

A JOURNAL  
OF  
COMPARATIVE  
LITERATURE  
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CULTURE

# COMPARIE



比较文学与比较文化

2014  
NO.2

总第12辑

上海师范大学比较文学与世界文学中心  
辅仁大学跨文化研究所

主办

刘耘华 李爽学 ○ 主编

 复旦大学出版社

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

文贝:比较文学与比较文化.2014年.第2辑/刘耘华、李奭学主编.一上海:  
复旦大学出版社,2015.5  
ISBN 978-7-309-11272-6

I. 文… II. ①刘…②李… III. ①比较文学-文集②比较文化-文集 IV. ①I0-03②G04-53

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2015)第053235号

文贝:比较文学与比较文化.2014年.第2辑

刘耘华 李奭学 主编

责任编辑/余璐瑶

复旦大学出版社有限公司出版发行

上海市国权路579号 邮编:200433

网址:fupnet@fudanpress.com http://www.fudanpress.com

门市零售:86-21-65642857 团体订购:86-21-65118853

外埠邮购:86-21-65109143

常熟市华顺印刷有限公司

开本 787×1092 1/16 印张 15.25 字数 276 千

2015年5月第1版第1次印刷

ISBN 978-7-309-11272-6/I·891

定价:38.00元

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如有印装质量问题,请向复旦大学出版社有限公司发行部调换。

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# COWRIE: A Journal of Comparative Literature and Culture

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# Note from the Editor-in-Chief

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Yunhua Liu

In the 1980's, *Cowrie: A Chinese Journal of Comparative Literature* was a world-renowned publication. Originally founded and edited by Professors Sun Jingyao and Mark Bender, the journal gained worldwide respect for its insights into Chinese comparative literature, which was then a developing field. For example, after the second issue of the journal, the French scholar René Etiemble gave a report at the International Comparative Literature Association 11th Annual Meeting (20 - 24 August 1985) in Paris entitled, "The Revival of Chinese Comparative Literature: 1980 - 1985," relying on material mainly from the journal. Influenced by this report, in 1985 Gerald Gillespie sent a letter to Yang Zhouhan in the hopes that *Cowrie* would publish a lengthy article on new directions on comparative literary trends in the west. Furthermore, leading Chinese scholars such as Qian Zhongshu, Ji Xianlin, Zhong Jingwen, Yang Zhouhan, Fan Cunzhong, Yang Jiang, Fang Ping, and Yue Daiyun were all happy to see their papers published in the journal. We can proudly say that during this initial phase some of the top scholarship on comparative literature in the country was published and disseminated internationally by *Cowrie*.

Unfortunately, after the early 1990s, due to financial constraints, *Cowrie* was only able to publish one issue, No. 6. But now, as China has opened its doors to foreign scholars who are increasingly nuanced in their understanding of the country, we hope to support and advance cultural exchange through the renewal of the journal. After careful consideration, in addition to continuing the original purpose of *Cowrie* — introducing Chinese comparative literature to the world — we have decided to expand the journal to not only include publishing original papers on comparative literature, comparative poetics, and comparative cultural fields (in Chinese or English), but also book reviews and notes, supplemented by annual reports. Furthermore, the journal will now utilize a double-blind system of anonymous reviewers and have a regular publishing schedule of two issues per year. This new orientation will seek to promote deeper understanding and commitment to academic dialogue between Chinese and foreign literature and culture, and provide a credible platform for interaction between literary circles at home and abroad. We sincerely appreciate the support for our new venture and will be diligent in our efforts to return the journal to its original prestige. By cultivating the roots planted by earlier generations, we will seek to create an increasingly rich and rigorous academic discussion in comparative literature.

(Translated by Mark Bender)

# 主编前言

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刘耘华

在 20 世纪 80 年代,中国比较文学界都知道由孙景尧先生及马克·本德尔先生一起开创的中国比较文学英文学刊——《文贝》(Cowrie)。此刊之前两辑出版之后,曾在巴黎国际比较文学协会第 11 届年会(1985 年 8 月 20—24 日)上大放异彩,法国比较文学泰斗艾金伯勒(René Etiemble)所作大会闭幕式报告,题为“中国比较文学的复兴:1980—1985 年中国的比较文学”,所援引的材料主要来自该刊;受此感染,前任国际比较文学协会主席吉列斯比(Gerald Gillespie)于 1985 年年底曾致信杨周翰先生,希望在《文贝》上发表其长篇论文《西方比较研究的新趋向》,而我国的一流学者,如钱锺书、季羨林、钟敬文、杨周翰、范存忠、杨绛、方平、乐黛云等无不乐见自己的优秀论著在该刊发表。我们可以自豪地说,我国比较文学研究的一些顶尖成果,在国门重开之初,是由《文贝》推向国际的。

