that has a consequence. He definitely realizes his identity with the force of clarity.

The title *Autumn Races* refers to rivalry in love, but just as the autumn races were over at the racecourse, the period of love rivalries was over in Ben's life. His last struggle for Rizili, for the prize, is not only an a*gón*[30] but also agony, the death-throe before suicide. In this sense his reverie or dream is foretelling and prophetic, and with its help Ben realizes that he is ready for death. Among the possible ways of overcoming the danger threatening him, he has opted for unsuccessful tactics against the attack of the three suitors — avoidance (wailing and flight), for example, did not prove a successful solution. After all, on the one hand, while thrown out on the street, he himself does not know what has happened, while on the other hand, he is choked with shame and rage, and in a mad craze he walks through the neighbourhood like a deranged person but does not find Rizili's villa, while all the time he is suffering from love. "He was in love, he was unfortunate," states the narrator. He puts up resistance after acceptance instead of acceptance after resistance, yet it is a

[29] "szűk látókörű, kis műveltségű, ezen kívül állásából elcsapott zsoké volt" *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[30] The ancient Greek for 'contest'. [*trans.*]

senseless and unfeasible method of fighting. With typical afterthought, belated grief with an acute feeling of love produces somatic symptoms in Ben's body. "Once he would shiver such that his teeth were chattering, then he would dizzily lean against the wall."[31] Due to his acceptance of loosing, waking up to the bench he prostrates himself before the approaching Rizili. Nevertheless, the failure he experienced in his imagination or dream intensifies his identity — not that of his being a jockey, but his being rejected. Thus the images of Ben's imagination and "thinking" not only fill the role of a typical foretelling dream, but represent "thinking" that makes him be aware of and recognize his own identity. Thus suicide can be his only valid choice. That is why he hurries towards the racecourse where he "already knows the tree which is expecting him."[32]

A further parallel is the short story *Finish* by Zoltán Ambrus, which can be compared to Krúdy's *Autumn Races* not only as a textual predecessor, but also because James Riderhood's dream is in the same way a prophetic, foretelling dream, a vision indicating a maturing thought that is leading towards and preparing for death, like Ben's dream or reveries and "thinking". Both represent death's anteroom. In the case of Riderhood, it is a simple calling dream, yielding to the call of past prominent people. In the case of Ben, dreaming, the "thoughtful" dream, accomplishes the clarification of identity as a result of which it is only the rejection that remains of Ben's dismissal as a jockey, and thus suicide can be his only valid choice. The method of his fighting against his present situation is not fortunate and it is actually the reason why it ends in failure. However, he is fully successful in developing and

[31] "Egyszer a hideg rázta, hogy a fogai vacogtak, máskor szédülten támaszkodott a falnak." *Ibid.*, p. 189.
[32] "már tudja a fát, amely várja őt" *Ibid.*, p. 190.

achieving his identity, the character goal, and that is why he knows the tree that is already waiting for him.

It is well known that a literary text often represents the cultural patterns of individual and communal identity. When psychological aspects are added to the interpretations of literary works and are applied to clarify meaning and explanation they are likely to invite the danger of excommunication by the profession. ("No engaging in psychology!") It could actually seem to be risky if we perceived the behavioural patterns of the characters in a fictive text as the behavioural model of everyday life, or if we demanded an explanation for the behavioural mechanisms of everyday life from the world of fiction. I did not intend to do that, but only hope that the moderate assertion of a socio-psychological perspective may direct attention to such narrative signs and coded messages which otherwise might have remained unnoticed.

A story with its autotelic nature refers to the fragmentarily seen world of whatever era's historical past or present only indirectly and secondarily. At the same time, the narrator (and the recipient) can use the story, in which both the social and personal identity is constructed in a narrative form, through representation and interpretation as a means of learning to know about him or herself and others, for example the community which speaks the same language. I believe that the view of social psychology according to which, besides aesthetic pleasure, literary works may transmit mental and behavioural patterns that not only represent the experience of the individual but also of a nation, should at least be considered.

In this way, Krúdy's novella highlights one of Hungary's archetypical historic positions: it unpicks the fabric of our cultural and communal patterns, suggesting that we do not even discover ourselves because of our sorrow over having

lost past glory, because of our melancholy over our dismissal, while remaining in the spell of old yet irretrievable success, in fact *because of the illusion of a dream*. We do not discover ourselves in our present, so much so that we discover our identity in the grief that defines ourselves as losers. For Ben the direct consequence of this identity is self-destruction, suicide. Despite the fact that we know that the most effective method against a threatening situation is confrontation fused with rational action whereby we can confront the goals of others in compliance with communal norms, and although it may weaken or modify the identity, it can be the basis of a rather successful strategy. Instead, during our history Hungarians have often chosen to bang their heads against a brick wall, which is the policy of suicide. That undoubtedly rescues, moreover preserves, identity, yet, inevitably, leads to destruction.

Katalin Fleisz

„Such was the Hungarian Don Quijote" Point of Views in the Novel Entitled *Ál-Petőfi*

Ál-Petőfi [Pseudo Petőfi], which was published in 1922, does not belong to Krúdy's most popular works. However, popularity is not always proportional to the real value of a work of art, and lack of popularity does not imply worthlessness. In the following pages we will reveal some of the exciting possibilities concerning the interpretation of the novel.

Ál-Petőfi takes place in the 1850s, at the time of the repression of the Bach régime. The story's "main character" is actually the legendary public awareness of Petőfi who does not live any longer, but his mysterious disappearance has resulted in a huge cult — or rather, mass hysteria. The cult is based on the fact that the poet has not died in battle, but hides in various places. This credulity resulted in pseudo-Petőfi characters, who represented the swindler flash gentry. Such is one of the novel's characters: Sarlai (Bujdosó in the novel), the trans-Danubian weaver.

Like many Krúdy works, the dialogue in *Ál-Petőfi* is built upon misunderstanding. On the one hand the novel charac-

terizes different points of views, on the other hand a wish for identification. Therefore, according to Krúdy, identification is possible only through the play of viewpoints. The image of the real Petőfi is a result of the novel's personal perception, which is then interpreted by its expectations.

