

Literary Institutions and Desire

Debates in Hungarian Literary Theory around 1900

Imre Zsolt Lengyel 

Institute of Hungarian Literature and Cultural Studies, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, 4/A Múzeum körút, 1088 Budapest, Hungary; lengyel.imre.zsolt@btk.elte.hu

Received 20 October 2025 | Accepted 5 April 2026 | Published online 14 August 2026

Abstract. This paper proposes a new framework for analysing literary-theoretical debates by examining programmatic writings in Hungarian cultural production around 1900. Methodologically, it combines Deleuze and Guattari's central concept —productive desire that invests the social field immediately—with a Bourdieusian account of field dynamics. On this basis, the paper interprets statements by influential authors not as merely ideological pronouncements but as strategic attempts to channel libidinal investments toward particular definitions and institutional configurations of literature. The analysis shows that their arguments consistently invoke a vision of social machinery that would be more strongly consolidated and powerful through the modes of operation and institutional arrangements they endorse, or, conversely, risk disintegration under alternative practices and competing institutions. Pál Gyulai framed supervised cultivation as the precondition for real community; Jenő Rákosi treated market-based freedom as the engine of national expansion; Zsolt Beöthy advocated a strict canon to preserve cultural coherence; Ignotus envisioned radical tolerance as the basis of solidarity; and the young György Lukács argued that only architectonic art—or revolution—could counteract forces threatening the very possibility of human relations. Ultimately, their efforts to attract and fix libidinal energies to divergent institutional arrangements through promises of consolidation appear to have intensified antagonisms rather than resolving them. The paper thus demonstrates how deploying desire as a resource, paradoxically, generated new forms of fragmentation within a modernizing cultural field, even as it disseminated reterritorializing definitions and practices of art that reduced its compatibility with the possibility of a libidinal revolution.

Keywords: cultural field, institutions, modernization, libidinal investment, Kisfaludy Society, György Lukács, Nyugat

Introduction

The function of literature has never been self-evident. One might even argue that literature in its modern sense emerged precisely when the social order and the communities capable of sustaining quasi-general consensuses about the correct and

meaningful uses of texts began to disintegrate.¹ The indeterminacy produced by the differentiation of the art subsystem brought with it greater freedom, but also a perpetual need to secure recognition for literary practices and to carve out a place for literature within an ever-changing society.² The profusion of treatises, essays, and articles in modernity that debate the purpose of literature (or of art more generally) testifies both to the problem's persistence and to the degree of responsiveness to context, creativity, and rhetorical skill required to propose a persuasive theory—and to disseminate it successfully. Each attempt at a definitive answer, however, only further complicated the question of what literature is.³

Even though literature was never something one could take for granted, there were times and places in which its embeddedness was relatively secure, and others in which its position appeared especially precarious. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, it was widely believed by both contemporaries and their immediate posterity that Hungary was shifting from the former condition to the latter. In the middle third of the nineteenth century, the fate of literature was tightly interwoven with the nation-building project and the struggle for national independence—endeavours enjoying broad public support. In retrospective accounts of this period, the subscriber is a recurring figure who “was not particularly interested in the works of the writers” but “wanted to make a patriotic sacrifice,”⁴ suggesting that even those who derived little direct benefit from literature regarded it as vitally important.

After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867—an arrangement that, with certain limitations, restored the sovereignty of the Hungarian Kingdom and enabled the (re)establishment of national cultural institutions—many thought that this project and this struggle had been practically accomplished. Consequently, the persuasive power of justifications for literature grounded in these aims was waning. In 1890, in the first issue of a significant new middlebrow magazine, *A Hét* (The Week), the philosopher and art critic Alexander Bernát described the situation thus:

“For decades, literature was for us far more than a source of aesthetic pleasure, a storehouse of agreeable reading, or an interpreter of the thoughts and feelings of a life flowing in the riverbed of a secure national existence. Our writers could serve aesthetics only with one hand; with the other, they raised a loud and inspiring defense of the national spirit. Literature was not

1 Guillory, “The Postrhetorical Condition”; Shiner, *The Invention of Art*.

2 Plumpe, *Epochen moderner Literatur*; Rákai, *Az Irodalomtudós tekintete: Az önállósuló irodalom társadalmi integrációja és az esztétikai tapasztalat problémái 1780 és 1830 között*.

3 Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market*.

4 Schöpflin, “A Magyar Író,” 312. (All translations from Hungarian are mine unless noted otherwise.)

a form of entertainment for us, but a temple where we prayed, conspired, lamented, despaired, and rose again and again. Should we complain about this now that we can enjoy the fruits of that great struggle? Perhaps because the taste of the fruit on the tree of literature is still somewhat sour? When the great burden of defending national existence fell from our shoulders, the older bond tying the public to literature loosened; neither literature nor the public could immediately find its way.”⁵

What Alexander’s essay sought to achieve—namely, forging a new kind of bond between literature and the public—was, as my paper will show, an aspiration he shared with several other members of the literary intelligentsia of the period. The creation of such new connections appeared particularly urgent in light of the growing competition from the entertainment industry, invigorated as one of the consequences of Hungary’s transition to capitalism, a process accelerated by the Compromise of 1867. While many commentators regarded institutions traditionally associated with literature—publishers of “serious” books and journals—as being in a state of crisis,⁶ newspapers, theatres, and music halls were thriving,⁷ claiming an ever-increasing share of the public’s time and money. At the same time, the sciences emerged as rivals to literature, presenting themselves as forms of knowledge purportedly more profitable and more attuned to the demands of the modern age.

The main hypothesis of this paper is that studying the authors who most effectively persuaded a critical mass of people, thereby fostering flourishing literary institutions, may shed light on the era by revealing the desires they successfully mobilized. I apply the theory of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who in *Anti-Oedipus* famously argued for a “productive”⁸ (anti-Platonist, Spinozist, and Nietzschean)⁹ conception of desire, contending that “the social field is immediately invested by desire, that it is a historically determined product of desire”¹⁰—meaning that only formations capable of securing a sufficient degree of libidinal investment will emerge and endure. Deleuze and Guattari further draw a marked distinction between “an unconscious libidinal investment of desire” and “the preconscious investments of

5 Alexander, “Irodalmi Bajok,” 11.

6 Lengyel, “Újságírás, közönség, irodalom. Az 1900 körüli évtizedek irodalmi diskurzusa a piacodással kapcsolatos dilemmák kontextusában,” 21–30.

