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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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„THE REAL POET BEGINS WHERE IT DIFFERS”
YOUNG LYRICAL ANTHOLOGIES IN THE KÁDÁR ERA

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I. Initial suppositions and theoretical foundation of the paper

The dissertation, which examines young lyrical anthologies in the relational system of the Kádár era, seeks to utilize the insights of several different disciplines and theoretical approaches. This includes literary history, literary sociology, history, sociology of art, network theory and cultural anthropology. Anthology, as a type of publication, a collection of texts, an act of representation, is rarely in the focus of literary research, and the young (lyrical or prose) anthologies also don't have the attention they deserve. Yet this tradition is very wide, it runs through the entire Hungarian literary modernity, and till nowadays it emerges as a canonization factor or rather an experiment. The end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies was a distinguished point in the history of young anthologies, as in a short time several significant collections of this kind were published, both artificially created and organically organized.

Applying Pierre Bourdieu's field theory to the relations of the Kádár era, it can be said that the field of power exercises complete control over the field of art and literature. Thus, young authors, who appeared en masse with an explosion never seen in these years (regardless of sociological factors) in their natural quest to break out of their marginalism in the sociological sense of literature (András Lengyel), evidently had to fight not only and primarily generational struggles. Their movements automatically articulated against the field of power, finding themselves facing power. Also they cannot be thought of as a unified generation in a biological, cultural or social sense (Károly Mannheim, Károly Veress, Tibor Valuch).

The paper also describes the conditions of Kádár's Hungary at that time, with the ambiguous bourgeoisie (Rainer M. János), the foreign and domestic policy (Melinda Kalmár), which is always in connection with the Soviet power. The years the paper focuses on (1968 and 1969) represent the time of the Hungarian new economic mechanism and the crisis in Czechoslovakia, at the same time the illusion of the possibility of some kind of „own way” for a country in the Soviet sphere of interest – and its utter hopelessness. The dissertation deals with the possibilities beyond literary sociology and the study of literary history, which can be called traditional, such as the applicability of network theory in literary studies (Albert-László Barabási, Zoltán Németh) and the possibility of a specific literary-cultural anthropological direction (Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Arnold Van Gennep, Earl Babbie), which sees the authors as informants and whose field is the imaginary literary space, keeping the issue of cultural memory (Jan Assmann, Paul Ricoeur) in mind.

II. Theses and chapters of the paper

The first chapter (1) collects the papers on anthology as a book type and shows the possibility of an anthology history, seeking to clarify basics and definitions, as well as various aspects of anthology reading and anthology as a literary problem. The second chapter (2.) attempts to outline the tradition of young, early-career anthologies from the beginnings (19th century) to the present day, without claiming to be exhaustive, covering relevant collections considered more important. Maybe we can say that this is a hidden tradition of Hungarian literature, a phenomenon that emerges through decades, when the creators at the beginning of their careers appear “in a bouquet” in groups. Such organizations can range from selections of real groups, literary societies, to reviews following the work of an editor, and volumes presenting the results of tenders to collections with a kind of valve function overseen by the authorities. The anthology of *Bokréta*, the *Holnap*, the *Jóság* with Miklós Radnóti, *Uj Anthologia* edited by Babits, *Négy nemzedék* of István Sötér after World War II, then *Emberavatás*, *15 fiatal költő 105 verse* and *Tűztánc*, and so on, was discussed. Later *Ver(s)ziók* to the *Lélegzet* Anthology and *Köztéri mulatság* to the *Telep* Anthology. The collection of young anthologies - a list of which can be found at the end of the dissertation, in a separate subchapter of the bibliography - although it has strived for completeness, it can hardly be, more and more volumes can always emerge from the past. It is a large-scale and not negligible tradition.

In the third chapter (3.), the Hungarian literary field of the sixties and seventies is outlined in the footsteps of Pierre Bourdieu. It is characterized by the complete domination of the power-political field over the art-literary and economic field, which is not only a development of the Kádár era, and especially not only of the sixties and seventies. The new economic mechanism, the ambiguous (small) bourgeoisification, the youth problem, the number of new entrants in the literary field must be taken into account. In terms of attitudes, the impact of 1968, in particular the events in Prague and Hungarian participation in it, and the subsequent complete disillusionment cannot be underestimated. Following the historical remarks (3.1) and a brief analysis of an agent report revealed in the work of Tamás Szőnyei (3.2), the field reconstruction attempt (3.4) follows the book appearances, the publisher structure, the journal structure and the deaths (3.3). Marginality as a sociological concept of literature is then briefly discussed (3.5), in which case it is a situation-indicating concept, as in the case of the dilettante also used following András

Lengyel. The career starters are necessarily in a marginal position, and sometimes in a dilettante position. Moreover, in the literary-art field dominated by the power-political field, in order to break out of this situation, which is unique to all graduates, as their natural endeavor and try to become mainstream actors, they had to move forward not only in the structure of the literary field. They found themselves opposed to the canonization steps, but also to the power in their endeavor in this direction - since the management of literature and the management of power or politics did not separate in the period under study. In modern Hungarian literature, power field introduced a natural, intermediate level between the canonization steps, such as publications in reviews and the first volume, and these were the central anthologies of Kádárism. The third chapter also deals with the sociology of literature (3.6) as an approach and problem, the possibilities of examining the connections between literature and society (3.6.1). It also seeks to take into account the transformation of the discipline (3.6.2), its present and its future, both in terms of the consequences, data (3.6.3) and further possibilities (3.6.4).