In *Ál-Petőfi* we can recognize the voice of the anecdote. Like Mór Jókai or Kálmán Mikszáth, the narrator visualizes this world's similarly live speech. In addition to the heroes' dialogues, the narrator supplements the text with his own opinions and realizations. Since he is a member of the community, he knows the habits of this specific community. However, the narrator is not omnipotent, as he can only guess in connection to ambiguous phenomenon.

The cultural background of the novel is the literature of age, for example the poetry of Mihály Vörösmarty, Pál Ányos, Károly Kisfaludy, and Mihály Tompa. Poetry functions as the channel of communication. The cult of Petőfi enables this cultural background. The poetry joins the principles of *nature, homeland*, and *Hungarian entity*. Thereby poetry and literature become cultish. The confrontation of viewpoints simply ironizes the approach of the cultish.

> Mr. Sloff liked the wine and poetry in wine very much. If he had drunk a drop too much, he would pour old poems.[1]

In this passage, we can observe the narrator has two opposing opinions inside of a single manifestation. The parlour voice of the narrator is stratified, because he submits the actor to his own viewpoints as well as to the viewpoints of the community. This

[1] „Nagyon szerette a bort és a borban a költészetet Sloff uram. Ha többet ivott a pohárból, ömlött belőle a sok régi költemény." KRÚDY Gyula, *Ál-Petőfi = A magyar jakobinusok, Ál-Petőfi*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1962, p. 201.

process is valid in the entire novel. The phrasing *„people say*" places the narrator inside the community. So he expects the credibility of interpretation from readers. However, the narrator ironizes his own interpretative position as well, because his knowledge is based on guessing. Because the senses are derived from the interference of many different viewpoints, we cannot discuss absolute.

Mise en abymes — The story of Lisznyai Kálmán

Although several stories in the novel interact as *mise en abymes*, they can reflect the entire novel itself too. This play of viewpoints creates its own effect on this phenomenon. For example: the story about the poet that is embedded in the novel differs from the main story in terms of acts, space, and time. We know the embedded story supposes the text has a hierarchical structure. According to Brian McHale, the embedded story must be one narrative level below the main story[2] Besides, the embedded story must correspond to the dominant sign of the main story. Therefore it must double the main story.

Lucien Dällenbach[3] approaches the *mise en abyme* from the issue of readability. The text containing the *mise en abyme* presumes something unvoiced. It points to the empty and unfilled areas of the text. Thus, on one hand, the *mise an abyme* relieves the reading; on the other hand, we can observe this as a figure of hiatus-splitting. In the latter case the *mise en abyme* intensifies the activity of reading, allowing us to read using the negativity of the context.

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[2] Brian MCHALE, *Postmodernist Fiction*, New York and London, Methuen, 1987.

[3] Lucien DÄLLENBACH, "Reflexivity and Reading," *New Literary History*, Vol. 11, No.3, On Narrative and Narratives II (spring 1980).

One of the novel's embedded stories is the story of Lisznyai Kálmán. He invokes the crucial battle wherein Petőfi disappeared. In this story Lisznyai is an episodic figure, a temporary narrator.

The intention of the narration is the resolution of Petőfi's disappearance. Thus, the narrator enlarges the last day of Petőfi. It seems this story is a report presented from the point of view of an eyewitness. This role of eyewitness is unmasked after all. With the evoking of the battle the text slows considerably, so that details can be observed, but the reader cannot observe the same in the dynamism of the battle.

In the story, we get a detailed close-up of the battle, but the description and portrait concerning Petőfi is rather unclear. He contemplates during the battle; he is a stranger in the milieu. He excludes himself from the eye of the narrator. This inexplicable attitude impairs the aim of the story: resolving the fate of Petőfi. The narrator is omnipotent in the description of the battle, however he is unreliable concerning the figure of Petőfi. To the narrator, this phantom-Petőfi seems in his depth to be inaccessible.

The detailed description of the battle's dénouement casts an illusion upon certain knowledge. Thereby, the secret of the missing Petőfi can be settled. However, the beginning of the story cancels out this total sense.

> If every angel of the heavens had helped him, he still wouldn't have escaped from the vociferous riders.
> Someone knows only so much about him that he saw him turning off from the road to the cornfield.[4]

[4] "Ha az ég valamennyi angyala segítségére jött volna, akkor sem menekülhet az ordító lovasok elől. / — Valaki még annyit tud róla, hogy látta letérni őt az országútról a törökbúzába…" KRÚDY, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

In this accentuated sentence lies the irony of Lisznyai's story. From the missing poet we can better understand his last day. It is a principle of narratology that the closure of the story, the cathartic end ensures for the unity of text. We can see the well-founded occurrences concerning the ending. This story moves towards only one aim as well, the perspective continually becomes narrower, howeverthe ending is delayed. This delay is not inconsistent with the twists and turns after unlocking a lock. The lack of the existence of death means the story starts out with Petőfi's identity. Following that, the details of the story remains inexplicable.

The embedded story repeats the central sense of the novel. Lisznyai is not in possession of a report that could serve as reference to his story.

Let us add: Lisznyai's story is deeply rooted in the language of the cult. According to Péter Dávidházi a feature of the language of the cult is that the inscrutable and incomprehensible perfect person cannot be subjected to the criticism. Therefore, the only approach to this person can be the admiring identification. In this sense, the mystery is the premise of the cult of the genius poet, which is an intermediate space between life and death. We know that, although the cult of Petőfi — started already during his life — was completely fulfilled through his death under mysterious circumstances in the 1850s. A large part of this was in Jókai, where the cult itself was constituted by the mysterious and subsequent disappearance of the poet. This cult rhetoric increased drastically when Romulus altered the form of the novel's foreword. Although romantic rhetoric in the preface is already hyperbolic and therefore ironic, despite this — or maybe because of it — the cult of the designee's absence of enunciation has been able to demonstrate.

Through two diverging directions, Lisznyai's story takes shape: on the one hand, the unveiling of the existence of death

while, on the other, the maintained mystery is given a frame. The unreliable narrative is not only an absence, but an identification with incomprehensible genius by the form of language.