7 Gluck, *The Invisible Jewish Budapest*, 139–178; Bezecsky, “Az időszaki sajtó mint a szépirodalom közege.”

8 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 26.

9 Smith, “Immanence and Desire.”

10 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 29.

interest,”¹¹ maintaining that “[i]nterest always comes after.”¹² For them, this asymmetry accounts for the recurrent phenomenon of individuals committing themselves to allegiances that run counter to their own material or rational advantage, and it underwrites their contention that an allegiance of this type cannot be adequately addressed as “a question of ideology.”¹³ In attempting to answer the ensuing “fundamental problem of political philosophy”—“Why do men fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?”¹⁴—Deleuze and Guattari posit that “there exists a disinterested love of the social machine, of the form of power, and of the degree of development in and for themselves.”¹⁵ That is, a potent social formation that “develop[s] and organize[s] the energies and forces under its command” to a high degree¹⁶ is likely to attract the libidinal investments of even those whom it damages or ruins, and these subjects come to desire not merely its persistence but even its expansion. Deleuze and Guattari encapsulate this unconscious disposition of the typical (“paranoiac”) modern individual in the exclamation “Oh how beautiful the machine is!”¹⁷

I find this line of reasoning illuminating because it may help us make sense of a conspicuous pattern that emerges from the texts analysed below—definitive statements by authors that were among the dominant figures of the literary field around 1900: two presidents of the influential literary society *Kisfaludy Társaság* (Pál Gyulai and Zsolt Beöthy); the editor-in-chief of the market-leading newspaper *Budapesti Hírlap* (Jenő Rákosi); the editor-in-chief of the prestigious highbrow literary magazine *Nyugat* (Ignotus); and a philosopher who was in the process of establishing an outstanding international reputation (György Lukács). Although the theoretical and ideological positions articulated in these texts vary considerably, their arguments repeatedly allude to a kind of social machinery that could either become more expansive and powerful through the modes of operation and institutional arrangements of literature they advocated, or declined in efficacy and risk breakdown when it came under the influence of alternative practices and competing institutions. This suggests that the authors indeed regarded desire discussed above as a source of energy to mobilize and harness in support of literature in its struggle for a secure position, and that they invoked the potential inhibition of such desires

11 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 345.

12 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 346.

13 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 104.

14 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 29.

15 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 346.

16 Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*, 101.

17 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 346.

as a strategic resource in the ongoing fight for dominance within the literary field.¹⁸ As a consequence, these conflicting appeals to the desire for a stable and well-organized social formation did not contribute to its realization but rather to the production of deep and enduring divisions within the Hungarian literary and intellectual field. The aim of the following analysis is to contribute to the reconstruction of the genesis of this fragmentation, while demonstrating its paradoxical character.

Pál Gyulai: community through cultivation

Founded in 1836, the Kisfaludy Society was the most important and most prestigious literary institution in nineteenth-century Hungary, as well as the principal representative of literary autonomy in the period: Admission depended on members' votes, and the Society awarded its prizes according to internally defined criteria of quality.¹⁹ Its open sessions functioned as public occasions for presenting its activities, while the presidential addresses that inaugurated these sessions sought to orient audiences concerning fundamental questions of literature. It may be regarded as a clear symptom of the prevailing sense of uncertainty that the Society's newly elected president, Pál Gyulai, began his first such address in 1880 by quoting the fashionable view that "the flower of poetry fell by us as well; it is the sciences' fruit that is ripening, and one cannot draw strength from aesthetic and literary education for the struggles of the age."²⁰

Gyulai did not entirely deny this diagnosis. He readily conceded that

"[...] hereafter, poetry, and literature in a stricter sense, may no longer exert such a great, virtually exclusive influence on the national spirit as it has over the seventy years up to now, when it has fulfilled its huge task: awakening dormant patriotism, raising to consciousness the idea of nationalism, cultivating the language, and transforming our social and political conditions. [...] It is the historical, political, and natural sciences that must now bring forth a stronger new generation capable of solving the major and most difficult problem of Hungary."²¹

Yet, this admission merely served as the point of departure for a new, allegedly more modern specification of the function of "literature in a stricter sense." While Gyulai accepted that the sciences promoted progress—and that such progress was

18 Bourdieu, "Principles for a Sociology of Cultural Works."

19 On the history and functioning of the Society, see: Kéky, "A Kisfaludy-társaság története (1836–1936)."

20 Gyulai, "A költészet s az irodalmi műveltség [1880]," 176.

21 Gyulai, "A költészet s az irodalmi műveltség [1880]," 177.

generally beneficial—he emphasized that modernization also carried potential dangers from which the sciences alone could not shield the nation. In his inaugural address, he assembled a strikingly elaborate catalogue of what a nation deprived of literature would resemble:

“Imagination and humour require nourishment, and a nation that is not enthusiastic about the beautiful will be less keen on the good as well; it is prone to become one-sided in its search for truth and, instead of spiritual pleasures, happily runs after sensual ones. If lyrical poetry falls silent—or, which is the same thing, ceases to advocate the great ideas and sentiments of religion, family life, and patriotism—the community begins to decline. If epic poetry and drama cease to be noble interpreters of history and society, the historical sense and the national spirit grow numb, and the cult of moral and social purpose decays. If the novel is reduced to mere entertainment, a substitute for cards and dominoes, frivolity subdues the intellect. If satire degenerates into lampoonery, pamphlets and newspapers also tend toward personal remarks and libel. If the art of oration deteriorates, drivel flourishes in Parliament. If science despises taste and the study of art forms, it becomes insipid and pedantic and, by cutting itself off from the public, loses part of its influence.”²²

The tendency of Gyulai’s assertions is clear: If citizens lacked the sensibility, refinement, and empathy that literature purportedly provides, the recently re-established nation would degenerate into a pseudo-community whose members were egoistic and unrestrained, lacking the means of rational communication with one another, and sharing no common understanding of the world. Preserving the nation as a real community—one that could thereby function as a cohesive and potent machine—was the keystone of Gyulai’s project.²³ To achieve this, he assigned to literature a middle position between unentertaining sermonizing, which would leave the public indifferent, and mere entertainment, which would fail to cultivate it. That is, while he accepted that art had to cater to the needs of the public—“When someone wants to freshen up mentally, to have a good time, to enjoy himself, he shies away if he gets offered something else. [...] The fundamental rule of the beautiful work is to delight people and to appeal to them; to decent people, that is. Art is its own end.”²⁴—Gyulai also insisted that literature could not rely exclusively on the market, which might very well corrupt it.

