Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC 253

Volume 253

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights, Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers Who Lived between 1900 and 1999, from the First Published Critical Appraisals to Current Evaluations

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Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism, Vol. 253

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER 76-46132

ISBN-13: 978-1-4144-7033-7
ISBN-10: 1-4144-7033-9

ISSN 0276-8178

Printed in the United States of America
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 15 14 13 12 11

Preface

Since its inception *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* (*TCLC*) has been purchased and used by some 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. *TCLC* has covered more than 1000 authors, representing over 60 nationalities and nearly 50,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as *TCLC*. In the words of one reviewer, "there is nothing comparable available." *TCLC* "is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many librarians would have difficulty assembling on their own."

Scope of the Series

TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, *TCLC* helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in *TCLC* presents a comprehensive survey on an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of *TCLC* is devoted to literary topics. These topics widen the focus of the series from the individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

TCLC is designed as a companion series to Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism,* (*CLC*) which reprints commentary on authors who died after 1999. Because of the different time periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between *CLC* and *TCLC.*

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.

- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

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- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style,* 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.

- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

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Kuester, Martin. "Myth and Postmodernist Turn in Canadian Short Fiction: Sheila Watson, 'Antigone' (1959)." In *The Canadian Short Story: Interpretations,* edited by Reginald M. Nischik, pp. 163-74. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2007. Reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism.* Vol. 206, edited by Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau, 227-32. Detroit: Gale, 2008. The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a works cited list set forth in the Modern Language Association of America's MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 7th ed. (New York: MLA, 2009. Print); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

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Kuester, Martin. "Myth and Postmodernist Turn in Canadian Short Fiction: Sheila Watson, 'Antigone' (1959)." *The Canadian Short Story: Interpretations.* Ed. Reginald M. Nischik. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2007. 163-74. Rpt. in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism.* Eds. Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau. Vol. 206. Detroit: Gale, 2008. 227-32. Print.

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Endre Ady
1877-1919

Hungarian poet, essayist, short story writer, and novelist.

The following entry provides an overview of Ady's life and works. For additional information on his career, see *TCLC,* Volume 11.

INTRODUCTION

Ady is considered the father of modern Hungarian literature. Primarily known for his symbolist poetry, collected in such volumes as *Vér és arany* (1908), *Az Illés szekerén* (1908), and *A halottak élén* (1918), Ady challenged poetic convention by synthesizing traditional Hungarian poetics with modern European literary trends, such as symbolism and expressionism, and addressing the need for cultural and artistic renewal in his native country. Throughout his career, he developed an original and visionary aesthetic that combined modern and archaic linguistic modes and transformed conventional Hungarian themes into a unique system of symbols. Many of Ady's early poems call for social reform, reflecting his concern for the suffering of the Hungarian lower classes, although in later works he increasingly explored themes related to love, God, and the universal concerns of humanity. While relatively unknown to English-language audiences, Ady remains the most influential and innovative figure of twentieth-century Hungarian letters. Writing in 1974, Lee Congdon proclaimed that Ady is "the greatest Hungarian poet of the twentieth century and the leading advocate of his country's national rebirth. In his poems and essays he declared war on Hungary's backward social life and challenged his countrymen to create a new, morally regenerated society."

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Ady was born November 22, 1877, in Érmindszent, a small village in eastern Hungary, now Romania, to Mária Pásztor and Lorinc Ady, a small landowner. He attended primary school in his native village, and then in 1888 went to a Catholic high school in a neighboring town. After four years, he attended the Reformed high school of nearby Zilah, now Zalau, Romania, graduating in 1896. Ady moved to Debrecen to study law, but after two years he abandoned his studies and began working as a journalist for various newspapers. In 1899, he published his first volume of poetry, *Versek,* and moved to Nagyvárad, now Oradea, Romania, a cultural center of the region, where he became acquainted with the work of Europe's leading writers and thinkers, including Emile Zola, Anatole France, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Friedrich Nietzsche. In 1904, Ady moved to Paris, working as a correspondent for a Budapest newspaper, and developed an interest in French literature, particularly the work of the French symbolists. When he returned to Hungary, the country was in a political crisis. Ady worked briefly for the public relations office of the government, while continuing work on his next volume of poetry, *Új versek,* which was published in 1906. After returning to Paris as a correspondent for another year, he published another collection, titled *Vér és arany,* a controversial work that divided the Hungarian literary community.