进入 90 年代之后,因经费掣肘,《文贝》难以做到定时定期地编辑和出版,屈指算来,在 20 世纪最后的十年仅出版了 1 辑(总第 6 辑)。现在,随着国家日益开放,外国学者了解中国的途径日益繁多,中外文化交往的情势也焕然一新,于此情形之下,我们希望,在延续原先之办刊主旨——向国际推介我国比较文学研究现况——的同时,也能够以原创性的研究成果来致力于增进中外文学文化间的深层理解和学术对话,并为海内外学界提供一个具有学术公信力的交流平台。所以,仔细考量之后,我们决定将办刊方针调整为以发表比较文学、比较诗学、比较文化等领域的原创论文(中英文皆可)为主,以书评、综述、年度报告为辅,并实行双向匿名审稿制,每年两辑,定期出版。我们会珍惜来自学界的每一份支持,以诚心、恕心、公心来处理每一篇来稿,培植根基,繁荣学术,使前辈开拓的比较文学道路日益宽广通畅。

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# 19 世纪末和 20 世纪初匈牙利文学中的 色情、性与情色描写

斯蒂文·托托西·德·泽普特奈科

(美国普渡大学)

**摘要:** 本文讨论了阿帕德·洛伊(即拉斯洛·雷西)的诗歌、芮妮·埃尔多斯和伊洛娜·库兹托兰尼·哈莫斯的小说以及斯普兰·弗洛里·弗里斯达特拉男爵夫人的回忆录, 这些文本中有露骨的色情描写以及情色指涉。本文认为, 这些文本有助于研究 19 世纪末和 20 世纪初的匈牙利城市社会和生活。埃尔多斯的小说虽不在讨论时期之内, 但因其体现了女性情色文学写作在现代匈牙利文学中的重要性, 系与前列文本一脉相承, 故一并加以论述。

**关键词:** 情色文学; 欧洲文学; 匈牙利文学; 现代主义女性作家; 文学社会学

**作者简介:** S. T. 德·泽普特奈科先后在阿尔伯塔大学、哈勒-维滕贝格大学任教, 教授比较文学、比较传媒研究等课程, 还曾任职于美国和亚洲的多所高等学府。自 2000 年起, 在美国普渡大学工作。除发表 200 多篇见解独到的学术文章, 还出版人文和社科领域专著和文集 36 部。近期合著文集有《比较文学、世界文学和比较文化研究指南》(2013)、《匈牙利文化比较研究》(2011)、《世界、文化与跨界》(2010) 以及《中欧大屠杀比较研究》(2009)。

## Eroticism, Sexuality, and Pornography in the Late Nineteenth-and Early Twentieth-century Hungarian Literature

*Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek*

(Purdue University)

**Abstract:** Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek discusses the poetry of Árpád Lőwy aka László Réthy (1851 - 1914), the novels of Renée Erdős (1879 - 1956) and Ilonka Kosztolányi née Harnos (1885 - 1967), and the memoir of baroness Spléný née baroness Flóra Freistädler (1874 - 1944). These texts contain explicit descriptions about and references to eroticism and pornography and the argument is that these texts are relevant for the study of the late nineteenth - and early twentieth-century Hungarian urban society and life. Although Erdős's novels are outside of the period discussed, they are included because her novels' relevance represents a continuum of previous texts published with regard to the main argumentation of the study, namely the importance of women's erotic writing in modern Hungarian literature.

**Keywords:** erotic literature; European literature; Hungarian literature; Modernist women writers; sociology of literature

**Notes on Author:** Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek taught comparative literature at the University of Alberta and comparative media and communication studies at the University of Halle-Wittenberg, as well as at various universities in the U. S. and Asia, and since 2000 he has been working at Purdue University. In addition to about 200 peer-reviewed articles he has published three dozen single-authored books and collected volumes in fields of the humanities and social sciences, most recently the collected volumes *Companion to Comparative Literature*, *World Literatures*, and *Comparative Cultural Studies* (with Tutun Mukherjee, 2013), *Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies* (with Louise O. Vasvári, 2011), *Mapping the World, Culture, and Border-crossing* (with I-Chun Wang, 2010), and *Comparative Central European Holocaust Studies* (with Louise O. Vasvári, 2009).