The fourth chapter (4) deals with the concept of generationality. According to Károly Mannheim and Károly Veress, the authors of the anthologies of the two years examined can not be called a unified generation, and not only on the basis of their age, biological generation differences, but also on the basis of their cultural, social and other attributes. The group of Kilencek („The Nine”) as a narrow, informal group should be treated as a unified but much smaller unit formed within the (author) mass than as representatives of the generation, and it would be a serious mistake to fully identify them with the generation under study. Also - following Tibor Valuch - the sociology of anthologies consisted of at least three generations in a sociological sense.

Between 1968 and 1969, two central anthologies and an independent group anthology were published, *Első Ének (First Song)* (1968), *Költők egymás közt (Poets Among Each Other)* (1969), and *Elérhetetlen föld (Inaccessible Land)* (1969). All three books are examined in detail, the circumstances of their creation, their corpus, their reception, and their afterlife. The authors are analyzed too, with little aesthetic judgment of the texts of the career starters in the books, more like their further careers, successes or disappearances, their past and present position in the literary field, their reasons and, if available, their memories.

The fifth chapter discusses the collection entitled *Első Ének (The First Song)* (5.) The chapter first deals with the creation of the anthology (5.1) and then with its specific corpus and authors (5.2). It also briefly covers the occupational data of poets and the issue of amateurism / dilettantism (5.3). András Mezei, Gábor Garai and István Kormos were the editors of the

anthology, which featured many authors with few texts. Aesthetically, it was the poorest collection of the three, despite the fact that it featured authors such as Dezső Tandori, Zsuzsa Takács or Tibor Hajas. Its reception (5.4) revolved around a debate sparked by Lajos Varga, which attacked the authors of the collection with a departure from Hungarian affairs, dilettantism and worldview errors, almost collectively condemning them, and although it was not a unified grouping, sharply opposed to with „The Nine’s” absent from the First Songs. In the debate, no one sided with Varga, and the history of inclusion, mixed with the waves of the dispute, ultimately assessed the collection positively overall, although more far-reaching problems have already been identified (lack of volumes, lack of reviews etc.). The books afterlife is short (5.5), it is a little-known, rarely-mentioned book.

The sixth chapter (6.) discusses the notable *Új Írás (New Writing)* Questionnaire (6.1) in 1969, which went around and thematized the problems of young literature, first for the well-known authors of contemporary literature (6.1.1) and then for young writers and poets (6.1.2) and finally with the answers of the invited critics (6.1.3) to various circular questions. The least emphasis was placed on the responses of the newcomers, they were framed by older peers and critics who relentlessly and discouragingly published the lessons of the debate. The problem (minority; lack of a publication forum, an independent journal; the “new wave”, etc.) was not solved by the corrupt meeting in Lillafüred (6.2), and it persisted until the end of the system, although the anthology policy crashed in the 1980s.: anthologies of groups and creative circles may have appeared in the JAK booklets, and the forced central collections have become completely uninterested. The last subchapter explores the further development of the problem of young literature, detailing a few emblematic texts, such as Ákos Szilágyi’s (6.3).

The seventh chapter deals in detail with the anthology (7.), its creation (7.1), corpus and authors (7.2) entitled *Költők egymás közt (Poets Among Each Other)*, which was the first in the representative series of the Szépirodalmi Publishing House, and the most aesthetically rich selection, with authors like György Petri, Zsuzsa Takács or Imre Oravecz. The contemporary reception (7.3) appreciated Zsuzsa Beney the most. In terms of further career paths, it is one of the most successful collections, with only three of its 15 poets gone from the field. According to the structure characteristic of the volume, a highly respected author introduced the one at the beginning of his career, followed by a “small volume” poem, and finally the self-confession of the young author. It also remained the structure of the other two “sister anthologies” (*A magunk kenyerén - On Our Own Bread; Ne mondj le semmiről - Don't Give Up On Anything*), which, however, had little to do with an editorial concept, keeping in mind the whims of the alphabetical order. After an abundant but rather tedious reception, the afterlife (7.4) was much

more successful: it is a well-known collection, mostly due to the authors who built a serious career.