In 1908, Ady returned to Nagyvárad and found himself at the center of an emerging group of writers, poets, and critics who were influenced by his work. This intellectual circle founded the magazine *Nyugat,* which came to be regarded as the most important Hungarian literary journal of the twentieth century. During this time, Ady briefly retired from public life and spent several months traveling. Tensions in his romantic life and frequent critical attacks led to serious bouts of insomnia for the author, and his health deteriorated as a result. Ady spent several months of 1909 in a sanatorium, but later that year he moved to Budapest and returned to literary life. He published two more works during this period, *Szeretném, ha szerenének* (1909) and *A minden titkok verseiből* (1910), the latter of which signaled a major shift in his poetics. Over the next few months, Ady spent time in Paris but returned to Budapest after ending a long-term romantic relationship. He published several significant works in the months that followed, including a collection of essays, *Vallomások és tanulmányok* (1911), and another volume of poetry, *A menekülő élet* (1912). During the next year, Ady suffered from deteriorating health, alcohol abuse, and the political turmoil that swept Hungary prior to World War I. Many poems written during this time reflect the poet's criticism of the country's prime minister. He spent most of 1913 in Budapest and produced another volume of poetry, titled *A magunk szerelme* (1913). In 1915, Ady married Berta Boncza, a young woman of aristocratic origin. They moved to Csucsa, now Ciucea, Romania, but the poet's desire for a quiet life was interrupted at

several points when he was called before the recruiting commission of the Austra-Hungarian army. Through the intervention of influential friends, he was never forced to serve in World War I. In 1918, Ady published *A halottak élén,* which was comprised of poems he had written over the past four years. By this time, however, his health had deteriorated considerably, and on January 27, 1919, Ady died of pneumonia in Budapest.

MAJOR WORKS

Ady first established himself as an innovative poet with *Új versek,* the title of which translates as "New Verses." In this work, the author explores major contradictions of human existence in four thematically linked poem-cycles. The prologue of the work, "Góg és Magóg fia vagyok én," or "Son of Gog and Magog," is based on the medieval tradition of tracing the history of a country back to the biblical creation story and explores the duality of the Hungarian people, who are comprised of an archaic Eastern or Asian heritage and a modern Western European identity. The first poem cycle, "Léda asszony zsoltárai," or "Psalms for Léda," departs from the conventions and taboos of traditional love poetry and examines the paradoxical nature of love, while the second cycle, "A magyar Ugaron," or "The Magyar Fallow," reinvents the Hungarian tradition of the "poet-prophet" and describes Hungary as the site of conflict between Eastern and Western cultures, which are ultimately extinguished by each other on Hungarian soil. In contrast to the stagnant Hungarian landscape, Ady describes Paris as the city of love and life in the third cycle, "A daloló Páris," or "Singing Paris." He culminates his aesthetic argument in the fourth cycle, "Szuz ormok vándora," or "Roaming over Virgin Peaks." The epilogue, "Új vizeken járok," translated as "I Walk on New Waters," uses water as a symbol for both life and death. Formally, *Új versek* is characterized by a unified compositional structure and Ady's innovative use of symbols. The author employed a similar formal structure in his next volume of poems, *Vér és arany,* and built on the themes of his previous work. In the first poem-cycle, "A magyar messiások," or "Hungarian Messiahs," however, he introduces a new theme: Hungary's ruined fate and the inevitability of revolution. In another cycle, titled "Az os Kaján," or "Ancient Demon Guile," the fears and forces of the unconscious are presented as mythical figures, while "A halál rokona," or "Kin to Death," explores the many facets of death. Ady's next poetic work, *Az Illés szekerén,* includes seven poem-cycles, most notably "A Síon-hegy alatt," or "Under the Zion Hill," which introduces the theme of religious experience into the author's canon. In another cycle, "A téli Magyarország," or "Hungary in Winter," the poet continues to build on the theme of social revolution.

According to some scholars, the publication of *A minden titkok verseiből* in 1910 signaled an important shift in Ady's literary career. In this work, the poet eschews the clearly outlined thematic structure of his earlier work and presents instead a more complicated and ambiguous treatment of such themes as love, sadness, glory, life, and death; he also increasingly relies on expressive paradoxes, or oxymoron, rather than symbols. Ady continued to experiment with form and theme in *A menekülő élet* and *A magunk szerelme,* the former of which explores the subject of God, while the latter revisits earlier themes of love and social change. For some critics, Ady's final major work, *A halottak élén,* synthesizes the themes and techniques of his entire literary career. While the collection includes love poems, its primary focus is war. In this work, Ady presents an apocalyptic vision of the world and pronounces that the purpose of history is lost. Inverting biblical tradition, he portrays the prophet as a frustrated witness, who, at the end of existence, can only curse God. Although at various points the volume returns to the symbolism of Ady's early career, *A halottak élén* is primarily characterized by a polyphony of styles, motifs, and rhythmic systems.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