In the present study about eroticism and pornography in the late nineteenth – and early twentieth-century of Hungarian literature I discuss the poetry of Árpád Lőwy (aka László Réthy, 1851 – 1914), the novels of Ilonka Kosztolányi née Harmos (1885 – 1967) and Renée Erdős (1879 – 1956), and the memoir of baroness Spléný née baroness Flóra Freistädter (1874 – 1944).<sup>①</sup> I define “erotic literature” as a genre with three types of text in which the erotic is narrated progressively: the erotic, the sexual, and the pornographic imagery in their expression and versions. Progressively explicit is understood as descriptions of the erotic imagery from the implicit erotic to the more explicit sexual to the most explicit, i. e., pornographic. “Erotic literature” is thus employed as an umbrella term and is understood by levels of linguistic and imaginary explicitness. Unlike in West European cultures and literatures and similar to other Central and East European literatures (i. e., Czech, Polish, etc.), there are few texts in Hungarian literature with erotic and pornographic content (on erotic literature in Hungarian see Tötösy de Zepetnek, “Hungarian”; in

① It may appear curious why a study of erotic literature in Hungarian would appear in a learned journal published in the P. R. of China. The context is that the lack of the study of erotic literature is not only the case in Hungary and Central and East European cultures and scholarship including Poland or Hungary, a similar situation exists in Chinese scholarship. For example, when in 2013 I tried to find Chinese scholars to conduct a research project on modern erotic literature in general and in modern Chinese literature in particular, the response was that a research project about eroticism — let alone pornography — is not something they would like to engage in. My objective is to raise interest in erotic literature in Chinese and thus the publication of my article in *Cowrie: A Journal of Chinese Comparative Literature Studies*.

literature altogether see Brulotte and Phillips; on sexuality and adultery see Foster, Foster, Hadady; Hamburger and Hamburger; Lawson). With regard to Hungarian culture, Tamás Bécsy writes that in the country's society the erotic and adultery in particular — the latter a principal act of “deviation” had to be kept secret owing to the rule of decorum and when because of course it happened, in literature it appeared according to the convention to mask it. Bécsy also writes that any description of the sexual act itself did not occur. However, there are examples of eroticism and pornography in both old and modern Hungarian literature, although mostly suppressed or censored in its time or later.<sup>②</sup> I begin with a short introduction to eroticism in Hungarian literature prior to the subject of my study, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In the fifteenth century the writer and tutor of Renaissance King Matthias Corvinus, Janus Pannonius (aka János Csezmiczei, 1434 – 1472), published poetry in Latin of not only erotic, but in some cases pornographic content, for example “Lucia, you want to fuck; so let's make it happen; but I have this stipulation; /During it put a brake on your arse's horrid roar/You promise; and because I do not believe it, so you pledge: /and even so my dick doesn't believe this story” (unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine) (“Lúcia, baszni akarsz; legyen úgy; ám az kikötésem, /fékezd ezalatt segged rút moráját. /Ígеред; s mert nem hiszem el, hát zálogot adsz rá; /még így sem hiszi

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② Current studies of interest include the 2002 volume of pornographic drawings collected by Tony Fekete (F. T.) entitled *Magyar Erotika/Hungarian Erotica* and Tünde Császtvay's 2009 *Éjjeli lepkevadászat. Bordélyvilág a történelmi Magyarországon* (The Chase of Butterflies at Night: The World of Prostitution in Historical Hungary) the latter of contains various texts collected from the nineteenth and twentieth century such as short narratives, jokes, and images (i. e., postcards, newspaper and magazine drawings, etc.) of sexual and pornographic content; Zsuzsanna Arany, *Ördögtrillák. Gonosz és erotika az irodalomban* (Devil's Chants: The Evil and the Erotic in Literature), (Veszprém: Művészetek Háza, 2004); Dávidházi, Péter. “Egy testrészt hűlt helyre avagy erotika és elfojtás az irodalomtörténetben” (“The Disappearance of a Body Part or Eroticism and Its Suppression in Literary History”), *Élet és Irodalom* 48.12 (2004: 15 – 21); Tamás Oláh, ed. *Fejezetek a szexualitás történetéből* (Chapters from the History of Sexuality), (Budapest: Pult, 1986); János Pelle, “Még és még? Erotika és irodalom” (“More and More? Eroticism and Literature”), *Árgus* 16.3 (2005: 65 – 72); Susan Zimmermann, “A magyar nőmozgalom és a ‘szexuális kérdés’ a XX. század elején” (“The Hungarian Women's Movement and the ‘Question of Sexuality’ at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century”), *Eszmélet: Társadalom és Kulturális Folyóirat* 42 (1999: 49 – 66); Irén Zoltvány, *Erotika és irodalom* (Eroticism and Literature), (Budapest: Szent-István-Társulat, 1924).