Pseudo-Petőfi(s)

The Pseudo-Petőfi figures testify the heroes read the world according to their own desires. After 1849, in the cult of poet, the identity of Petőfi is constantly shifting The true identity of Petőfi will only be created through the hero's desires. Meanwhile, only the pseudo-poets appear in the narration. On the one hand, the Petőfi figures appear as constructions of the readers, on the other, they appear as real heroes. However, the existence of the latter depends on the reader's interpretation(s). The heroes read with cult rhetoric and, according to Jauss, we can say that they identify with Petőfi with *admiring identification*,[5] when — according to cult rhetoric — Petőfi's figure is unspeakable. Cult language is spoken by the postmaster and Kálmán Lisznyai as well as by Krúdy in the preface to the novel. However, in today's reading, these figures seem like *antiheroes*. Both pseudo-poets are objects of the two jealous women's desire. The weaver named Bujdosó is a comic figure. He has no point of view and the events of his life are not guided by his will; things just happen to him. He simply exists as a subject of others' s looks. His behaviour — the situation of petty hiding, his inability to love — twists the mythical image of Petőfi, which is based on liberty and love. Bujdosó has no inner point. He is in hiding not only at the level of the events,

[5] Hans Robert JAUSS, *Levels of Identificationof Hero and Audience* = Hans Robert JAUSS, Benjamin BENNETT, Helga BENNETT, *New Literary History*, John Hopkins University Press, 1974, pp. 303–307.

but existentially too. He is resistant to the dialogue as well, because when posed the question of identity, he refuses to give a straight answer.

> Why are you hiding so if there's nothing going on? — asked Mrs. Isztrics
> I'm a pitiable person, that's all. I can't stay in one place. Something drives me forward, as the windmill spins, when the wind starts.[6]

According to Mrs. Isztrics, the true metaphor of Petőfi is based on conviction and authority, while the inner energy of the subject (the love) would provide an unreliable meaning in the text itself (the text is a Bujdosó-figure). In contrast, the „captured" pseudo-poet consoled by the woman sinks into a strange reticence. He contradicts the viewpoint of Mrs. Isztrics. She has a rival named Amanda, who markedly equals the hero of the Jókai novel entitled *A tengerszemű hölgy* [The lady with sea blue eyes]. In both novels the hero is evanescent, created by the different roles he plays. Her Petőfi is an abstract character, the outlaw, who is in truth a medium to the newest romantic role of the woman. Although the outlaw has a voice, in contrast his identity is deeply indeterminate as well. He creates his own cult, and his manner of speech is like a monologue. Therefore, his identity is not developed. Here he merely evokes a tradition of text to Amanda:

> Amanda was day-dreaming for some time.
> God knows what was on her mind during the story of the „outlaw". As if it were yesterday, she heard the tales that were told in the villages towards the Bakony, around the evening fire. These tales

[6] "— Miért bujdosik tehát, ha nincs semmi oka — firtatta Isztricsné. / — Szánalomra méltó ember vagyok, ennyi az egész. Nem tudok egy helyben maradni. Valami hajt előre, amint a szélmalom forog, ha rágyújt a szél." KRÚDY, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

> were of adventurous ladies, dressed in male cloth, who cut their hair short, and wandered in the forest with the outlaws.[7]

The apostrophe is suggestive. By this the outlaw becomes a role, an assumed mask. Not only does the identity of this Petőfi figure become a mask, but his outlaw identity is one too. Like Bujdosó, his existence is merely in hiding. Here the identity finder questions him, but he does not give a straight answer:

> So, you are Petőfi Sándor? — asked Amanda with bated breath. […]
> The brown man quietly shook his head.
> Who I am that no one will ever know!"[8]

Both pseudo-Petőfis are attached to the real poet through texts. The outlaw recites the outlaw poems of Petőfi. In addition, the favourite pastime of Bujdosó is copying the poems of the poet. Both behaviours point to the infinity of repetition and through this demystifies the original artwork and its identity. Namely copying and reciting are turning points: while they are attached to the original artworks, they lack forming power, which could be the condition that establishes their identity. The declamation of the outlaw poems is an ingredient of the outlaw's role. The modern reader sees this appropriation of text ironically. The narrator relies on visual effects, so he mobilizes the reader's own understanding. As a consequence, the voice of the heroes stays in their own relativism. The narrator mobilizes his or her

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[7] "Amanda darab ideig elmerengett. Isten tudná, mi fordult meg az eszében a «betyár» elbeszélése alatt. Mintha tegnap hallotta volna azokat a mesemondásokat, amelyek a Bakony környéki falvakban az esti tűz mellett elhangzottak kalandos kisasszonyokról, akik férfiruhába öltöztek, rövidre vágatták a hajukat, és az erdőt járták a betyárok társaságában." *Ibid.*, p. 289.

[8] "— Ön tehát Petőfi Sándor? — kérdezte visszafojtott lélegzettel Amanda. […] A barna ember csendesen ingatta a fejét: / — Hogy én ki vagyok, azt soha senki sem fogja megtudni!" *Ibid.*, p. 286.

own cultural apparatus (the anachronism of genteel outlaw) in the understanding of the outlaw:

> The young man with flying hair thus spoke and his face ruddied of internal fever. Even in his rags he showed some wear value, gentility, gentlemanlike conduct. No. This hiding man was no ordinary robbing wanderer, whose only desire was to steal the ham on the stack and run away. There was something in this boy of the heros of fantastic dreams, the trappings, the maiden-haired, the dancer, the gentle outlaw, who has chosen this dangerous calling from noble passion and no desire of robbery. Such was the Hungarian Don Quixote of this age.[9]

However, it later turns out, through the understanding of Amanda the gentle outlaw collides with the true outlaw. Here it seems that Amanda is not really interested in Petőfi's identity, but she desires a loving relationship with a real outlaw:

> You are not a real outlaw. I have seen for some time that you are a foolish gentleman, who has been confused in mind by a lot of robber stories, like Count Vay, who rumoured about himself that he had been Jóska Sobri. […] Now take off your fancy dress, I like you more in your old smoky clothes — murmured Amanda, and merely for fun she sent him to the loft for the night alarming him with some clattering carriage she had heard from far away.[10]

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[9] "A lobogó sörényű fiatalember így beszélt, és arca kitüzesedett a belső hévtől. Rongyaiban is mutatott valamely előkelőséget, nemesi származást, úrias magaviseletet. Nem. Ez a rejtőzködő nem volt közönséges portyázó vándorlegény, akinek egyetlen vágya elemelni a sonkát a kéményből és tovairamodni. Volt valami e legényben a fantasztikus álmok hőséből, a cifraszűrös, árvalányhajas, táncos úribetyárból, aki nemes passzióból és nem rablási vágyból választotta a veszedelmes életpályát. Ilyen volt a magyar Don Kihóte ebben a korszakban." *Ibid.*, p. 288.