While Ady's earliest poetic efforts were largely ignored, he attracted serious critical attention after the publications of *Új versek* and *Vér és arany,* both of which were polarizing works that garnered disdain from conservative scholars but were applauded by younger artists and critics in Hungary, who united in support of the author's revolutionary aesthetic. Ady's popularity and reputation grew as a result, and by 1909 he had become the central figure of a burgeoning renaissance within contemporary Hungarian literature. Despite this success, he questioned the ability of his enthusiastic supporters to understand the essence of his poetics, and in 1908 published "The Duk-Duk affér," an article in which he distanced himself from the writers and editors of *Nyugat.* Ady later reconciled with his admirers, who were initially alienated and outraged by this perceived betrayal, and after a brief hiatus from literary life was celebrated on lecture tours throughout the country. The author remained critical of Hungary's conservative ruling class, however, and was frequently the subject of attacks in the right-wing Hungarian press. After exploring less incendiary themes, Ady resumed his denunciation of the Hungarian government during World War I, which eventually led to the censoring of his work. Following the so-called daisy revolution, which resulted in a new prime minister for Hungary in 1918, Ady was elected president of the Vörösmarty Academy, a new literary society founded by a group of progressive writers. In the years following his death, Ady's innovations and achievements continued to influence the trajectory of culture and art in Hungary. Ironically, he has been

embraced and claimed by both right-wing and progressive political and ideological movements since his death.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, scholars have continued to assess Ady's literary contributions, often focusing on his thematic preoccupations and formal strategies as well as his relationship to the sociopolitical climate in Hungary during his lifetime. Anton N. Nyerges, writing in 1969, concentrated on Ady's early volumes, *Új versek,* and *Vér és arany,* noting the themes of tortured love and "Nietzschean heroism" in the former work and the poet's "treatment of the sources of creative power and the intermingling elements" in the latter. Marianna D. Birnbaum examined the poetic devices in Ady's works, such as his use of "archaisms," or vocabulary "rooted in the ideology of Romanticism," through which he "accentuated his modern ideas, expressing them in an older mode of consciousness." While Péter Hanák traced the poet's "artistic and personal development," Mária Kurdi, writing in 1987, drew parallels between Ady's poetry and that of Irish poet W. B. Yeats. Scholars such as Kurdi, Lee Congdon, and Péter Pór [see Further Reading] have particularly emphasized Ady's significant contribution to Hungary's cultural regeneration during the early decades of the 1900s. Pór described him as a "poet-prophet," while Congdon declared that "to understand Ady is to understand the hope of national regeneration that animated Hungarian intellectual life during the years from the turn of the century to the end of the First World War." Although his works are seldom read outside his native country, due in part to the difficulties of translating his Hungarian verse into other languages, Ady remains a significant figure of the twentieth century. Regarded by many commentators as one of the most innovative and influential poets of his time, his achievements remain unparalleled in twentieth-century Hungarian literature. Pór asserted that at his height, Ady was "comparable to the greatest poets of Europe" and praised the "visionary objectivity" and "universally valid mythology" of his major works. Pór added that his "radically revolutionary style shattered a complete system of imagery, one as sterile as it was homogeneous," and his poems "pronounced with a romantic passion fierce and brutal truths."

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Versek (poetry) 1899
Új versek (poetry) 1906
Sápadt emberekés történetek (short stories) 1907
Az Illés szekerén (poetry) 1908
Vér és arany (poetry) 1908
Szeretném, ha szerenének (poetry) 1909
A minden titkok verseiböl (poetry) 1910
Vallomások és tanulmányok (essays) 1911
A menekülő élet (poetry) 1912
A magunk szerelme (poetry) 1913
Ki látott engem? (poetry) 1914
A halottak élén (poetry) 1918
Margita élni akar (verse novel) 1921
Az utolsó hajók (poetry) 1923
Összes versei (poetry) 1930
Poems (poetry) 1941
Poems (poetry) 1947
Poems of Endre Ady (poetry) 1969
The Explosive Country: A Selection of Articles and Studies, 1898-1916 (essays) 1977
Neighbours of the Night (short stories) 1994

CRITICISM

Anton N. Nyerges (essay date 1969)

SOURCE: Nyerges, Anton N. "The Asian Bacchus." In *Poems of Endre Ady,* by Endre Ady, translated by Anton N. Nyerges, pp. 25-37. Buffalo, N.Y.: Hungarian Cultural Foundation, 1969.