el fűtykösöm ezt a mesét”.<sup>③</sup> And here is an example with reference to adultery in Pannonius’s poetry: “While the bed of another crunches under you, loose woman/Severus, you spare your wife’s bed too much/Like Hodus, who could drink wine at home/but instead goes to get drunk in nearby taverns” (“Míg más ágya ropog, ledér, alattad,/nőd ágyát, Severus, nagyon kíméled./Mint Hodus, ki aszút ihatna otthon,/s a szomszéd lebujokba jár vedelni”).<sup>④</sup> Two centuries later István Gyöngyösi (1629 – 1704) wrote a long poem — *Csalárd Cupido* (1695) (Deceitful Cupid) — with the intention to warn against the perils of love. One section of the long poem is a list of the variations of adultery, for example, the wife’s interest in having sex with employees of the husband: “My wife often fell underneath my physician” (“Borbélyom alá dőlt sokszor feleségem”).<sup>⑤</sup> Of interest is that in Gyöngyösi’s poem it is the husband whose side is taken and this bent toward the man remains the case in the majority of later texts, thus an affirmation of men’s privileged position in Hungarian society and culture (on pre-modern Hungarian erotic literature see Bene; Erdélyi; Jakubovich and Pais; Réz).<sup>⑥</sup>

From the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, texts with implied erotic — i. e. not sexual or pornographic — content include Mihály Csokonai Vitéz’s (1773 – 1805) *Lilla* songs and the comic epic *Dorottya*, both with erotic symbolism and Pál Némethi (eighteenth century) whose poetry is infused with erotic tones. After the birth of the novel in Hungarian (mid-nineteenth century), eroticism appears in prose, but only implicitly — the reader has to imagine the sexual situation — and in almost all cases consummation or sexual desire is described as exemplification of consequences as a punishment for the

③ Pál Réz, ed. *Magyar Erato* (Hungarian Erotics), (Budapest: Magvető, 1986), 12.

④ Ibid., 8.

⑤ Tibor Klaniczay, *A magyar irodalom története* (History of Hungarian literature) (Budapest: Akadémiai, Vol. 2, 1964), 195.

⑥ Sándor Bene, “Politika, paráznság és házasságtörés a magyar irodalmi hagyományban. Bethlen Miklós Velencében” (“Politics, Naughtyness, and Adultery in Hungarian Literature: Miklós Bethlen in Venezia”). *Ámor, álm és mámor. A szerelem a régi magyar irodalomban és a szerelem ezredéves hazai kultúrtörténete* (Eros, Sleep, and Rapture in Old Hungarian Literature and the Millennial History of Love), ed. Géza Szentmártoni Szabó, (Budapest: Universitas, 2002: 299–324); Erdélyi, Gabriella. “Szerettem egyszer egy nőt. Házasságtörés és házasságtörés 1500 körül” (“Once I Loved a Woman; Marriage and Adultery in Hungary around 1500”), (*Történelmi Szemle* 49, 2008: 165–178); Jakubovich, Emil, and Dezső Pais, eds. *Ó-magyar olvasókönyv* (Reader of Old Hungarian Literature), (Pécs: Danubia, 1929); Réz, Pál, ed. *Magyar Erato* (Hungarian Erotics), (Budapest: Magvető, 1986).