[10] "Nem is vagy te igazi betyár. Látom én terajtad, hogy darab idő óta, hogy amolyan kótyagos úrféle vagy, akit megzavart eszében a sok

We can see here that the clothes are a mask (this is a typical motif of Krúdy) cancelling out any stable meaning. Also, the voice of the narrator is unreliable, because its resources can be interpreted in several different ways. When Amanda is clothing the outlaw, his picturesqueness is described in the following way:

> But no one would have recognised the outlaw now. Amanda dressed him up so that he could have played at the National Theatre. He was a picturesque figure in his fancy dress. Indeed he would have stood in front of the mirror the whole day trying on his hat with maidenhair.[11]

Like Amanda and the outlaw, the perspectives of Mrs. Isztrics and Bujdosó lose the significance of Petőfi's identity. The commentary by the narrator about the forty-year-old woman who is hungry for love in fact overrides the search for the real Petőfi:

> What was this love? Vanity or passion? But it was rather vanity in this age, when a woman does not want to stay without a lover for another day of her life. Or rather was it passion? We, men never know what circumstance would set on fire a passionate desire in a woman. We have seen soldier-smelling, unwashed men, who were very much loved by distinguished ladies. The finer the everyday life of a woman is, the stronger is her inclination towards extremes

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rablóhistória, mint azt a Vay grófot, aki azt híresztelte magáról, hogy ő volt Sobri Jóska. […] Hát csak vesd le azt a cifra ruhát, jobban tetszel nekem a régi füstösben – mormogta Amanda, és csak úgy mulatságból éjszakára a padlásra kergette a Betyárt, azzal az ijesztgetéssel, hogy szekérzörgést hall a távolból." *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295.

[11] "De bezzeg nem lehetett volna ráismerni a Betyárra, aki most látja. Amanda úgy kiruházta a legényt, hogy a pesti Nemzeti Színházban is felléphetett volna. Festői figura volt cifraszűrében. Bizony egész nap elálldogált volna a tükör előtt, amint árvalányhajas kalapját próbálgatta." *Ibid.*, 293.

> on certain days. ,. […] Mrs. Isztrics was also convinced that her Bujdosó was the most sophisticated speaking man. Such is a woman, if she loses her mind![12]

We can see here that not only the Bujdosó figure, but also the relationship with the woman is ironic. With the man as the object of desire, he gains his existence as an inmate. Following this thought, the woman's conduct is revealed as ironic, namely with the intent to shape some personality from the little, foolish figure.

Due to the dispersion of the existing Petőfi-image the novel's title receives particular importance. We know that the title of a text, as the text marker, makes contact with the whole text, as this first piece of information has an essential feature in the course of interpretation. The prefix of Pseudo-Petőfi's as a title includes dispersion and indefinability. However, the *Petőfi* is astoundingly in singular form, because it will also bring back the endpoint. In the title the unique proper noun relates to the dispersion indicator *pseudo* prefix. The „correct", irony-free title in this case could be: Pseudo-Petőfi(s). The title in this sense mutes all ultimate meaning, because the unity has been assigned to the dispersion. Pointing to the Petőfi figure can be revealed only in misinterpretation, as an infinite series of

[12] "Mi volt ez a szerelem? Hiúság vagy szenvedély? De inkább hiúság ebben a korban, amikor egy asszony nem akar már pár nélkül maradni egy napig sem életében. Vagy talán szenvedély? Mi, férfiak, sohasem tudhatjuk, hogy mi az a körülmény, amely egy asszonyban lángra lobbantja a szenvedélyes vágyat. Láttunk már bakaszagú, mosdatlan férfiakat, akiket nagyon szerettek előkelő asszonyságok. Minél finomabb egy nőnek a mindennapi élete, annál inkább hajlik néhanapján az extravaganciák felé. […] (Isztricsné arról is meg volt győződve, hogy az ő Bujdosója a legválasztékosabb beszédű férfi. Ilyen az asszony, ha elveszti az eszét.)" *Ibid.*, p. 303.

pseudo poets. Petőfi in the novel is available only as a Pseudo-Petőfi.

In closing we can say, on the basis of interpretation, desire can be a productive force. The whisper, the rumour, is the ultimate evidence that reveals the deficit as the story begins. The direct voice of the narrator is deeply mediated: he can only engage in community knowledge, while his self-knowledge is limited. He sees the heroes' situations in a mythical way. The heroes are typical, they stand within the viewpoint of „everyone", and do not have a single face or personality. They live on their own desire and obsession.

However, for the readers of the novel, a kind of duality may be observed. Following the Petőfi searcher aspect (namely the heroes of the novel), we move towards the lack of identity. But the reader also sees what the actors do not see: the humour in the search, and the swindling by pseudo poets. Not only does exterior knowledge of the historical novel help in this, but so too does the narrative solutions of the novel. The serious story unfolds as a comic story.

Following the aspects of the narrative, the reader's aspect is abducted too. The reader's point of view is also split. When the stylization rounds into irony, our reading gets split too. That stop has only one meaning: the missing or evasive identity of Petőfi. The reader knows more than the actors; however, it is more of a demotion of knowledge. Instead of happily identifying with the stylization, the reader is involved in a reflective game of irony. The world of actors based on stylization is parodistic to reader, because the reader *sees* the unreachability. This optical distance, or perspective, is the image of meaning, a staging of the story revealing the border of the story as well. A definitive meaning does not exist, only one that opens multiple perspectives. There is an ironic mirror that reflects each meaning as a mirror and reflected image simultaneously.