[*In the following essay, taken from his introduction to an English-language collection of Ady's poems, Nyerges analyzes the author's two early volumes of poetry,* Új versek *and* Vér és arany, *noting the themes of tortured love and "Nietzschean heroism" in the former work, while describing the latter as a more mature and darker production, especially in its "treatment of the sources of creative power and the intermingling elements."*]

Although not his most profound works, ***New Verses*** and ***Blood and Gold*** are the most vivid books of poetry Ady wrote. As yet unabsorbed in god-seeking or profoundly ethical and political writings, he appeared on the literary scene as an unencumbered pagan, an Asian Bacchus with brown tormented eyes and a trace of mockery on his lips. The poems of this period bear some resemblance to the works of the French symbolists, but even more they have the outlandish color of the old wandering days on the Eurasian steppes and the truculence brought into Europe a thousand years earlier by the nation of Magyars. The more he asserted his newness and sympathy with French liberalism the more he retreated into the gray of Magyar antiquity until his later poetry appears to be a recreation of the lost my-

thology of the small group of horsemen who almost alone among Eastern people succeeded in securing a lasting place in the heart of the West.

Ady threw with *New Verses* the challenge of rebellion at the literary tastes of the ruling class. That the book was also a blow aimed at the heart of an aristocratic political authority which for a thousand years had successfully withstood the temerity of rebellion and the erosion of change was almost submerged in a deeply personal and introspective character that was to mark Ady's entire poetical output. The *I* of the poet forever held up a mirror before the *me,* reflecting countless images in the gallery of the self. As he grew, searching for God and groping for a philosophical system, he peered further inside seeking the most faint and distant reflections.

In *New Verses* Ady merely sensed the role he later made his mission, but he unfailingly found his voice. With the opening line of a remarkable but probably untranslatable title poem he proclaimed himself the son of Gog and Magog, described in Ezekiel and Saint John the Divine as a remote northern people or, alternately, their princes serving in the army of the Prince of Darkness. He never thereafter ceased to attack any form of authority or society that shackles human progress, to search the inner Abel-Cain duality of the soul, and to claim the tribute due his lonely genius that sought an unmanageable meeting of love with others. At the same time, his identification with Gog was accompanied by a feeling of guilt and martyrdom with strongly masochistic overtones.

New Verses is divided into four cycles, each of which deals with a single theme and the individual poems are variations on that theme. Never content until he had experienced an idea in all its Protean forms and striven toward a synthesis of the spiritual contradictions, Ady continued to use and develop this technique. His poems are linked to cycles, cycles to books, and books to books in a manner that makes it literally true his thousand-odd poems form a vast single work. Without an understanding of this intricate structure a reading of the poems as individual entities leads to a world of disintegration and chaos.

Over the book hovers a Bergsonian atmosphere of the "ceaseless upspringing of something new" and a mystic morrow which is forever consumed in the fever of the present. A sense of unpredictability and emergent evolution is combined with the determinism and messianic fervor of Nietzschean philosophy. Like some of the Russian symbolists Ady saw himself as the prophet of a new era in which mankind would become strong and glorious under the guidance of a great poet or superman.

Ady states in a striking dedicatory conceit to the *New Verses* that poetry is no more than a presentiment of the morrow destined to perish in its own conflagration and that the sixty-six perfervid poems of the book were spared from destruction for the sake of the Woman. The woman was Léda, his suggestive anagrammatic name for Mrs. Ödön Diósi née Adél Brüll, the comely and cultured wife of a Hungarian merchant with a modest business in Paris. Ady and Mrs. Diósi first met in 1903 in Nagyvárad, where her family was engaged in business activity. While an intimacy quickly developed, the sophisticated thirty-one year old woman gave no indication of wishing to become seriously involved with the twenty-six year old provincial poet-journalist, even though he addressed her with a poem as lovely as **"Her Ladyship of Tears."** At any rate, her attention at the time was centered on a certain man-about-town, and the early Ady-Léda correspondence witnesses that the young poet was subjected in a Budapest hotel to a "tragic revelation." Nevertheless, after her return to Paris he followed her and during a thirteen month visit a triangle destined to endure for eight years was established. Neither a Madame Bovary bent on ruining herself for romantic love nor a woman content to be closed in the compartment of marriage, Léda did not consider tying her economic lot to that of the impecunious Ady, but she entered without reservation into an unconcealed and impassioned love affair and lived a dual life as Léda-Adél. With expert guidance she introduced the young writer to the latest currents in French cultural life, and her educational devotion was soon apparent in the expanding horizons of his writings. Devoted to his wife and impressed by the young poet, Mr. Diósi stood by with unstinting hospitality.

Ady's dependence on Léda was heightened by a progression of his syphilitic condition, for neglect and taboo had led him to disregard the early warning signs. When the sores appeared, the Diósis made no attempt to disentangle themselves, and the husband took Ady to leading Parisian specialists for treatment. During the worst phase of the disease the Diósis moved him to their own apartment, where Léda personally cared for him.

A sadness lurks in the poems written shortly after the diagnosis as when in **"A Parisian Dawn"** he wrote

> this kiss-fed Paris never knew
> kisses more sad, more like a malady.