22 Gyulai, “A költészet s az irodalmi műveltség [1880],” 177–78.

23 On the relationship between literature and the nation in Gyulai’s writings, see: S. Varga, *A nemzeti költészet csarnokai*, 496–512.

24 Gyulai, “Művészet és erkölcs [1887],” 248.

This line of thought can be understood as a justification for institutions such as literary societies and literary criticism (the latter perhaps the most significant genre in Gyulai's oeuvre), as well as the basis of his aversion to forms of literature gravitating toward unrestrained populism—feuilletons,²⁵ newspapers,²⁶ and the popular novels of Mór Jókai²⁷ and others. Gyulai's claim that literature must remain faithful to its "eternal substance" made the supervisory function of non-market institutions appear especially important; in his view, only literature offering an idealized representation of reality could be expected to fulfill its cultivating mission.²⁸ He emphasized both components of this definition equally: By condensing "the essential, the characteristic features" of reality "to express a certain idea,"²⁹ writers, he suggested, could create a miniaturized version of the actual world, enabling individuals to see themselves as members of a moral community and to act accordingly—thereby resisting atomization and the threat of societal self-destruction.

Jenő Rákosi: expansion through the market

One of the most vocal opponents of the market-restricting ambitions of Gyulai and his circle was Jenő Rákosi, who, besides being a well-liked playwright and journalist, was also a successful businessman. Between 1875 and 1881 he served as president of the *Népszínház* (Popular Theatre) in Budapest, and after 1881 he became the owner and editor of *Budapesti Hírlap* (Budapest Daily), two of the most profitable cultural enterprises in Hungary at the time.³⁰ Presenting himself as a proud self-made man, Rákosi repeatedly emphasized that these ventures thrived by the grace of the public. His polemical writings may thus be read as a series of attempts to complement the relatively high economic capital of these enterprises with symbolic capital by challenging its principal possessors in the cultural field—institutions such as the Kisfaludy Society or the Academy of Sciences.³¹ His main target was what he portrayed as these ostensible authorities' judgment (and typically condemnation) of "literature at work" (that is, popular, entertaining, or applied literature), a judgment he claimed they delivered according to the "arrogant and neutral standards" of "established beauty," "taking nothing else

25 Gyulai, "A Tárczaelbeszélésekről [1898]."

26 Gyulai, "Hírlapjainkról [1895]."

27 Gyulai, "Jókai legújabb művei [1869]"; Gyulai, "Jókai mint hírlapíró [1875]."

28 Gyulai, "A költészet lényegéről [1885]."

29 Gyulai, "Művészet és erkölcs [1887]," 251.

30 On Rákosi's career, see: N. Pál, *Modernség, progresszió, Ady Endre és az Ady-Rákosi vita*, 185–205.

31 For an overview of Rákosi's literary theoretical positions, see: Lengyel, "1881 Elindul a Budapesti Hírlap. Az Irodalomteoretikus Rákosi Jenő."

into consideration.”³² These standards, he argued, could be applied only to works of “abstractly literary value,” which he equated with texts produced outside the marketplace, supported by “sponsors, academies, or whatever.”³³

If such authorities attempted to extend their jurisdiction beyond the narrow confines of the most autonomous pole of the literary field, however, they would become not merely irrelevant but dangerous, Rákosi contended—dangerous above all if their irrelevance was not universally acknowledged. In his inaugural address as a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, he mounted his most systematic attack on what he regarded as the excesses of academism. He invoked the example of French classicism to warn against the replacement of the general public and free competition by the rule of a clique—an arrangement which, in his view, inevitably leads to the dominance of untalented authorities and to the “paralysis” and “one-sided degeneration” of art.³⁴ By deploying familiar arguments from the critique of aristocratic privilege (at one point even comparing autonomous cultural institutions to the House of Lords), Rákosi sought to appeal to the liberal sentiments of the Hungarian intelligentsia.

For Rákosi, however, the “paralysis” of art was not primarily an aesthetic concern. Indeed, he readily admitted in one of his articles that “heavier literary traffic” might make literature “muddier” by forcing writers to serve ephemeral tastes rather than posterity.³⁵ Nevertheless, he still regarded this as preferable to a situation in which Hungarian literature became more exclusive and homogeneous because the “stone masons” (the counterparts of high-art “sculptors”³⁶) were terrorized into insecurity and silence by elitist critics, or because the press contracted in its attempt to meet Gyulai’s expectation of uniformly high quality.³⁷ The reason was that, in his view, Hungarian literature “should serve every taste, both good and bad,” so that it might “satisfy any demands”—and thereby render “everything that is not Hungarian unnecessary or at least dispensable.”³⁸

Rákosi’s aspiration to displace other literatures can be traced to his understanding of nationality as almost exclusively a matter of language:

“The national language is the incarnation of the national spirit. The Hungarian national spirit is the Hungarian language—to the extent that it is more active, in a better and more vital way, in an immigrant couple’s

32 Rákosi, “Lukácsy Sándor,” 170.

33 Rákosi, “Lukácsy Sándor,” 170.

34 Rákosi, “Modern aesthetika,” 137.

35 Rákosi, “A magyar író,” 82.

36 Rákosi, “Lukácsy Sándor.”

37 Rákosi, “Kupa Árpád.”

38 Rákosi, “Kossuth és irodalmunk [1882],” 58.

child who has grown up surrounded exclusively by the Hungarian language than in a gentleman from an ancient Hungarian family who received his education in foreign languages.”³⁹

With this conception, Rákosi directly linked literature to the cause of expanding and consolidating the Hungarian nation. By producing all sorts of engaging works in Hungarian, he argued, writers could expose a wider population to the effects of the Hungarian language and thereby make them more Hungarian—a goal he considered essential given the long suppression of Hungarian national identity under the Habsburg Empire and the multiethnic, multilingual character of the Kingdom of Hungary. If Hungarian could become the most attractive culture in the region, he believed, people of different ethnic backgrounds would identify as Hungarians on a large scale and raise their children as genuine Hungarians. He viewed the case of the rapidly developing capital, Budapest—then emerging as a major regional entertainment hub—as a model for the entire kingdom:

