

immigration; J. Barta, Jr. on enlightened absolutistic theory; L. Arday on 1917–19 British plans for East-Central Europe; T. Frank on Hegel in England; R. Kroes on new conservatism in America. Also, articles on the history of the Debrecen English Department, in-memoriam papers (Fest, Yolland) and book-reviews.

It is regrettable that book-reviews are no longer published in *HSE* after volume X and that teaching methodology is represented by one single study (G. Lengyel on teaching English as a foreign language).

Beginning with volume XII *HSE* has been printed in Kossuth University's Duplicating Office and—now that initial difficulties have been surmounted—its presentation has been improved and the number of misprints diminished.

1986 will be an important year for English studies in Hungary, the centenary of their introduction in the curriculum of Hungarian universities. The *HSE* volumes in preparation have been conceived in anticipation of this anniversary and will again pay due attention to Anglo-Hungarian and Scottish-Hungarian historical and intellectual relations since these are of long standing and particularly important in the case of Debrecen.

Zoltán Abádi-Nagy

Kossuth Lajos Tudományegyetem,
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Clara Györgyey:
Ferenc Molnár

Boston, Twayne Publishers, A Division of G. G. Hall and Co.,
1980. 195. pp. (Twayne's World Authors Series No. 574.)

It is not to the credit of Hungarian self-assessment that the first biography of Ferenc Molnár (1878–1952) and systematization of his works, which can be considered complete in spite of its sketchy character, was conceived not in Hungary but in the United States. All the greater is the pleasure that it has at last been born and through her work Clara Györgyey has undoubtedly done a great service to both the Hungarian and international history of drama and the theatre.

The book depicts in eight chapters the—essentially sad—story which was the life of Ferenc Molnár, and his more joyous career as a writer. The glamor and unexpected successes of the first years—his gluttonous enjoyment of life, money and women—were avenged by the decades of loneliness, mutual misunderstandings and illness—not to mention his rushes of torturing qualms of conscience. And if the man went through the tortures of hell while still alive—merely by living too long in a world which he no longer understood—this was intensified by the tortures the writer had to suffer when he lived long enough to see the dwindling of his creative power and the alienation of his audience.

Clara Györgyey traces this long road in eight concise chapters. She sketches for the American reader the picture of Budapest towards the end of the last century, then she presents a brief but in my view, authentic, biography of Ferenc Molnár. The next two chapters deal with the achievements and failures of the writer of short stories and novels, with occasional side-glances at the dramatist and the overlappings between the prose works and the plays. The following two chapters are about the dramatist, one discussing all his plays except *Liliom* to which, as the central play of his oeuvre, a separate is dedicated. Finally, a picture is drawn of his years in America, followed by a summary of how the author evaluates the writer and his career.

Let me repeat again: it is almost impossible to give this pioneering work the commendation it deserves. The value of the work is enhanced by an excellent bibliography which—primarily

because of its listing of the literature on Molnár published outside Hungary—will probably remain a major source for a long time.

It would be uncalled for to enter into a debate with the author about the system of values on which her judgements are based. I am compelled to remark, however—without arguing about the presence of autobiographical elements—that I find it a gross exaggeration to call Molnár an “autobiographical artist” (in the preface) and to try to prove this in his life’s work. On the contrary: Molnár was an artist trying to conceal his feelings—perhaps that is why he found his real genre in the drama—who *did* make use of the raw material of his own life and emotions but almost never directly, “autobiographically”, in the cases he did so, like in *The Companion* (Hungarian title: *Utítárs a száműzetésben*) his performance was far below his usual standard.

I would also query the “central role” played by *Liliom* if we look at his whole life’s work. It is probable that it was his most successful play; it is more than probable that both its ruthlessness and sentimentalism are close to his real-life experiences, but I doubt that it is the peak of the career of Ferenc Molnár either from the point of view of the artist or from that of the craftsman.

In several places Clara Györgyey makes passing hints at parallels and coincidences between characters in the works of Molnár and in the great works of world literature. She makes an important intimation that Schnitzler had possibly the greatest impact of any writer on him. It would be a good idea for her to support this and similar notions with a more thorough documentation—perhaps in a separate study. Having made such suggestions, she, however, reiterates her assertions (p. 64, 172) that Molnár did not have any contact with the literary movements of his age and that his reading did not have a significant influence on him either. I think Györgyey could prove the opposite of this on the basis of her own material—without being afraid that it would undermine the significance of Ferenc Molnár as a writer.

Finally, special credit is due to the careful and attractive printing, including the correct spelling of Hungarian names and titles. I found only one disturbing mistake, the criticism of Osvát (his first name is Ernő, who wrote about Molnár several times) is not equivalent to the criticism of Osváth (his first name is Béla: p. 141) mentioned by Györgyey. My other remark is that the excellent sketch by Ady on Molnár is, unfortunately, not even mentioned in the book.

Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem,
Budapest

Péter Nagy

Romániai magyar irodalmi lexikon, I

Bukarest, Kriterion Kiadó, 1980. 650 pp.

Hungarian literature in Rumania came into existence in the twenties after the provisions of the Peace Treaty of Trianon had awarded the greater part of historical Hungary to the neighbouring countries, and historical Transylvania as well as the adjacent territories had come under Rumanian jurisdiction. In these territories, besides the Rumanian majority, there lived two nationalities of sizeable population: Hungarian and German. (Of the population that came under Rumanian jurisdiction 53.8% proclaimed themselves to be of Rumanian nationality, 31.7% Hungarian and 10.6% German.) Hungarians became a minority group and their ethnical and cultural survival was strongly threatened by the assimilative endeavours of the Rumanian policy that aimed at establishing a uniform national state.

Under such circumstances a very important role was allotted to the majority culture, especially literature, which considered it its primary role to maintain the national and historical consciousness of the minority Hungarian population and to foster the intellectual connections of the Transylvanian peoples: Hungarians, Rumanians and Germans. Hungarian literature in Rumania