At times he was terrified, and once like other frightened or superstitious Parisians he went to Madame Thebe, a famed clairvoyant of the day, and mockingly but curiously presented his palm for a reading. She disturbingly foretold that by the age of thirty he would be tremendously successful in his career or totally insane. But as the disease cleared, his self-confidence returned and in the later poems of the *New Verses* there are indications that his illness was to become a creative stimulus.

Ady made no reference in the **"Psalms for Leda"** to his mistress's acts of tenderness. With dithyrambic mad-

ness he concentrated on all that was excruciating in the relationship. Breaking with the romantic tradition and its theme of subjection to the will of the beloved, he portrayed a man subjected to his own ideal. For the marvels that had been a part of the romantic tradition since the revival of Ovid, he substituted one marvel, his psychic self. For the traditional romantic love of solitude and privacy he substituted a desire to exhibit in the habiliments of dream imagery the privatissima of his emotional life. The meaning of his love he expounded in the light of Nietzschean heroism, declaring it to be the power that would conceive a child (his poetry) whom others would bring to fruition.

In his relations with Léda as well as with certain Parisiennes Ady was the eternal bachelor in pursuit of or flight from women. The exciting love acts he conceived of as invitation and arrival or dismissal and departure. In **"Leda Aboard Ship,"** for example, a state of intense excitement is attained because Léda is hovering in sight. Between arrival and departure, however, he experienced long periods of spiritual impotence.

Léda awoke the poet's awareness not of herself but of the realm of his own unconscious. With almost the first psalm the white ghost of an idealized Léda walks a castellated dreamland. The psychal guards, the eyes, fearfully watch the outer world, and only at midnight when the guards grow lax do the repressed emotions come to the surface. Whenever the poet studies Léda it is only because her eyes mirror the blessed marvels of himself. In **"My Leda's Heart"** her power to look into his soul creates love, which in turn sees her as no more than a symbol from the "grove of sombre marvels."

With the birth of this dual love the poet's conscious and unconscious forever haunt each other. The conscious as nemesis of the unconscious is the theme of **"In Vain You Shadow Me"** (which at first glance appears to treat of naked sadism) and of **"The White Silence,"** which is a confession that the furious struggle produces symptoms of madness. In the conflict between the ideal and the real, Léda, the voluptuous object of pleasure, is associated with pain, and in **"The Fiery Sore"** the poet expressed the desire to fuse the torments of love and syphilis into one intensely emotional experience. The peculiar Ady world of love is nowhere more breathlessly displayed than in **"The Hackney Coach,"** which depicts a vehicle of fantasy bearing the lovers to vicarious pleasures. But in the real world their relations were the exhausting storms of hedonism. On their own wings, unaided by conveyances of fantasy, they sail

> . . . into the autumn gloom
> shrieking, pursuing and pursued,
> two hawks with languid, drooping wings.

In **"A Woman's Lap"** Ady identified woman as the material or life force and man as the polarized death force. This identification is also significantly implicit in the fact that nowhere does he ever represent woman as seeking the solution of death whereas for him it may seem the only solution. The difficulty of rubricating Ady's poetry is evident, however, in that in subsequent books the life force of woman becomes more and more a killer force akin to death.

The spiritual disharmony of this early phase of Ady's life is nowhere more evident than in his poems on money. Tied as he was to gentry attitudes, the underlying principles of capitalism were alien and perhaps even repugnant to him. Nevertheless, he was irresistibly drawn toward an adulation of this source of power. In 1806 Wordsworth had written his famous sonnet accusing his fellow men of giving their souls away and thinking of nothing but making money and spending it. The core of the poem is the idea that the nineteenth century was a great time for money-makers but not for thinkers or artists. Almost exactly a hundred years later Ady repudiated the intellectual's sublimated attitude and acknowledged the power of money over the soul of the artist. The two attitudes reflect one poet's recession from socially revolutionary ideas and the other's advance toward them, although for the time being Ady anticipated only what F. Scott Fitzgerald was to develop into a view of life—the struggle between fluid income and wealth as a solid possession.

Ady's longing for gold grew into an obsession as his struggle for meager honoraria from newspaper articles continued. A trip to the Riviera with Léda only whipped up the fury of his longing, and finally he wrote **"The Yellow Flame"** and **"Lord Swine Head."** The latter poem, perhaps the peak of his achievement in the ***New Verses,*** is comparable in its anguish to the Laocoon. The statuary magnificence of the poem is grounded in a Parisian experience. On having seen The Thinker at the Grand Palais, he said it was a pity Rodin had not created a statue of Money, for this would have been an awesome and appalling work. Some months later **"Lord Swine Head"** erupted into being as the poet wrote feverishly in a Budapest cafe, from where a friend rushed the poem stanza by stanza to a newspaper printer. The myth-making powers of the poet are utilized in this work for the revelation of eternally modern forces in primordial garb and for the description of life as being under constant pressures that allow no room for the expression of individuality. The clean-shaven physiognomy of a banker lurks behind the bristled snout of Lord Swine Head as surely as the Old Faun masks a poet.