“The rudimentary figures of our art invaded the lower stratum of the city’s population as well; the music halls, cabarets, and other such primitive means of cultural life gained ground. In our youth, we proudly said that Hungarians did not deal with such lowly art, Budapest was German, and it would stay German. We were wrong. Today, an organic national life needs the finest organs just as much as the basest and most unesthetic ones to remain healthy.”⁴⁰

The bottom line is that Rákosi promised to strengthen the national machine by means very different from those proposed by Gyulai. He argued that literature, understood as part of the entertainment industry, could promote the peaceful assimilation of minorities and thereby bring about the gradual dissolution of ethnic differences in the Carpathian Basin, culminating in a homogeneous—and thus, in his view, powerful—kingdom of thirty million Hungarians.⁴¹ To advance this cause, he insisted, Hungarian intellectuals needed to set aside the reservations of Gyulai and his circle and embrace the free market in the domain of culture.

Zsolt Beöthy: coherence through canon formation

Since Pál Gyulai was repeatedly criticized for his alleged elitism, it is significant that the person elected in 1899 as the next president of the Kisfaludy Society was Zsolt Beöthy—a literary historian who regarded the question of popularity as crucial.

39 Rákosi, “A nyelv kultusza,” 16.

40 Rákosi, “Az idegen elemek beáramlása [1913],” 138.

41 Nagy, “Jenő Rákosi and the Hungarian Empire of 30 Million People.”

When he attempted to define literature at the outset of his university lectures on the theory of literary history, he employed formulations such as:

“Thus, the defining trait of the contemporary concept of literature will be the following: It is the aggregate of the works of the mind that are addressed to the entire nation. [...] Now, the question is what constitutes the center of literature thus conceived, thus delineated? We may consider poetry as such a center of literature, since its subject is of a kind that addresses everybody, so it requires a tone and a language that everyone understands.”⁴²

To contextualize this definition, in his lectures, Beöthy offered a brief sketch of the cultural history of humankind. In prehistory, he argued, “poetry, religion, history, and the sciences virtually all coexisted in the myth,” which formed the basis of a shared culture encompassing the entire “nation.” Later, as “the branches of intellectual production” began to ramify, virtually all works were still composed in verse, which allowed them to “address everybody” and to be “easily committed to everyone’s memory.”⁴³ This still constituted a unitary culture, but

“progress continues towards differentiation. [...] Different circles of intellectual work separate from each other more and more, further and further. Especially in the case of certain branches of science, their modes of expression, language, and approach increasingly become such that they do not consider the whole nation, only a certain group with a particular inclination and education.”⁴⁴

Beöthy illustrated the endpoint of this process with an anecdote about two German physicists, Helmholtz and Boltzmann, of whom it was allegedly said that they were writing exclusively for each other, since only the former could comprehend the latter’s books, and vice versa.⁴⁵ The message was clear: In modernity, a common language (in this case, German) does not in itself guarantee mutual understanding, as individuals can deploy the same linguistic medium in radically different ways. Without literature maintaining the unifying function once performed by myth, national machines risk breaking down: Left to their own devices, they disintegrate into subgroups lacking shared points of reference and incapable of effective communication.

Consequently, for Beöthy, literature required not expansion but demarcation: What was needed was not a vast and heterogeneous corpus designed to cater to the tastes of every social stratum, but a narrower set of works — each of which addressed

42 Beöthy, *Az irodalomtörténet elmélete*, vol. I, 12–18.

43 Beöthy, *Az irodalomtörténet elmélete*, vol. I, 14–15.

44 Beöthy, *Az irodalomtörténet elmélete*, vol. I, 16.

45 Beöthy, *Az irodalomtörténet elmélete*, vol. I, 24.

to and acceptable for every member of the nation. This notion fundamentally contradicted Rákosi's efforts to diversify Hungarian literature in order to satisfy the demands of all groups; from Beöthy's perspective, such diversification undermined the only counterbalance to differentiation and threatened to replace the possibility of a universal Hungarian culture with a loose and dysfunctional conglomerate of subcultures connected only by language.

Accordingly, Beöthy's expectations regarding assimilation markedly differed from Rákosi's. While he believed that acculturation could transform someone into a genuine member of another nation, he maintained that those who wished to become Hungarian had to acquire more than the language:

"Our language gains ground, and so does the feeling of community. But this feeling must strike root in the historically formed soil of the Hungarian spirit, and it must draw its water of life from there. This ongoing conquest will only be truly reassuring for the secure, undisturbed, and self-faithful development of Hungarian intellectual life, and it will only be a genuine strengthening of our spirit if it is a conquest not only of our language but also of our ideals."⁴⁶

As the phrase "self-faithful development" indicates, the unity Beöthy sought to cultivate had both synchronic and diachronic dimensions. From his perspective, the project of assimilation through the market posed threats on both fronts. The superficial assimilation of minorities, he feared, could not only leave the nation without a shared frame of reference but also hollow out its essence so dramatically that it would eventually perish:

"This historical unity and the permeation of the collective consciousness by this historical unity is the indispensable condition of our national development—in fact, of our survival. Literature must serve as a guiding example. We must feel in our souls that we are the descendants of ancient Hungarian generations—whether by blood or not. This is the *verbum veritatis* of the Hungarian future."⁴⁷

Although Beöthy equated any alteration of the nation's essence with destruction, he nevertheless wanted the nation to grow and develop. He supported not only assimilation but also the importation of foreign ideas and knowledge.⁴⁸ This apparent contradiction could be resolved through the concept of organic growth:

46 Beöthy, "Elnöki megnyitó beszéd [1907]," 4.

47 Beöthy, "Elnöki megnyitó beszéd [1903]," 6.

48 On the relationship between nation and literature in Beöthy's works, see: Szénási, *Néma vár-ostrom*, 35–47.; Dávidházi, *Egy nemzeti tudomány születése*, 847–70.