After years of troubles, the poets published the anthology of „The Nine” called *Elérhetetlen föld (Inaccessible Land)* one year later, which is discussed in Chapter Eight (8). In the midst of the twists and turns of power, it could only see the light of day with the help of a man of power (8.1). Poetically, it is the least diverse collection, whose members formed a real group (8.2). After a rather extreme reception (8.3), the cornerstone of the poetic identity of the group members remained that they were members of the Nine. From time to time, new anthologies were published, and virtually all of them remained on the field — even if not all members managed to break out of marginality in the field of literature (8.4).

The dissertation concludes with two exploratory chapters. The ninth (9th) briefly revolves around the problem of network theory, addressing, among other things, the principle of “the rich will get richer” or the problem of the success of real groups. It takes into account further perspectives of the topic, possible further thoughts and possibilities with a network theory approach (9.1) with a couple of visualization experiments (9.2). The application of the approach, which is mainly related to the work of Albert-László Barabási, is gaining ground in Hungary, this chapter intends to be related to this, paying attention to international (Burgert A. Senekal) and previous Hungarian developments (Iván Horváth, Gergely Labádi). The second perspective (10), in close connection with the sociology of literature (10.1), outlines the specific, literary-anthropological collection work, raising a line of cultural-literary anthropological research (10.2) that considers individual authors as informants and trying to utilize their texts generated during the interviews. The dissertation attempts to use the answers given by the authors (10.3) with sufficient source criticism and caution when illuminating the individual questions, paths and problems.

III. Results and conclusions of the paper

The aim of the dissertation is to explore a complex set of problems in several circles, which are represented by young lyrical anthologies. The first round of this is a close examination of the three marked volumes, the *Első Ének*, the *Költők egymás közt*, and the *Elérhetetlen föld*: a detailed exploration of the circumstances of their creation, their corpus, their authors and careers, their reception, and their afterlife. All three volumes are known to the literary scholarship, but their re-reading has been dealt with by few, albeit from different perspectives,

to varying degrees, but all three books are important and to be examined both as a corpus and as a phenomenon.

The dissertation explores the anthologies in one broader context, covering in detail not only the authors of the individual volumes, but also the problems, situation and struggles of the whole young literature in the sixties and seventies. During the reconstruction of the literary field, it turns out that it is completely dominated by the field of power. In this way, all literary questions also become a matter of power, as does the situation of young literature. And it doesn't help in this situation that there is no unified generation.

In the third and broadest circle, the dissertation deals with the basic problems of anthology research, illuminating the possibilities and impossibilities of anthology history, and drawing attention to a hidden but at the same time very important tradition, which is represented by the line of the young lyrical anthologies.

In its methodology, the paper utilizes the tools of sociology of art, sociology of literature, and history of literature, and expands and sheds light on two possible directions: the importance of a network theory approach, which allows for the processing and visualization of large amounts of data; as well as the specific, literary-anthropological study that it also uses. The collecting work, which was carried out through correspondence, personal interviews, proper source critique, and the utilization of cultural memory, the research of memory research, made it possible to explore data, attitudes, relationships and connections that could not have been achieved simply by examining the texts.

The complex problem of young lyrical anthologies, more broadly of young literary anthologies, is inexhaustible, as the importance of starting a career in the study of a writer / poet is hardly questionable; the corpus, the mass of authors, is almost unpredictable, the intersection of the dissertation is a tiny segment of everything it tried to shed as sharply as possible.

IV. Publications of the thesis

1. *A Szép versek titkos jubileuma*. Irodalmi Jelen 2013/11. 103–106.
2. „*De így is, úgy is, ebbe a korba zárva*” – *Vázlat a Szép versek történetéhez, 1964-1991*. Tiszatáj 68 (2014) 9. szám 54–75.

3. *Szűrös Mátyás-telep* (Az R25 antológiáról). *Élet és Irodalom* LIX (2015) 33. szám
4. *Kísérleti tankönyv* (György Péter: *A hatalom képzelete. Állami kultúra és művészet 1957 és 1980 között*). *Kalligram* 24 (2015) 11. szám 89–90.
5. *Sikertelen Budapesti ősz? - Karinthy Ferenc regényéről*. *Irodalomismeret* (2017) 2. szám 79–89.
6. *Nemzedéki antológiák a Kádár-kor hajnalán: A 15 fiatal költő 105 verse és a Tűz-tánc példája*. In: Bene, Sándor; Dobos, István (szerk.) *Az idő alakzatai és időtapasztalat a magyarságtudományokban: A doktoriskolák V. nemzetközi magyarságtudományi konferenciájának előadásai*. Budapest, Nemzetközi Magyarságtudományi Társaság, 2017. 281–294.
7. *Megosztás* (Király István: *Napló 1956-1989*). *Élet és Irodalom* LXI (2017) 27. szám 21.
8. *Tárgytisztítás* (György Péter: *Az ismeretlen nyelv*). *Kalligram* 26 (2017) 4. szám 94–97.
9. *Felelet* (Reichert Gábor: *Megfelelési kényszer*). *Élet és Irodalom* LXIII (2019) 3. szám 20.