The inner conflicts over money and love were not resolved in the ***New Verses,*** and for some time thereafter the poet continued to be dominated by them. The solutions, however, are foreshadowed in poems that deal with the poet's dream-making or creative powers. One of the most remarkable of these poems is the **"Scion of**

Midas," in which the poet claims descent from the ass-eared Phrygian king and gives an imagistic illustration of the power the saint had observed in the "low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are."

Although Ady occupied himself with the realm of the unconscious, he avoided the sterility with which complete absorption in introspectiveness threatens the creative mind and stood at an opposite pole from those European symbolists who made a literary dogma of abstention from political affairs. A red chariot pausing in the "misty mauve" of the ***New Verses*** was a portent of at least one line of his thinking. It was also during this period that he became identified with the Social Democrats' support for an attempt of the Hapsburg Emperor to introduce universal suffrage into Hungary, a move designed by the Crown to counter the demands of the Independence Party for the creation of a national army.

The most overtly political aspect of the ***New Verses,*** however, was its attack on a prime convention of "Magyar morality", namely, adherence to the picture drawn of Hungary by the great nineteenth century poets who in epic and song had given the Magyars that feeling of self-confidence in their national distinctiveness which national states have regarded as necessary to cultivate. The sure statements of Petőfi, who loved and stood squarely on the broad and open expanse of the steppes, gave way in Ady to a view of life from the ridges of doubt and paradox. This is evident, for example, in **"The Hortobagy Poet."** Also, **"On the Tisza,"** which foreshadows many neopagan poems, boasts in the first stanza of the poet's measurelessly deep roots tapping the phylogenetic childhood but decries in the second stanza a scene from contemporary rural Hungary. The symbolism of the first stanza is intensely personal in origin. Upon first visiting the Louvre, Ady marveled at finding what seemed his own strange, swart face among the reliefs in the Assyrian-Egyptian collection. Thereafter he repeatedly spoke of his discovery, examining his features before a mirror and exclaiming in self-mockery that Ramses had not been more handsome.

In the localism of the Magyar poems with their trenchant criticism of the Hungarian scene the universality of their significance was all but lost on everyone. But the cry of the poet of Hortobágy that he could have been a "holy bard on any other part of earth" was like the cry of other European poets and artists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century who had turned against the life they saw around them. For the West European poet the cry was against the ugliness of industrial cities, slums, clatter, and tawdriness, and for Ady against an anachronistic social and political order.

The year following the publication of ***New Verses*** was an *annus mirabilis* in Ady's creative life. Having fled once more to Paris, which he had come to regard as a Sherwood Forest (or in Ady's word Bakony, the legendary woodland hideaway of highwaymen) he plundered his striking originality to the full in creating a new book to which he gave the unchristian title of ***Blood and Gold.***

In Budapest and the provincial strongholds the appearance of the new book augmented the fears of aristocrats and gentry that the poet was helping prepare a holocaust. This impression was strengthened by a declaration of faith which Ady published in a defiant challenge to his detractors: "I believe and vow that the revolutionary renovation of Hungary is inevitable. The blessed and marvelous storm is heralded by sacred gulls. Only a shrill restlessness is heard in social and political affairs, but in literature, art, and science the lightning bolts of certainty are here." The air thus cleared, little room existed to mistake the intent of ***Blood and Gold*** or to underestimate the seriousness of its contribution to the political reform movement.

The new book developed further the cyclical structure of ***New Verses.*** However, ***Blood and Gold*** shows a striking advance toward a synthesis in that above all it is a treatment of the sources of creative power and the intermingling elements. Although from the point of view of poetic development ***New Verses*** and ***Blood and Gold*** may be regarded as a unit, a spiritual alteration is perceptible as the "coltish flame" of the earlier work gave way to more sombre hues. The ineluctable whiteness that earlier enveloped Léda deepened into black and scarlet, and the struggle against the "white satanic veil" was replaced by a struggle with a black and unbearably fecund creativity.

The interplay of the fear of death with love for the excitement of living is the subject of the opening cycle, **"Kinsman of Death."** The presentimental arrival of death is described in **"The Ghost Got Into Paris,"** aesthetically one of Ady's most gratifying poems. The first stanza, referring in the external world to some early autumn-like days that actually occurred in Paris during the summer of 1906, states that the chill of death came during the dog-days as the poet walked along the Boulevard of Saint Michel. The second stanza reveals that the events in the external world corresponded with an anxiety suppressed in the poet's inner world:

> small, twiggy songs within my spirit burned—
> purple and pensive, strange and smoky-hued.