Whatever was foreign, Beöthy argued, had to be molded into a shape appropriate for the nation, enabling progress while leaving the national “substance” unchanged. Such growth, he maintained, was possible only on the basis of thorough knowledge of the national spirit, of which literature—understood as the universally acceptable corpus—was “the most direct expression.”⁴⁹ Similarly, since works of art detached from “the shared spirit of a nation, an age, a tradition”⁵⁰ were unlikely to endure, the high literary canon necessarily consisted, in his view, of eminent expressions of the national spirit, despite their apparent differences and internal tensions.⁵¹

Accordingly, in his lectures and in his presidential addresses to the Kisfaludy Society, this canon appeared as a panacea: It would secure national unity both synchronically and diachronically while simultaneously enabling progress—the nation would remain a stable and self-expanding machinery. Beöthy therefore frequently exhorted especially younger intellectuals to devote more attention to Hungarian literary history in addition to foreign cultures and in place of ephemeral trends.⁵² His conceptualization aimed to reinforce the position of “serious” literary practices and institutions that were historically self-reflective and less oriented toward entertainment than the market would permit. At the same time, he sought to distance himself theoretically from the attitude (attributed to his predecessor) of treating widespread popularity as a cause for suspicion. In practice, however, Beöthy’s anti-elitism often manifested itself in sweeping complaints about contemporary literature and in wariness toward new works that seemed disconnected from tradition or insufficiently comprehensible or acceptable to all—and thus, in his view, unable to fulfill literature’s function of sustaining the nation’s unity.

Ignotus: solidarity through tolerance

The presidential address of the Kisfaludy Society in 1908 was one of the many occasions on which Beöthy voiced such complaints; it became particularly memorable because this lecture prompted Ignotus, the editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *Nyugat* (West), to describe Beöthy’s conception of literature as a “persecutor aesthetics” in an oft-cited article in one of the journal’s first issues. Ignotus’s aversion to Beöthy’s ideas dated back to the early 1890s. Ignotus was a young poet and a journalist for *A Hét* when he already commented on Beöthy’s above-quoted essay *Maradandó alkotások* [Enduring Works of Art], concluding his article as follows:

49 Beöthy, *Az irodalomtörténet elmélete*, vol. I, 30.

50 Beöthy, “Maradandó alkotások,” 1.

51 On the context and reception of this lecture, see: Kosztolánczy, “»Egy Phalanx«,” 296–97.

52 Beöthy, “Elnöki megnyitó beszéd [1908].”

“The one thing we will never understand is how the writings of someone born on Hungarian soil, who went to Hungarian schools, learned from Hungarian poets, reads Hungarian journals, lives in a Hungarian environment, and writes in Hungarian could not be from the Hungarian spirit—unless they desire every Hungarian to write the same things in the same way as what sprang from the souls of older Hungarian writers. Evidently, the above are not refutations of Beöthy’s beautiful essay but reflections it aroused in us. Nobody in their right mind would dare or want to deny the essay’s conclusion: the necessity of the national character of poetry. But we will never admit (and neither does Zsolt Beöthy claim) that national poetry may be nothing but that parochially folkish school which, among other things, wants to wipe out its own country’s capital and with it every civilizational achievement of its thousand-year-long struggles. Not to mention that its intolerance (which does not always stem from narrow-mindedness and not necessarily from a respectable bias) is hardly capable of filling with enthusiasm the other races that respectably want to assimilate into the Hungarian nation.”⁵³

Despite the article’s ambiguous rhetoric, this passage makes it clear that Ignotus entered the debate about unity with motives similar to those of both Rákosi and Beöthy: like them, he supported the assimilation of minorities and was wary of anything that might disrupt this project of enlarging and homogenizing the Hungarian national machine. Ignotus elaborated on this theme in the 1908 article mentioned above:

“Nevertheless, politics has tasks concerning the national character of literature, but only indirectly. No doubt, a poetic work is the more sublime the wider that sympathetic community is from whose soul the peculiar stamp of its character emerges. And we can only hope—and achieve by way of appropriate politics—that all of us who live together in this country and are political members of the nation may become one (if possible) in language and (in any case) in feeling, thinking, worldview, pastimes, aspirations, in distinctive sensibility, and distinctive traits of our personalities. But for this politics, tolerance is needed; moreover, this politics should begin with tolerance; moreover, this politics is tolerance. Because it is not true that tolerance is the virtue of the sheep; it is the virtue of the clever, the superior, the nobly sly, and those who march steadily toward their goals. Indeed, the wolf is the intolerant one: it can make others howl with it, but it can never make them sing with it—still less sympathize with it.”⁵⁴

53 Ignotus, “Maradandó alkotások,” 34.

54 Ignotus, “Utóirat (A Perzekutor-esztetikáról),” 228.

Ignotus's key point was that the assimilatory project required far more circumspection than Beöthy's writings—and the school associated with him—seemed to acknowledge. He feared that declarations concerning the qualities of the national spirit could cause those who did not fit the description to feel excluded from Hungarianness, leading to fear and estrangement. By contrast, he argued, radical tolerance and the absence of rigid criteria could, in the long term, enable such individuals to become integral members of the nation—paradoxically facilitating the country's unification and consolidation.

The differences in their conceptions of literature added to the deepening disagreement between Beöthy and Ignotus. Regarding the connection between writers and the national spirit, Beöthy emphasized the importance of learning in recognizing the nation's historical essence and actual demands; Ignotus, by contrast, treated literature strictly as the sphere of self-expression and regarded any conscious effort to jeopardize sincerity and to be virtually foreign to art. As Ignotus postulated a strong and reciprocal connection between the artist and artwork, Beöthy's statements assumed an ominous meaning for him. When Beöthy labeled a work of art “unnational” because it seemed unsuitable for general acceptance or disconnected from tradition, Ignotus understood such judgments as implying that the author, too, was alien to the nation—or should be excluded from it. Accordingly, he presented Beöthy's quest for integrative works of art—those capable of serving as shared points of reference—and the selectivity it required as an attempt to banish certain personalities, attitudes, or individuals, which he regarded as a grave danger to national unity and leading to the disintegration of the national machine.

In opposition to the standpoint he attributed to his adversaries, over the years Ignotus developed an alternative theory that conceptualized literature not as a common ground but as a virtual gallery representing the diverse personalities and experiences of the people living in Hungary. This line of thought led him to invalidate all criteria for belonging to Hungarian literature except the sincerity of self-expression—just as he rejected all rigid criteria for belonging to the Hungarian nation in the case of citizens:

“Either we tailor a uniform for the writer's thinking, feeling, interests, and voice, thereby forcing him to lie or, at any rate, write poorly, or we accept as Hungarian and as literature what Hungarians *de facto* write, and we abandon the persecutor aesthetics and the assessment of the literary worth of writers on the scales of politics.”⁵⁵

While Ignotus's stance fundamentally contradicted Beöthy's arguments against heterogeneity in literature, he also distanced himself from the free-market position.