transgression of social codes and punishment is executed virtually in all cases to the woman. Examples of this genre of implied eroticism in poetry and prose occur in texts of canonical authors in the period I am discussing include János Arany (1817 – 1882), István Toldy (1844 – 1879), Zsigmond Justh (1863 – 1894), Béla Révész (1876 – 1944), Zsigmond Móricz (1879 – 1942), Endre Ady (1877 – 1919), Gyula Krúdy (1878 – 1933), Zsigmond Móricz (1879 – 1942), Margit Kaffka (1880 – 1918), Lajos B író (1880 – 1948), Józsi Jenő Tersánszky (1888 – 1969), Mihály Babits (1883 – 1941), Ernő Szép (1884 – 1953), Dezső Kosztolányi (1885 – 1936), Géza Csáth (1887 – 1919), and Zolt Harsányi (1887 – 1943).<sup>⑦</sup> Further, there were also novels published in the period discussed but owing to the perception of “no artistic merit” (i. e., popular culture type texts associated with for example Harlequin romances) such are not listed in histories of Hungarian literature. For example, there was writer and journalist countess Sarolta Vay de Vaja et Luskod (1859 – 1918), who was born a woman but was raised as a man and whose case was analyzed by psychologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing.<sup>⑧</sup> Vay wrote reports and fictions although without explicit erotic content, in many instances with focus on matters of love and relationships; the 1888 anonymous novel with pornographic text and images about lesbian love *Júlia és a nők* (Julia and Women); Irma Nagy’s — likely a pseudonym — 1908 *Bűnös szerelmek. Egyúrilány vallomásai* (Guilty Loves: Confessions of a Young Lady [the actual book cannot be found in Hungary or elsewhere]); the 1909 novel by “A Defrocked Monk” entitled *Fekete misék. Papok és apácák bűnei* (Black Mass; Sins of Priests and Nuns; see Anonymous) with a pornographic narrative including blasphemy; Nándor

⑦ Judit Kádár, "Írók, feleségek, szeretők. Modern értelmiségi nők a huszadik század eleji magyar irodalomban (Erdős Renée, Csinszka, Harmos Ilona, Török Sophie)" ("Writers, Wives, Lovers; Intellectual Modern Women in Hungarian Literature at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century [Renée Erdős, Csinszka, Ilona Harmos, Sophie Török]"), (*Népszabadság*, 2004. 07. 24.), 10; Ilona L'Homme, "Az erotikus női költészet fogadtatása a XX. század elején" ("The Reception of Women's Erotic Poetry at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century"), (*Irodalomtörténet* 3, 2003), 468 – 478.

⑧ AnnaBorgos, "Mi ez a nagy sikoly? Nőiség, testiség és pszichoanalízis háború előtti magyar nőírók műveiben (Erdős Renée, Bródy Lili, Török Sophie)" ("What is This Great Scream?: Womanhood, Corporeality, and Psychoanalysis in the Work of Women Writers before the War [Renée Erdős, Lili Bródy, Sophie Török]"). *Laikus olvasók? A nem-professzionális olvasás értelmezési lehetőségei* (Lay Readers?: Possibilities of the Analysis of Non-Professional Reading), ed. Zsófia Lóránd, Tamás Scheibner, Gábor Vaderna, and György Vári (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2006), 51–64.

Ujhelyi's (1888 – 1933) 1918 *Egy férfi szerelmei* (A Man's Loves), a novel with erotic descriptions banned in Hungary in 1920. Ujhelyi published several novels about adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, and transgenderism<sup>⑨</sup>; and Sándor Nádas's (1883 – 1942) 1919 novel *Krisztina sorsa* (The Fate of Krisztina). Similar to literature, in the visual arts there are less than few works with sexual or pornographic content; notable examples include the drawings of count Mihály Zichy de Zich et Vásonykeő (1827 – 1906).<sup>⑩</sup>

One canonized text that underwent eroticization and rendered pornographic is János Arany's trilogy *Toldi* (1846 – 1879). One of several assumed authors the pornographic text was Árpád Lőwy (pseudonym of László Réthy). In his *Pajzán Toldi. A szexuális őserő eposza* (Naughty Toldi: The Epic of Sexual ur-Power) Lőránt Czigány describes the genesis of the text in detail and presents the text in full.<sup>⑪</sup> The text in its pornographic version explodes in expressions and imagery about the sexual prowess of the protagonist — Miklós Toldi, a nobleman in the service of Louis the Great of Hungary (1326 – 1382) — including references to adultery about his bedding of several women (e. g., the wife of his king; a most exceptional act in the pornographic version and thus against all decorum in Hungarian culture and literature altogether).