In the third stanza the repressed emotion comes to the surface as both the internal and external world speak of death. In the final stanza the anxiety is once more repressed and only the memory of a psychic disturbance, corresponding to the moan of trees in the outer world, remains in the conscious mind. The tremulous subtlety of the poem derives from the delicate weaving of con-

scious allegory and unconscious symbolism into the expression of an almost imperceptible mood half clearly and half unclearly understood. Beneath this Freudian world of symbols and allegories, however, there is an even stranger world of religious mysteries, and the autumn is less the month of August than of the mystical Ab.

Once the thought has risen to the surface, death is thereafter recognized as the never plumbed depth of the unconscious from where arise the phantasmagorias that die in the shackles of life. Death is the subjective world that would make desires manifest without the distortions imposed on them by life. The poet describes himself as the kinsman of death because like death he loves those who refuse the distorted offerings of life.

The dream thoughts about death as the realm of creativity are the subject of **"My Sons' Fate,"** which describes the formation of poetry as the interplay between resistance to death and the evasion of this resistance. Beneath this theme lies Ady's continuous struggle with himself as an unfettered dreamer and a formal artist. The poetry resulting from this struggle is like that which Nietzsche imagined Greek art to be, namely, the outgrowth of a tension between the artistic sense, represented by Apollo, working not on objective materials but on savage unconscious urges, represented by Dionysus. This duality has escaped those critics who have tended to regard Ady as a writer incapable of conscious planning and living in a world where unconscious symbolism is the tyrant lord of creation. Ady is *par excellence* the genius of Coleridge's definition—the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination.

"My Sons' Fate" is an abstract and non-pictorial representation of the dream thoughts about death which in **"My Coffin Steed"** and **"The Black Piano"** are translated into concrete dream imagery. In the first poem the unconscious is symbolized by a black coffin on which the conscious is commanded to ride by dreams symbolized as laconic (compare the dream condensation of Freudian terminology) and weak-eyed urchins who drum the coffin as they arrive at midnight and shuttle around with the speed of unfettered thought. As the poet rides his black mysterious coffin he sits on the closed lid. which is the dividing line between the world of dream and death. In his left hand he holds a bloody rein and in his right hand a whip, the pictorial representation of the line "I seek and shun the storm" in **"My Sons' Fate."** The flames of sulphur, an allusion to the Hadean world, are reminders of the indeterminate distinction between the world of the preternatural and the supernatural. The laughter in the final stanza is the dream-translated weeping of a poet creating under the spell of cruel demons who come from an unknowable world. The black piano symbolizes the same psychic substratum as the black coffin. The instrument, however, is played not by dreams, which can see even though they are weak of sight, but by the completely blinded conscious which has abandoned its role of guiding the unconscious. The resultant music is the melody of life, which is made bearable only by the use of intoxicants. To the beat of this music, which like the original chaos. lies at the very base of existence, the poet expends his life's blood, that is, gives himself up to death through creativity.

In the midst of his preoccupation with death Ady does not fail to keep in touch with reality. This is demonstrated in the curious poem **"The Hotel Lodger"** wherein he reflects on the contrast between his cheap Parisian hotel, symbol of the outer world, and the magic of his room number, the symbol of his poetic afflatus. (He did, in fact, live for a period in room thirty-six on the third floor in his favorite hotel at 15 Rue de Constantinople in Paris). The waiter who will some day announce his death, he states with almost amused detachment, will be aware only of his physical demise but will have no notion of the meaning of the magic numerals or of all the poet's intellectual struggles with death. Few poets since Dante have occupied themselves with the number three to the same extent as Ady, who also utilized tripartite titles for almost all his poems and frequently employed tricolon constructions of syntax.

The **"Kinsman of Death"** cycle deals with that substratum of the conscious which, if it were to triumph, would cause the utter annihilation or death of the conscious. **"The Demon Guile"** cycle deals with this same substratum but offers as a means of access to it not death but a state of self-forgetfulness induced by alcoholic draughts or other media. This state is characterized by the orgiastic impulse of Dionysian emotions which incite the poet to a frenzy of his symbolic powers. The symbols thus evolved are music and dance, nonconcrete symbols which annihilate ordinary experience and penetrate into the true meaning of existence. These dithyrambic symbols are projections of the poet's very own self. The white creatures of the **"Widow Bachelors' Dance"** are such projections who under religious and civic interdiction carouse in the poet's soul during the spring fertility rites on Saint George's eve. The ecstasies of intoxication are followed by a dreamstate in which the drunken realities of Dionysian emotion are translated into the Apollonian world of appearances or concrete images:

> Saint George's day—the dance is done.
> Each widow bachelor turns and goes
> into a midnight yawning grave
> where bloom the woman and a rose.