György Tverdota

The Book of Courting. Gyula Krúdy: *The Seven Owls*

At the Krúdy Conference organized by INALCO[1] in Paris half a year ago, I suggested that we reread one of Krúdy's most exceptional novels, *Hét Bagoly* [The Seven Owls], with a code borrowed from Flaubert's *Sentimental Education*. By doing so we can benefit from the notions and approaches that were worked out by Pierre Bourdieu in his analysis of Flaubert's novels in his book *The Rules of Art*.[2] This way of decoding is possible due to the fact that Bourdieu described the evolution of modernity's literary field by following plot, character depiction, and the setting of atmosphere as well as the reconstruction of the context in Flaubert's novel. If we read *The Seven Owls* well, it will provide us with a similar picture set up with the deep poetic truth of the cross section of Hungarian literature, which was in the midst of being transformed at the turn of the 19th and the 20th century, i.e., the early stages of Hungarian literary modernity. Leonóra, one of the mistresses

[1] INALCO = Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales

[2] Pierre BOURDIEU, *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Seuil, Paris, 1992.

of the young writer in the novel, directly specifies the key phrase by telling Józsiás Rimbaud's 'command': "You must be modern otherwise you will be left on the road."[3] The picture of shaping modernity implies much more than seeing only "the chronicle of the vanishing past", "the chronicler's narrative of the literary life", the realization of "a sort of realistic poetics" in Krúdy's novel.[4]

It would be an easy but false resolution if we recognized the Hungarian Frédéric Moreau in Józsiás and out of his mistresses we traced Leonóra to Madame Arnoux, Zsófia to Madame Dambreuse, and Áldáska for example to Rosanette. The parallel features cannot be found in the depiction of characters, the plot, or the position of the characters. It is quite likely that Krúdy did not read or know of Flaubert's novel. Their ideas of style — Flaubert's dispassionate style and Krúdy's nostalgic-ironic toned, romantic writing — are essentially very far from each other. The realistic register of *The Sentimental Education* and the narrative of *The Seven Owls*, which applies elements of the fantastic, even if playfully, make the two novel worlds distinct from each other.

The analogy should be revealed from deeper layers. Both novels can be seen as encyclopedias of each artist, each writer's way of life. In a number of variants, the figure of the

[3] Gyula KRÚDY: *Hét Bagoly* = Gy.K., *Nyolc regény*, [The Seven Owls= Eight novels], Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1975, p. 845. Hereafter I will refer to this edition with brakected page numbers.

[4] István FRIED, *Szomjas Gusztáv hagyatéka* [Gusztáv Szomjas' Heritage] = I.F., *Szomjas Gusztáv hagyatéka. Elbeszélés, elbeszélő, téridő Krúdy Gyula műveiben* [Gusztáv Szomjas' Heritage. Narration, narrator, spacetime in Gyula Krúdy's works], Palatinus Kiadó, Budapest, 2006, 140; Tibor GINTLI, *Olvasás és önértelmezés* [Reading and self-interpretation] = T.G., *„Valaki van, aki nincs". Személyiségelbeszélés és identitás Krúdy Gyula regényeiben* ["There is someone who does not exist". Personality, narration, and identity in Gyula Krúdy's novels], Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 2005, pp. 39–40.

intellectual living on writing, the competition of writers, their relationship to their own 'products,' their readers, publishers and editors, are depicted. The societal status of the writer and the development of the writer's fate is revealed in these different variants. Neither Flaubert nor Krúdy have proved to be negligent chroniclers; both of them enlighten the deep layers of this microworld, reveal its embarrassing, bitter secrets, the fallibilities or self-torturing nature of the artist. Both writers present the self-assertive strategies, successes, and failures of the literary characters of their specific age. In the course of this we are given insight into the world of the press, the operation of the institutions who have a role in the artistic market. The two novels present the artistic fields of two cultural centres (Paris and Budapest) becoming more autonomous. In his book, Bourdieu draws a regular literary-artistic topography by using the map of contemporary Paris and follows his characters' movements to the typical spots of the intellectual and market life of the age.[5] On the basis of Krúdy's novel we could also outline Józsiás' and Guszti Szomjas' routes, places which are realistic and symbolic at the same time: editorial and publishing offices, small pubs, places where writers congregate, the possible and real spots of establishing relationships, the witnesses of these strategic steps, sometimes successful, failed, or possibly not taken.

The secret of the parallels between the two novels, I believe, is fairly simple. There is nothing extraordinary in Flaubert's challenge. In *The Sentimental Education* a key figure of the new trend in art in the late nineteenth century assesses the results, failures, possibilities and deadlocks of the developing painting and literary modernity by looking back at the major moments of the trend's birth and shaping, the typical attitudes of those participating in it and the

[5] BOURDIEU, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

characteristics of the institutions operating the process. There are several inventories and assessments in literature set up by artists who took part in the redevelopment of literature, the development of modernity. It is sufficient here to refer to two Hungarian texts, Babits' *Halálfiai* [Sons of Death] and Margit Kaffka's novel *Állomások* [Stations], both of which stand nearer to Flaubert's model than to Krúdy's book. Therefore both *The Sentimental Education* and *The Seven Owls* can be considered as retrospective self-reflections of an age written in novel form.

The point of comparison is not only to bring to conclusion the similarities I have outlined. What makes *The Seven Owls* so interesting is howKrúdy realizes that his programme has so much common with Flaubert's in a very inventive way but nonetheless differs from his code. Let us first consider the common point referred to at the beginning of my presentation. Both *The Sentimental Education* and *The Seven Owls* is *The Book of Courting* considering their genre. The title (*The Book of Courting*) is originally the name of Józsiás' book, a love advisor, just being prepared which he offers for the Publisher Kálmán Virág and His Wife in Józsefváros, and a chapter of which he reads out to a colleague of the publisher's, Mr Szerelemvölgyi and his daughter, Áldáska, while eating beef soup in Mr Klein's restaurant. And we can also witness this reading out.[6]

This is the remarkable text in text phenomenon that theorists call mise en abyme. *The Book of Courting* is a book within a book that is a microcosm of the macrocosm, precisely *The Seven Owls*. However, the short story offered to Vadnai, the chief editor of Fővárosi Lapok (Metropolitan News), is also

[6] The main character refers to his writing under preparation with the title *Udvarlók könyve* [Book of Beaux] but accepts Mr Szerelemvölgyi's version for the title: *Az udvarlás könyve* [The Book of Courting]. KRÚDY, *op. cit.*, p. 787.