55 Ignotus, “Utóirat (A Perzekutor-esztetikáról),” 228.

The mission of *Nyugat*, he declared at one of the journal's soirées, was not to fulfill the public's demands but "to train the readers to be tolerant of the writers, not to follow their own tastes."⁵⁶ Since the artwork is a direct expression of the artist's soul, he argued, the public of a society aspiring to tolerance must not allow itself to favour only certain kinds of works—that is, certain kinds of personalities. Moreover, an artist attempting to cater to audience expectations could produce only insincere—and therefore defective—art.

Thus, Ignotus's message to those invested in making Hungarian literature great and the Hungarian nation integrated and thriving was to give their "love, interest, support, and respect" to "our writers,"⁵⁷ meaning the contributors to *Nyugat*—which he portrayed as the embodiment of a virtual gallery of Hungarians. Its editors assessed submitted works solely by their literary quality (above all, their sincerity and originality), ensuring that the journal offered a faithful representation of the nation. By protecting its independence from both politics and the market, *Nyugat* promised to inculcate tolerance in the nation, thereby serving its unity, expansion, and power—and, in any case, it succeeded in consolidating its position as the new centre of the autonomous pole of the Hungarian literary field,⁵⁸ eventually superseding the Kisfaludy Society.

György Lukács: unity through constructive art (or revolution)

To emphasize the artist's total freedom from prescriptions, Ignotus often repeated (with slight variations): "The artist may do anything he likes, provided he knows how to do what he likes"—a phrase that eventually became his trademark. Thus, when György Lukács's essay *The Parting of the Ways* (published in *Nyugat* in 1910) quoted this sentence, it would have been clear to every reader that he was referencing the journal's editor-in-chief, even though he did not name him. Lukács's essay offered a fundamental critique of the position of Ignotus and *Nyugat*, which he subsumed under the phenomenon of Impressionism—the dominant worldview of his contemporary world. Lukács's diagnosis of modernity echoed the concerns raised in Beöthy's lectures, with the significant difference that, in Lukács's assessment, Beöthy's nightmare had already materialized: In the absence of shared frames of reference, communication itself had become impossible:

"With the end of the solidity of things, the solidity of the ego also ceased to exist; and the loss of facts meant the loss of values. There remained nothing else but mood. Only a mood of equal rank and importance within

56 Ignotus, "Író és közönség," 107.

57 Ignotus, "Író és közönség," 106.

58 Kosztolányi Tibor, "Indulás."

and between individuals. [...] Everything being subjective, all unanimity of meaning ceased to exist; statements had lost their meaning, for they no longer excluded the possibility of an opposing statement.”⁵⁹

In Lukács’s writings from this period, the long-running discourse on the lack of unity assumed an almost apocalyptic tone. His essay *Aesthetic Culture*, also published in 1910, provides another stark illustration. There, Lukács attempted to depict the condition of “culture today,” insisting at the outset that culture, in his sense, presupposed unity and that only a well-organized and potent machine merited the name “culture”: “Culture: the unifier of life; a unity strong enough to intensify and enrich life.”⁶⁰ Modern men, however, he argued, were forced to live in a paradoxical pseudo-culture:

“In a sense, the unity of aesthetic culture does exist: as a lack of unity. Aesthetic culture has a central tenet: the peripheral nature of all things. [...] What enables aesthetic culture to transcend the purely individual (for man’s heritage forms an essential part of culture) is that only the particular individual moods are regarded as transcendent. Aesthetic culture also has its own concept of human relations: the total loneliness of man, the complete negation of human contacts.”⁶¹

Lukács implied that Ignotus’s conception—which urged the appreciation of sincere artworks of any kind and rejected homogenization and hierarchy as prerequisites of unity—was both a symptom and a sustaining force of anarchy and radical fragmentation. In *The Parting of the Ways*, Lukács adopted the standpoint of Ignotus’s opponents, though without their nationalist disposition: A specific kind of art, he argued—“the art of order and values; [...] a constructive art,” an “architectonic” art⁶²—could challenge Impressionism by demonstrating the existence of objective truth and thereby lead the world back toward the re-establishment of community. In this essay, he lauded the painters’ group *The Eight*, but elsewhere he deployed similar arguments in discussions of the poetry and drama of Endre Ady and Béla Balázs.⁶³

In *Aesthetic Culture*, however, Lukács called even this belief into question:

“Art was always only a consequence of cultures [...] Thus we face reality: It was made that way by necessities that are greater than we are, and these necessities, riding roughshod over us, achieve their ends driven by an

59 Lukács, “The Parting of the Ways,” 168.

60 Lukács, “Aesthetic Culture,” 146. In his classic study, György Markus famously argued that “Culture was the ‘single’ thought of Lukács’ life.” (Markus, “Life and the Soul,” 525). For a more recent account, see: Szabados, *Emberségünk próbája*, 80–87.

61 Lukács, “Aesthetic Culture,” 148.

62 Lukács, “The Parting of the Ways,” 171.

63 Lukács, “Új Magyar Lira”; Lukács, *Balázs Béla és akiknek nem kell*.

inner inevitability. If it is really true that in the whole complex of culture there are primary forces which set things in motion (and motion does not originate in the incalculable complexity of interactions), then people who take account of these forces and are convinced that their own life-work can actually have an impact, do perhaps command the power to change culture. Perhaps. But those who live for and around art never command such a power.”⁶⁴

According to this alternative framework, not even the most “constructive” or “architectonic” art could reasonably be expected to unify the community and create a culture; at most, it could establish virtual connections among artists and allow them to feel *as if* they lived within a genuine culture.⁶⁵ Lukács nonetheless presented this outcome as an unsatisfactory compromise, made necessary only by the absence of actors possessing the will and the force to change the world radically:

“The proletariat and socialism seem to hold out the only hope. The hope that the barbarians are coming and with callous hands will tear apart all delicate, refined things [...] one could rightly expect that the revolutionary spirit, whose power had “unmasked” all ideologies and identified the real historical forces, will show vision and understanding here. And the revolutionary spirit, having swept aside all things peripheral, will return once again, after the long hiatus of anti-artistic feelings, to what is essential in art. However, what we have seen so far provides little ground for hope. It appears that socialism does not possess the soul-expanding, religious strength of early primitive Christianity.”⁶⁶

This line of thought anticipated Lukács’s Marxist-revolutionary turn eight years later. In light of the writings discussed above, one may interpret his conversion in part as the resolution of a dilemma generated by his doubts concerning art’s capacity to re-establish culture. Lukács’s choices underscore the power of the desire for unity and for a high “degree of development”: His longing for a powerful machine was so intense that, for him, even the complete destruction of modern culture and art did not seem too high a price to pay for eradicating fragmentation. His trajectory thus leads into the next era—one in which attempts at the radical transformation of society come to the fore, displacing proposals for reform and for the elaboration of new literary institutions and practices.