The final three stanzas symbolize the sudden awakening from the dream with the report of the "swift-sinewed spies", the quick effort of the partially awakened con-

scious to review and interpret the dream and finally the translation of the images when orgy and dream are done into the work of man.

The explication of the **"Widow Bachelors' Dance"** as a creative process involving the emergence of concrete from non-concrete forms through a Delphian intoxication is strengthened by a passage in one of Ady's prose works, **"The Magyar Pimodan"** (after the Hotel Pimodan, where Gautier and Baudelaire chewed and smoked hashish): "Two states of ecstasy are to be found in alcohol, but only persons with very sensitive nervous systems are able to experience both of them. The first state is common to everyone who drinks; it inflames every inclination toward ecstasy and invests us with a feeling of great power. Toward dawn or day we undergo a period of sleep that is interrupted by queer periods of awakening. When we awake our head feels taut, we are the very soul of restless alertness, and we can link the most antipodal ideas together. Then all of a sudden at twilight, wherever we are, eternity envelops our still restless brain and heart. With this we have come completely to the sensation of art, and it is only at such times that I love Homer and that I am able to conceive Michelangelo as he should be conceived. I emphasize that this state of sensitivity, the period of an hour or two which reveals and betrays the greatest secrets, comes on the following evening. This state has no direct relation with alcohol poisoning or ecstasy; it is the perverse and magic manifestation of the nerves from which only these exclamatory words are lacking—we thank our dear master for having given us such sweet sorrows."

Ady created his most complex symbolization of the Dionysian and Apollonian worlds in the title poem to **"The Demon Guile"** cycle. The characteristics of Dionysus and Apollo are masked in the demon into one symbol of a psyche with twofold aspects, a deeper and more primitive one which would express without distortion the naked realities of self-forgetfulness and a more recent one which would give representation to these realities through art (or dreams in Ady's terminology). The first five stanzas of the poem are a depiction of this dual inheritance from an archaic world that came into existence with the dawn of civilization when the two elements began a struggle in the arena of the poet's psyche symbolized as a tavern beneath the windows of which the outer world swirls by and clamors for admission. During this struggle, Demon Guile on one hand prompts the poet to the ecstasies of intoxication and on the other hand wrestles with him in an effort to transform these ecstasies into presentable dreams or art. On the table where the poet drinks are a cross and two candles, funereal symbols that indicate the table top is all which separates the world of self-forgetfulness from the world of death. Stanza six depicts Demon Guile as forever having his steed ready to depart, a symbolization of the evanescent nature of ecstasies. The realization of this evanescence causes the poet in the following nine stanzas to reflect on the barrenness and absurdity of the world outside the tavern to which he must return when ecstasy and dream are done, and he longs to be released from the struggle that is waged on behalf of life. In the final two stanzas the demon departs for a new rebirth in the westward course of civilization, and the poet sinks beneath the table into final death.

The close relationship of creativity to death is also the theme of the **"Good Prince Silence,"** in which the *I* is the poet's symbolization of his own conscious self wandering in the realms of the unconscious where in psychic unrest it creates midst forces beyond understanding. Here the conscious is forever stalked by fear of the disintegration of creative sanity and the abandonment of the conscious to the final curse of silence.

The following cycles, **"Money," "Our Lord"** and **"Leda's Golden Statue,"** deal with the life forces of materialism and love. Even as Jesus had renounced, without rejecting, the materialistic world with his magnificent "Render unto Caesar" so Ady renounced, without rejecting, the world of Christ with his **"Judas and Jesus."** The renunciation came after a grievous struggle:

> Upon basalt of Golgotha
> I gash my heart-beat's anguished plea.
> O Christ, my poet, holy Form,
> I bartered Thee.

The justification follows:

> . . .
> A woman longs for money, silk,
> and waits for me.

Ady cannot accept Christianity to the exclusion of all else because Christ's renunciation of life and his dreams of a Kingdom of Heaven would have forever blocked the realization of his own dream of knowing in life the freedom of creative activity he associated with death. The state of being poor in spirit is incompatible with the state of being a poet.

In ***New Verses*** Ady stated his obsession for gold and gave one possible solution, complete and absolute gratification. With ***Blood and Gold*** the struggle becomes more complex and the professed solutions increasingly subtle. In **"Only One Moment"** he feigns to be content with brief moments of plentifulness that come like the light of inspiration and make everything burn in an "immortal blaze." In **"Lazarus Before the Palace"** he resigns himself to the role of a beggar pampered by the wealthy because they fear his revolutionary powers. In