Lőwy/Réthy is known as author of several collections of pornographic poetry; he is an exceptional figure in Hungarian literature because he was a renown scholar and director of the Hungarian National Museum's Department of Numismatics.<sup>⑫</sup> His poetry is not only erotic and pornographic, but political

⑨ LászlóKelecsényi, "Egy erotikus emigráns" ("An Erotic Emigrant") (*Holmi* 14. 8., 2002) 1026 – 1036.

⑩ Another member of this prominent aristocratic family of Hungary — count Tivadar Zichy de Zich et Vásonkeő (1908 – 1988) — published a number of erotic novels including the 1936 *Orgia R. T. Egy képzelet város erkölcsrajza* (Orgia Ltd.: Description of Morality in an Imagined City) and the 1937 *Szeretni tudni kell ...! Egy iskola története, amelyben kizárólag szerelmet tanultak* (One Needs to Know How to Love ...! History of a School where Only Love was Taught).

⑪ Lőránt Czigány, *Pajzán Toldi. A szexuális őserő eposza* (Naughty Toldi: The Epic of Sexual ur-Power), (Budapest: Kortárs, 1997), 95 – 96.

⑫ Interesting is that Réthy's daughter Margit (1887 – 1962) married József Uray de Ura (1875 – ?) of the same prominent gentry family whose member Margit Uray de Ura (1860 – 1934) was mother of Margit Kaffka (1880 – 1918) who is considered a prominent writer of modernist Hungarian literature who wrote also erotic poetry and fiction (see Horváth, Gita; Nyilasy; Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Kaffka de Tarczafalva," "Margit Kaffka," "The Anti-World War I"; Zoltvány). Lőwy/Réthy's poems were circulated in manuscript form only until they were (转下页)



in that his texts are against Hungarian essentialism of his time – specifically against anti-Semitism during *Magyarization* (“Hungarianization”) from the mid-nineteenth century until the interwar period of the twentieth century — when such an opinion was not accepted.<sup>13</sup> Here is an example of Lőwy/Réthy’s critical ironization of Hungarian society: “Patronage. Blessed is this small country Hungary/.../You prosper if you have a little patronage//There is only one place where good words are useless; /if you want to fuck and your dick does not stand up./If your dick does not know the direction,/There good patronage is worth shit” (“Protekció. Áldott kis ország ez a Magyarország/.../Boldogulsz, hogyha van egy kis protekciód //Csak egy hely van, ahol a szép szó nem használ; /hogyha baszni akarsz es a faszod nemáll./Ha nem tudja faszod hol a direkció,/Szart sem ér ottan már a jó protekció”.<sup>14</sup>Lőwy/Réthy’s poetry contains also blasphemy, another taboo in Hungarian literature: “The Hungarian drinks wine,/and no water,/He pays a girl or a young wife with his dick. //But when he is angry,/he needs no cunt,/he fucks Christ/of Almighty God” (“Bort iszik a magyar,/nem pediglen vizet,/Lánynak, menyecskének fasszal fizet. //De ha megharagszik,/nem kell pina ennek,/Bassza Krisztusát

(接上页) published in 1989 in an edited version entitled *Disznólkodni szabad* (Smut is Allowed) (see also J. H. J., a previous lithographic edition of 1983). In my opinion, the only other author whose text is similar is György Faludy's (1910–2006) rewriting of François Villon's (1431–1464) poetry, in an inventive rewriting and not translation *per se*. Faludy's biography is perhaps relevant — an exceptional case of *épaté le bourgeois* — because he was bisexual; following his second wife Zsuzsa Szegő's death in 1963 he lived with his lover—former U. S. ballet dancer and translator of Latin verse Eric Johnson in Toronto for almost three decades. Johnson was 25 years Faludy's junior and after separation from Faludy in 2001 emigrated to India. In 2002 Faludy married poet Fanni Kovács — a woman 64 years his junior — and they published *A szerelem jogán* (By the Law of Love), a book of erotic poems and images and they posed for the 2002 edition of the Hungarian edition of *Penthouse*. Faludy's life during the 1950s in communist Hungary was fictionalized in Stephen Vizinczey's 1965 *In Praise of Older Women: The Amorous Recollections of András Vajda* and the novel was made into film in Canada in 1978 and in Spain in 1997. Among other collections of poetry, novels, and scholarly works (e. g., his 1970 *Erasmus of Rotterdam*), Faludy published *My Happy Days in Hell* in 1962, an autobiography about his experiences in the Hungarian communist internment camp at Recsk and that in my opinion anticipated Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's or Imre Kertész's similar texts about concentration camp experience.