a self-reflection in which the burlesque-like fracas of Józsiás' two mistresses in P street not long before it is elaborated, i.e., when Zsófia, "the red fox" just making her tryst with Józsiás, is forced to jump out of the window to run away from the furious "fat lady", Leonóra. Finally, the big love confession is again a text within a text that Józsiás makes to the white paper when he falls in love with Áldáska.[7] In the self-reflecting parts, the omnipotent third-person narrator usually gives the floor first to the subordinate omnipotent of love advice, then to the confessing first-person narrator. The object of courting is naturally philandering, conquering women, love, sometimes rather intensive eroticism. While the title *The Book of Courting* proves the reason for the title of my presentation, it does not however confine the analysis to the text written by Józsiás, for it can be extended to the whole novel. It is even more evident when we read of the excursion of Józsiás and Zsófia in Svábhegy in the chapter entitled The "*Book of Courting*" (*continuation*), or later about the tobogganing of Józsiás and Leonóra in Népliget in The New Capter of "*The Book of Courting*". Thus an equal sign is placed between the book of Józsiás (the part) and Krúdy's book (the whole).

Moreover, these chapters elaborating the theme of love rather thoroughly focus no less on the issues of literature and the writer's career, thus giving another, extended meaning to courting. Love and literature are two life contents that can only exist in close correlation in Krúdy's novels. The thesis being formulated on the part of the author is that "You cannot create everlasting and great things without love" — however, heimmediately adds that women patrons, muses, and female

[7] *Tizenharmadik fejezet. Józsiás feljegyzéseiből* [Chapter Thirteen. Józsiás' Notes]. *Ibid.,* pp. 853–856.

readers benefit as well: "women need the support of poets, the flaming love of poets."[8]

Literature could be a successful rival even of love: "Józsiás like a child of his age suffered severely from love, but he suffered even more from literature. Behind the rime covered windows in the streets of the inner town he did not only imagine lovers but also readers".[9] Then the protagonist exclaims in reported speech as follows: "Oh, these men whose names kiss with the printer's ink every day do not know what tormenting thirst suffer those who wish the printer's ink but do not enjoy it."[10] But so do other writers feel too, and female writers are no exception either. "Oh, I wish I could be famous!"[11] — sighs Mariska Simli for example, the "inky fingered" cassock wearing, grubby lady writer Like Frédéric Moreau, Józsiás is overfond of literature too. He seizes upon the white paper with yearning passion; he looks distressed when his name appears in a press publication under some text written by him.

Nothing is more natural than his courting the omnipotent, often arrogant and dogmatizing editors with the same passion as courting pretty young girls or beautiful women like the spoilt wife of the corn-merchant or that of the wine-merchant. When hurrying to the editor's office he even forgets

[8] "Nem lehet szerelem nélkül maradandó és becses dolgokat alkotni." „az asszonyoknak szükségük van a költők támogatására, a költő lángoló szerelmére" *Ibid.,* p. 764.

[9] „Józsiás, mint korának gyermeke: komolyan szenvedett a szerelem miatt, de még jobban az irodalom miatt. A jégvirágos ablakok mögött a belvárosi utcákon nemcsak szerelmeseket sejtett, hanem olvasókat is."

[10] „Ó, ezek a férfiak, akinek neve mindennap csókolódzik a nyomdafestékkel, nem tudják, hogy milyen gyötrelmes szomjúság ég azokban, akik a nyomdafestéket óhajtják, de nem élvezhetik." *Ibid.,* pp. 770-771.

[11] „Ah, be szeretnék híres lenni!" *Ibid.,* p. 775.

about the ladies patronizing him too: "For the moment he forgot Leonóra and Zsófia completely, he could only think of the sarcastic editor, Mr Vadnai, how could he woo the goodwill of this gentleman who wore otter fur cap?"[12] The chapter of the sledging in Népliget as a whole is about the question — most of all formulated by Leonóra's practical suggestions — of how a writer can make a career, legitimate or illegitimate, through even more effective ways that ensure the advancement of a career besides having writing skills, or even if lacking them. This cultural-sociological phenomenon cannot be presented in a more expressive way, which is called "illusion" and defined by Bourdieu as the belief in the meaning of a game, the interest in participating in the game, or the commitment to the game, where game means a competition for successes to be gained in the arts field.[13] This illusion guides the protagonist's behaviour in the course of the plot as much as love, passion, and the illusion of women's devotion.

The title of the book, *The Seven Owls*, is named after a house in the inner city of Pest, and the text contains many remarkable personal and place names, the names of streets, squares, houses, inns, restaurants, pubs, cafés and institutions. If we do not accept the shallow explanation as to whyKrúdy calls off a list of names, evokes personal souvenirs condensed into names, it is worth thinking over the reasons for this lavish, overwhelming, almost maniacal name accumulation compared to Flaubert's functional use of names, which literary critics like Tibor Gintli have written instructive commentaries

[12] „Leonórát és Zsófiát e percben teljesen elfelejtette, csupán a szarkasztikus Vadnai szerkesztő úrra gondolt, hogyan lehetne kegyességét e vidrasapkás férfiúnak megnyerni?" *Ibid.*, p. 775.

[13] With special regard to sub-chapters entitled *L'illusio et l'œuvre d'art comme fétiche, and Da Capo. L'illusion et l'illusio, respectively.* BOURDIEU, *op. cit.*, pp. 373–378, 535–541.

on with reference to other works.[14] The etymology of names in *The Seven Owls* is worth a more thorough analysis, however, here I will only deal briefly with references that are related to my topic, i.e., the poetic depiction of the literary field.