64 Lukács, “Aesthetic Culture,” 153–54.

65 Lukács, “Aesthetic Culture,” 158.

66 Lukács, “Aesthetic Culture,” 151.

Conclusion

The debates examined in this paper reveal how, around 1900, Hungarian literary actors attempted to secure the cultural embeddedness of literature at a moment of rapid social, economic, and intellectual transformation. Although Gyulai, Rákosi, Beöthy, Ignóty, and the young Lukács articulated sharply divergent visions, their projects were driven by a shared belief that literature could be made indispensable by being presented as instrumental in stabilizing a threatened social order and strengthening a desired social machinery. Consequently, each sought to render literature compatible with what Deleuze and Guattari called paranoiac, reterritorializing investments and—following Nietzsche—“gregariousness (herd instinct).”⁶⁷ The analysis shows that this tendency was catalyzed by the various actors’ ambitions to improve the position of themselves and their institutions within the cultural field by mobilizing the forms of desire just mentioned. These struggles between and within the fields thus seem to have contributed to making Hungarian literature less inclined to produce liberating lines of flight, or more generally, to the state of affairs that *Anti-Oedipus* summarizes as follows: Under capitalist modernity, where “the schizoid pole is potential in relation to the actual paranoiac pole,” one can rely on art and science only “as potentialities” in the quest for a libidinal revolution, since “their actuality is easily controlled by the formations of sovereignty.”⁶⁸ Yet, precisely because the institutional configurations they envisioned were mutually incompatible, their efforts produced not cohesion but lasting fragmentation. What emerges from this reconstruction is a complex field of intersecting strategies, each attempting to channel libidinal investments toward a different version of cultural “development.” By foregrounding the affective and institutional dimensions of these struggles, the analysis demonstrates how the desire for cohesion can itself become a generator of division—reshaping the Hungarian literary field in ways that would define its evolution well into the twentieth century.

Acknowledgements

This paper was supported by the János Bolyai Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Literature

- Alexander, Bernát. “Irodalmi bajok” [Literary Troubles]. *A Hét* 1 (1890): 11–13.
 Beöthy, Zsolt. “Elnöki megnyitó beszéd [1903]” [Presidential Opening Address 1903].
A Kisfaludy-Társaság Évtapjai 37 (1902–1903): 3–6.

67 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 342.

68 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 376.

- Beöthy, Zsolt. “Elnöki megnyitó beszéd [1907]” [Presidential Opening Address 1907]. *A Kisfaludy-Társaság Évtapjai* 41 (1906–1907): 3–7.
- Beöthy, Zsolt. “Elnöki megnyitó beszéd [1908]” [Presidential Opening Address 1908]. *A Kisfaludy-Társaság Évtapjai* 42 (1907–1908): 3–7.
- Beöthy, Zsolt. “Maradandó alkotások” [Enduring Works of Art]. *Budapesti Hírlap*, January 11, 1895: 1.
- Beöthy, Zsolt. *Az irodalomtörténet elmélete I.* [The Theory of Literary History]. Budapest: Egyetemi Nyomda, 1940.
- Bezecsky, Gábor. “Az időszaki sajtó mint a szépirodalom közege” [Periodical Press as a Medium of Belles-Lettres]. In *Médiák és váltások*, edited by Katalin Neumer, 43–88. Budapest: MTA BTK FI–Gondolat, 2015.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. “Principles for a Sociology of Cultural Works.” In *The Field of Cultural Production. Essays on Art and Literature*, edited by Randal Johnson, translated by Claud DuVerlie, 176–91. Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Dávidházi Péter. *Egy nemzeti tudomány születése. Toldy Ferenc és a magyar irodalomtörténet* [The Birth of a National Discipline. Ferenc Toldy and Hungarian Literary History]. Budapest: Akadémiai, 2004.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. With Michel Foucault. Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition. London: Penguin, 2009.
- Gluck, Mary. *The Invisible Jewish Budapest: Metropolitan Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. George L. Mosse Series in Modern European Cultural and Intellectual History. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.36032654>
- Guillory, John. “The Postrhetorical Condition.” In *Professing Criticism: Essays on the Organization of Literary Study*, by John Guillory. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226821313.003.0005>
- Gyulai, Pál. “A költészet lényegéről” [On the Essence of Poetry]. In *Emlékbeszédek II.*, by Pál Gyulai, 217–29. Budapest: Franklin, 1914.
- Gyulai, Pál. “A költészet s az irodalmi műveltség” [Poetry and Literary Culture]. In *Emlékbeszédek II.*, by Pál Gyulai, 175–83. Budapest: Franklin, 1914.
- Gyulai, Pál. “A tárczaelbeszélésekről” [On Feuillet Short Stories]. In *Emlékbeszédek II.*, by Pál Gyulai, 347–56. Budapest: Franklin, 1914.
- Gyulai, Pál. “Hírlapjainkról” [On Our Newspapers]. In *Emlékbeszédek II.*, by Pál Gyulai, 323–34. Budapest: Franklin, 1914.
- Gyulai, Pál. “Jókai legújabb művei” [Jókai’s Latest Works]. In *Bírálatok 1861–1903*, 73–99. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1911.
- Gyulai, Pál. “Jókai mint hírlapíró” [Jókai as a Journalist]. In *Bírálatok 1861–1903*, 132–52. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1911.