<sup>13</sup> Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Review of Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Budapest Diary: In Search of the Motherbook*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. 232 pp. and Richard Teleky, *Hungarian Rhapsodies: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity and Culture*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997. 217 pp." *Modern Fiction Studies* 44.2 (1997): 455–459.

<sup>14</sup> Árpád Löwy, [László Réthy]. *Disznólkodni szabad* (Smut is Allowed), ed. Gita Horváth (Budapest: Orient, 1989), 48.



az/Atyaúristennek”.<sup>15</sup> Here, in addition to blasphemy, Lőwy/Réthy makes reference to adultery whereby the reference is not to the young man’s wife, but to the wife of another. Another poem where he implies sexuality and adultery is “Vénlegény megnősül” (“The Old Bachelor Marries”), where — because the husband is impotent — his young wife goes elsewhere to satisfy her sexuality.<sup>16</sup>

Renée Erdős is the first author in the history of Hungarian literature who was able to work based solely on income from her publications.<sup>17</sup> Erdős was the mistress of poet Sándor Bródy (1863 – 1924) who was married. She is considered the most erotic writer in Hungarian literature until post-1989<sup>18</sup>; she wrote poetry and prose and among her novels is *A Brüsszeli csipke* (The Lace of Bruxelles) whose main themes are eroticism and adultery. The novel did not receive favorable criticism at the time of its publication in 1930. For example the renowned (and canonized) author Endre Illés wrote that the novel is not to be read with any type of critical apparatus or analysis, but with the common readers’ hungry interest in monumental kitsch (“*Abrüsszeli*”). The novel’s protagonist is Adrienne Kellerhardt, who is in an unhappy marriage which to brake she considers adultery. However, she does not consummate her love and remains in her unhappy marriage. The title of the novel refers to her family’s tradition to sew a piece of Bruxelles lace to the first dress of a new-born girl.<sup>19</sup> The protagonist of the novel is cheated on by her husband, which she discovers

<sup>15</sup> Árpád Lőwy, [László Réthy]. *Disznólkodni szabad* (Smut is Allowed), ed. Gita Horváth (Budapest: Orient, 1989), 70.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>17</sup> Renée Erdős, “Erdős, Renée.” *Új magyar életrajzi Lexikon* (New Hungarian Biographical Lexicon), ed. László Markó (Budapest: Magyar Könyvklub, 2001. Vol. 2, 411–412).

<sup>18</sup> Judit Kádár, “A legerotikusabb magyaríró; Erdős Renée” (“The Most Erotic Hungarian Woman Writer; Renée Erdős”). *Műhely* 5 (1997): 43–47; “Erotikus, katolikus. Erdős Renée (1879–1956)” (“Erotic, Roman Catholic; Renée Erdős [1879–1956]”). *magyarnarancs.hu* 45 (2006); [http://magyarnarancs.hu/konyv/elsullyedt\\_szerzok\\_v\\_erotikus\\_katolikus\\_erdos\\_renee\\_1879-1956-66255](http://magyarnarancs.hu/konyv/elsullyedt_szerzok_v_erotikus_katolikus_erdos_renee_1879-1956-66255), [Dec. 20, 2014].

<sup>19</sup> László Kemenes Géfin, Jolanta Jastrzębska. *Erotika a huszadik századi magyar regényben 1911–1947* (Eroticism in Twentieth-century Hungarian Novels 1911–1947), (Budapest: Kortárs, 1998); József Balassa, *Erdős Renée csodálatos élete* (The Wondrous Life of Renée Erdős), (Budapest: Literature, 1926); Anna Fábri, *A szép tiltott táj felé. A magyar írónők története két századforduló között, 1795–1905* (To the Forbidden Beautiful Land: History of Hungarian Women Writers in Two Centuries, 1795–1905), (Budapest: Kortárs, 1996); Endre Illés, “Gyóntatószék-erotika” (“Erotics of the Confessional”). *Árnyékkrajzok* (Shadow Drawings). By Endre Illés, Budapest: Magvető, 1965, 434–439; Zoltán Iszlai, *Az orgazmus történetisége* (The Historicity of Orgasm), (Budapest: Élet és Irodalom, 1990).