The network of names denotes a circle of literature, press, people living on writing and other persons, places, institutions being in relationship with them. The density of this network is appropriate for making this cultural field familiar to the reader, in which we occasionally run into someone recognisable. It also provides us with the illusion of being an insider. The network populates the second nature of the renewing metropolis expanding at scary speed with reference points that can seemingly be addressed; however, one cannot easily expect to receive an answer from them. The net helps in finding the way in the jungle of the literary world of the city. It is nevertheless worth differentiating the status of the names. There are reference names that were telling names in those days too and are still surrounded by a broad and rich space of cultural connotation. Consider Zsigmond Kemény, Jókai, Mikszáth, Pál Gyulai, Reviczky or Károly Eötvös, Jenő Rákosi and Ferenc Herczeg. There are names that are considered to refer to real persons; nevertheless, only the researcher of the period has a clearer picture of them. The figures of Kornél Ábrányi, Károly Vadnai, and Gusztáv Lauka are more and more overshadowed. And then we arrive to an area where today's reader cannot decide if the writer's names refer to real or fictitious persons. Has Bucsánszky's *Álmoskönyv* (Book of Dreams) ever existed in reality? Who could Mr Csinosi be, or porter Steccz? Did Mr Hubli really have a hairdresser's saloon at the Barátok square? Could Homicsko draw Guszti Szomjas? In every way whatsoever,

[14] GINTLI, *op. cit.*, with special regard to pp. 26–36.

this cavalcade of names makes the reader feel dizzy; they detain us in a magic way in the world of the novel.

The way the novel treats the personal and geographical names is in close connection to the significant diversion from Flaubert in terms of his choice of theme and consequently his perspective. The Hungarian writer proceeds as if Flaubert had not chosen for the protagonist the young Frédéric stepping into life with a relatively significant capital and fitting into civilian society with the chances of rising but being rather a beginner with a more peripheral status from his environment, like Dussardier. Or as if Bourdieu had not reconstructed modernity's shaping field related to Flaubert, Baudelaire, and Manet but as if he had investigated the role of Murger, Champfleury and the contemporary vagabond world in this process.[15] Despite being 30, Józsiás is not only considered a beginner, moreover, as a journalist on the periphery, his status is still in question, just as is his status as a writer whose career is developing. He has an insight into the world of the insiders, but he still has successes in the field of applied literature only for the time being. Not speaking of his voluntary adjutant, Guszti Szomjas, the attorney-at-law who due to his being late can never be up to date and as he movs on the periphery, cannot even hope to enter the highly esteemed guild of writers someday.

As a consequence of the topic choice, the population making its living on producing, editing, and publishing popular, applied literature, calendars, books of dreams, love correspondents and works which teach the tricks of courting, get closer to later readers as the real names become obscure as

[15] Evidently the artists enumerated above can be found in Bourdieu's description, however, they play only a marginal role in the course of the reconstruction of the literary field. On Murger, cf. BOURDIEU, *op.cit*, pp. 127–128., on Champfleury, *Ibid*. pp. 434–435.

do the fictitious ones that refer to them. Krúdy realizes an inherent exoticism in them, a perspective which the turn of the century considered shallow from a literary point of view, even beside the presence of Jókai and Mikszáth, though implying the promise of the future, could be made interesting for post-World War I readers.

Setting up the circle of this population starts with resignation. We would look in vain for the discussion of artistic problems in Krúdy's novels that are essential to Flaubert's novel and make Kafka's *Stations* or Babits' *Halálfiai* [Sons of Death] so heavy. In this population the main issue is not establishing an *ars poetica*, or notions to be committed to, but the way of getting an advance payment, which restaurant you can have a cheaper meal, or where you can purchase good wine at a reasonable price. The characters draw more reliable conclusions about each other based upon what tie somebody is wearing or in what state his shoes are than on the literary solutions he applies. In terms of the criteria of life knowledge, the orientation in the world of pubs and cafés, or the recognition of editors' weaknesses, play a not insignificant role. Krúdy fully benefitted from the aspect of the writer's existence that is called habitus that is analysed so deeply by Bourdieu, and in this the vagabond world as the depicted population is absolutely appropriate to him.[16]

The depiction of this population does not necessitate writing tools that are required in the influential and official world of societies, publishers, elegant magazines, casinos, theatrical premieres and exhibition openings. It is not worth

[16] For the analysis of the Habitus, see the chapters entitled *L'habitus et les possibles* and *La dialectique des positions et des dispositions*. *Ibid.,* pp. 429–439. However, the interpretation of the notion is even more precise in the chapter entitled *Habitus et incorporation* (*Ibid.,* pp. 200–205.) in Pierre BOURDIEU, *Méditations pascaliennes*, Seuil, Paris, 1997.

wasting oil paint on associates of the book of dreams' publisher in Józsefváros, for them a pen-sketch or a pencil-sketch is sufficient enough. Instead of large canvases, little croquis. And if a croquis is used it is to simplify the figure, moreover to show him in a grotesque way, deform him into a caricature, and Krúdy does not only know its mocking modality but also practices its affectionate aspect as well in the case of the previously mentioned Mariska Simli.

> A maned, gray-headed, absent-minded looking man was wiping a pen in his hair. He had eyes with red circles around them as if he had spent his time crying every night. His face showed extreme tiredness as if he had had to do heavy physical work for each wrinkle he managed to put on his face.[17]

This is a description of Mr Szerelemvölgyi, Áldáska's father. However, the real benefit of this choice on the writer's part is the perspective thus attained. Everything correlates to everything. Although Mr Szerelemvölgyi earns his daily veal portion by editing love correspondences, he translates Homer in secret and thus steals into the highest intellectual regions as well. Krúdy also knows this secret path. He shows the whole literary field from the lower register. The literary world is shown from below with Jókai placed on the top of the pyramid and about whom we learn that he was walking in the world with a gently bowed head and his novels were not written by him but mostly by Petrinyi. And here we may refer again to the issue of the peculiar usage of names in the novel. On the basis of the names themselves we may compile a boring glossary only. So that they act magically there is no

[17] "[E]gy sörényes, ősz, szórakozott képű férfi törölgette a tollat hajába. Vereskarikás szemei voltak, mintha éjjel keserves sírással töltötte volna idejét. Arca rendkívüli fáradtságot fejezett ki, mintha mindenegyes ráncért, amelyet sikerült arcára felrakni: súlyos testi munkát kellett volna végeznie. " KRÚDY, *op. cit.*, p. 782.

need of writing long pages for they are either vagabonds or celebrities as seen by vagabonds, therefore it is enough to depict them in a foreshortened manner. In most of the cases the writer only needs to attach a well-chosen constant attribute to them or to complete them with a clause: Mr Imrey, the spectacled archivist in the land administration institute who would also write poems under the name of Árpád Zempléni", "he can cough quite heavily like Gereben Vas", "Béla Tóth …stammers because he drinks a spate of alcohol", "the lion-faced Kornél Ábrányi junior", "the professor-like Pál Balogh", etc. *The Seven Owls* sometimes has the air of a bestiarium.[18]