- Gyulai, Pál. "Művészet és erkölcs" [Art and Morality]. In *Emlékbeszédék II.*, by Pál Gyulai, 242–54. Franklin, 1914.
- Holland, Eugene W. *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis*. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203007426>
- Ignotus. "Író és közönség" [Writer and Audience]. In *Kísérletek*, 103–8. Budapest: Nyugat, 1910.
- Ignotus. "Maradandó alkotások" [Enduring Works of Art]. *A Hét* 2 (1895): 34.
- Ignotus. "Utóirat (A perzekutor-esztetikáról)" [Postscript (On Persecutor Aesthetics)]. *Nyugat* 4 (1908): 227–28.
- Kéky, Lajos. "A Kisfaludy-Társaság története (1836–1936)" [The History of the Kisfaludy Society (1836–1936)]. In *A Százéves Kisfaludy-Társaság*, edited by Lajos Kéky, 9–270. Budapest: Franklin, 1936.
- Kosztolánczy, Tibor. "»Egy phalanx«? Az 1890-es évek irodalompolitikai küzdelmeiről új megközelítésben" [A Phalanx? A New Approach to the Literary-Political Struggles of the 1890s]. *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 112, no. 3 (2008): 287–305.
- Kosztolánczy, Tibor. "Indulás" [Beginnings]. In *Tessék színt vallani. Osvát Ernő szerkesztői levelezése*, vol. 1, edited by Tibor Kosztolánczy and Erika Nemeskéri, 99–113. Budapest: Gondolat, 2019.
- Lengyel, Imre Zsolt. "1881 Elindul a Budapesti Hírlap. Az Irodalomteoretikus Rákosi Jenő" [1881: The Launch of the Budapesti Hírlap – Jenő Rákosi as a Literary Theorist]. In *Történetek az irodalom médiatörténetéből*, edited by Ágnes Hansági and Mihály Szajbély, 359–87. Budapest: Akadémiai, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1556/9789636641610.16>
- Lengyel, Imre Zsolt. "Újságírás, közönség, irodalom. Az 1900 körüli évtizedek irodalmi diskurzusa a piacosodással kapcsolatos dilemmák kontextusában" [Journalism, Audience, Literature. Literary Discourse of the Decades Around 1900 in the Context of Dilemmas Related to Marketization]. *Irodalomtörténet* 103, no. 1 (2022): 15–36.
- Lukács, György. "Aesthetic Culture." In *The Lukács Reader*, translated by Arpad Kadarkay, 146–59. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995.
- Lukács, György. "The Parting of the Ways." In *The Lukács Reader*, translated by Arpad Kadarkay, 167–73. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995.
- Lukács, György. "Új magyar lira" [New Hungarian Lyric Poetry]. *Huszadik Század* 20, no. 10 (1909): 286–92.
- Lukács, György. *Balázs Béla és akiknek nem kell. Összegyűjtött tanulmányok* [Béla Balázs and Those Who Do Not Want Him. Collected Studies]. Budapest: Kner, 1918.

- Markus, György. “Life And the Soul: The Young Lukács and the Problem of Culture.” In *Culture, Science, Society*, 521–51. London: Brill, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004202405.i-666.68>
- N. Pál, József. *Modernség, progresszió, Ady Endre és az Ady–Rákosi vita. Egy konfliktusos esztétörténeti pozíció természete és következményei* [Modernity, Progress, Endre Ady and the Ady–Rákosi Debate. The Nature and Consequences of a Conflictual Intellectual-Historical Position]. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2008.
- Nagy, Ildikó. “Jenő Rákosi and the Hungarian Empire of 30 Million People.” In *Hungarian Minorities and Central Europe: Regionalism, National and Religious Identity*, edited by Ferenc Gereben, 203–79. Budapest: PPKE BTK, 2001.
- Plumpe, Gerhard. *Epochen moderner Literatur: ein systemtheoretischer Entwurf*. Opladen: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1995. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-663-09954-3>
- Rákai, Orsolya. *Az irodalomtudós tekintete: Az önállósuló irodalom társadalmi integrációja és az esztétikai tapasztalat problémái 1780 és 1830 között* [The Literary Scholar’s Gaze: Social Integration of an Autonomous Literature and the Problem of Aesthetic Experience, 1780–1830]. Budapest: Universitas, 2008.
- Rákosi, Jenő. “A magyar író” [The Hungarian Writer]. *Élet* (1914): 78–85.
- Rákosi, Jenő. “A nyelv kultusza” [The Cult of Language]. *Élet* (1914): 14–23.
- Rákosi, Jenő. “Az idegen elemek beáramlása” [The Influx of Foreign Elements]. In *Tárcák, cikkek II.*, 134–45. Budapest: Franklin, 1927.
- Rákosi, Jenő. “Kossuth és irodalmunk” [Kossuth and Our Literature]. In *Tárcák, cikkek I.*, 56–60. Budapest: Franklin, 1927.
- Rákosi, Jenő. “Kupa Árpád.” In *Tárcák, cikkek II.*, 60–66. Budapest: Franklin, 1927.
- Rákosi, Jenő. “Lukácsy Sándor.” *Élet* (1914): 163–71.
- Rákosi, Jenő. “Modern aesthetika” [Modern Aesthetics]. *Akadémiai Értesítő* (1893): 136–42.
- S. Varga, Pál. *A nemzeti költészet csarnokai. A nemzeti irodalom fogalmi rendszerei a 19. századi magyar irodalomtörténeti gondolkodásban* [The Pantheons of National Poetry: Conceptual Frameworks of National Literature in Nineteenth-Century Hungarian Literary-Historical Thought]. Budapest: Balassi, 2005.
- Schöppflin, Aladár. “A magyar író” [The Hungarian Writer]. *Nyugat*, 21 (1908): 310–15.
- Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226753416.001.0001>
- Smith, Daniel W. “Immanence and Desire: Deleuze and the Political.” *Stasis* 7, no. 1 (2019): 124–38. <https://doi.org/10.33280/2310-3817-2019-7-1-124-138>
- Szabados, Bettina. *Emberségünk próbája. A fiatal Lukács György és az áldozat problematikája* [The Test of Our Humanity: The Young György Lukács and the Problem of Sacrifice]. Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2025.

- Szénási, Zoltán. *Néma várostrom. Népnemzeti tradicionalizmus és konzervatív kritika a magyar irodalmi modernség kontextusában 1920 előtt* [Silent Siege: Popular-National Traditionalism and Conservative Criticism in the Context of Hungarian Literary Modernism before 1920]. Budapest: Universitas, 2018.
- Woodmansee, Martha. *The Author, Art, and the Market. Rereading the History of Aesthetics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