The most precious specie of this animal lexicon is Guszti Szomjas, whose name was inserted by István Fried into his book with good sense.[19] Moreover, we may find relatives for him in the Hungarian anecdotes in world literature too; however, such a character would certainly be unimaginable in *The Sentimantal Education*. The existence of his character essentially diverts the way Krúdy shows the infancy of the Hungarian literary modernity from Flaubert's model. Frédéric Moreau's story, even if it lacks continuities, elaborates a longer process. From Józsiás' life, however, we only learn of some episodes from a couple of months, a few events in the writer's life. Either story is of diachronic nature, while the other is of synchronic nature giving a cross-section, a still picture. A motion is brought into this still picture by Guszti Szomjas' turning up. He is a witness of old age in terms of his souvenirs, taste, and mentality, of the coronation of Franz Joseph, or essentially of the age of the Austro-Hungarian

[18] „Imrey úr, a földhitelintézetbeli pápaszemes levéltáros, aki Zempléni Árpád név alatt verseket is szokott írni"; „derekasan tud köhögni, akárcsak Vas Gereben"; „Tóth Béla… azért dadog, mert temérdek alkoholt fogyaszt"; „az oroszlánképű ifjabb Ábrányi Kornél"; „a professzoros Balogh Pál" *Ibid.,* p. 725, 745, 772, 801.

[19] FRIED, *op. cit*.

Compromise. The events, processes, institutions and behaviour of the literary present take shape in the sharp backlight and contrast of the period of an earlier generation, and most of all they sometimes receive two equal, sometimes two contradicting or interfering evaluations: the one of Józsiás and that of Guszti. There are sometimes coincidences in their assessment of a situation. Therefore *The Seven Owls* cannot be considered a chronicle at all, not even to the extent of *The Sentimental Education* because competing subjective visions of the turn of the century are shown and not an indisputable story created with an objective claim.

Furthermore, we will apply an unacceptably simplifying scheme if we interpret the endless reflexions on literature only as the exchange of views between the protagonist and a helpful but fussy, old country man. By evoking the affectionate or grouchy quarrels of an anecdotic figure and a young man of literary ambitions, Krúdy refers to a more essential and closer relationship between the two men, which in a fairly misleading way, is only suggested and appears here and there, a relationship that can be depicted with a transition to phantasticism, though ironic. Who would not associate them with famous couples of figures from Hungarian or world literature: Don Quijote and Sancho Pansa, Csongor and Balga, Toldi and Bence, Don Juan and Leporello? These might be rather distant associations. Much closer associations may be the Mikszáth heroes who have to face with the conditions of the age of dualism after waking up from an earlier age, or those who stubbornly stick to the habits of a previous historical period proving to be severely anachronistic in the present age. “I would like if Mr Fonnyadi sometimes shouted below the window: Donauwasser! Like the water sellers did in

the old Pest"[20] — Guszti Szomjassays his wish to his landlord and moves into the Seven Owls.

The analysis of the relationship between Józsiás and the notary of Peleske coming to life provides additional surprises! The figure of Guszti Szomjas steps into the world of fantasticism at several points, gripping persons who got in touch with him, even Mrs Fonnyadi, in whom he seems to recognize the counterpart of Flóra, the old man's love of his youth. This Doppelgänger-role is perhaps the most important among the roles of the old man wearing an otter cap and bobcat furcoat, and by playing it he jostles to attain the position of the protagonist, similar to Hoffmann's Zinober or Dostoievski's Goliadkin, and preys on Józsiás. The "old gib" substitutes for the young writer even with his three mistresses, at least to satisfy his appetite, as he may not be able to provide love services. The mingling of the two characters who are balancing on the edge of reality and fantasy is not only interesting for its own sake but also because it necessitates a more elaborate analysis investigating the kaleidoscope-like, time-horizon changing method of depicting the literary field experienced by them, which is so radically different from the model Flaubert applied. As the mutual relationship of Guszti Szomjas and Józsiás develops, the two literary periods are also becoming the duplicates of each other, which the two characters represent by defending their own period, making a judgement on the other's behalf and reflecting their own in the other.

With this fairly long analysis, I arrived at the beginning of my major suggestions on the novel. My statement sounds like a closing joke, and it could even be one, however, it

[20] „Szeretném, ha Fonnyadi úr néha az ablak alatt elkiáltná magát: Donauwasser! Amint a régi Pesten kiáltották a vízárusok." KRÚDY, *op.cit.,* p. 738.

should be taken more seriously. I think that in *The Seven Owls* Krúdy presents us a world heading for the past from the long ago past and then for the present from the past. However, he surrounded this cosiness with frightening, rigorous, and freezing strangeness. I would have really liked to speak about the edge that splits the worlds of cosiness and strangeness from one another. The meeting points of these two worlds, the places without locations in the novel can be precisely described topographically, too. Facing the emptiness already appears during the excursion Józsiás and Zsófia have in the Svábhegy at the extinct villa of Zsigmond Kemény, at the house of the writer who was deranged, abandoned, and approaching death. We face with emptiness in a building in the very centre of the town, in the Anatomical Institute, in the basement of which the bodies of the self-murderers are lined up in containers, the lounge of which is a pub called The Grey Arabian Horse, the drinking place of the catafalque drivers. The classical place for the alienation of cosiness is the abandoned Margaret Island in winter. The novel's most astonishing symbol however is a par excellence place without a specific location, the ice on the River Danube with its arctic shapes and sculptures of desolateness. The peak point of the symbol is the sexual intercourse of the lovers on the ice floating into the emptiness. Krúdy even takes care of invalidates the immense symbol expressing the meaningless emptiness of human life and the unity of love and death, closing it into banality by showing Zsófia saved from the captivity of ice, trying to keep her incognito. The first thing she does after being saved is to try to preserve appearances. I hope that I will have the opportunity to write about Krúdy's type of atopia, the analogue of which we cannot find even in Flaubert's novel, in another essay.

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