

'The Great Aunt of Europe' Visits Budapest, 1905

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Abstract

Not long after her world-famous book, *The Century of the Child*, was published, Ellen Key wrote the somewhat controversial book *Love and Marriage*. The volume's hostile critical reception in Sweden prompted Key to embark on a lecture tour around Europe. Other than visiting Berlin, Vienna, and Prague, in March 1905 she held two talks in Budapest, Hungary. The reception of her lectures was mixed: her female audience exalted her views while men disparaged her work. Based on the contemporary press, this paper provides a historical overview of Ellen Key's work while also analysing her visit to Budapest and subsequent reception in Hungary. The broader aim of this examination is to assess why Hungarian research literature exclusively views Ellen Key as an educator and the author of *The Century of the Child* when her work extended far beyond either role.

Keywords: Ellen Key, visit to Budapest, 1905, reception in Hungary, contemporary press

Introduction

'The Great Aunt of Europe,' 'The Swedish Pallas' or 'Radical Europe's Aunt' needs no introduction: Ellen Key (1842-1926) was a writer, essayist, teacher, educator, debater, literary critic, lecturer, and contributor to Swedish interior design. In 1886, she furthermore became one of the founders of the *Dräkreformrörelsen* (The Swedish Dress Reform Society). A friend to renowned authors, painters, and scholars from Scandinavia as well as the entire world, she played a central role in the emergence of *Det moderna genombrottet* ('The Modern Breakthrough'), an influential movement in Scandinavian naturalism and debating literature that replaced romanticism toward the end of the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly a vital opinion maker and celebrity in her own time, Ellen Key also authored more than 40 books and 180 articles and essays. Her books, articles, pamphlets, and essays discuss love and marriage, feminism, suffrage, art, interior design, education, the question of peace and war, literary criticisms, reviews, and a good number of biographies and biography-like pieces of writing. Given the many influences that impacted Key's work, some aspects of her life and work must be elaborated in order to understand the mixed reception her lectures garnered in Budapest.

Ellen Key's Life

Ellen Key was born in Sundsholm in 1849 in the southern Swedish province of Småland. Her father, Emil Key, supported liberalism and political radicalism. Her mother, Sophie Posse, had been born into the nobility. Both her maternal grandparents and parents were well-read and reading played a rather important role in their lives. From a very early age, Key and her siblings were allowed to participate in evening sessions when the family told stories and read aloud, a habit that exposed the young Keys to advanced literature. Raised in a free-thinking, bourgeois family, Ellen Key was mainly educated at home, where her mother taught her the three Rs and English while her foreign-born governesses taught her German and French. After Sophie Posse realized her eldest daughter's affinity for aesthetics, philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy, Ellen Key did not have to undergo the same education as her siblings. In other

words, her intellectual identity was confirmed, to use a term by De Angelis (1978 p.12). Possessing this sense of 'confirmation' meant that Key enjoyed special privileges as the oldest of six children and the most loved child of her parents, a status that exempted her from doing household chores. Furthermore, Key had a room of her own where she could devote herself to reading after having taught her siblings, a task that was apparently her only duty beyond taking care of the herb garden.

Ellen Key's preparation for official 'confirmation' into a religious denomination took place between 1865 and 1866 when she attended *Åhlinska flickskolan* (Åhlin Girls' School),¹ a private school in Stockholm. The other school where Ellen Key received instruction was the progressive *Jenny Rossanders lärokurs för fruntimmer* (Jenny Rossander's Educational Course for Adult Women)². Her instruction took place between 1868-72, but only during winter terms since she had to devote herself to other tasks, including acting as her father's secretary once Emil Key became a member of Parliament. Given that she also wrote her father's political speeches, her role was closer to that of amanuensis. Apart from these two courses, she studied extensively in private and developed her vast knowledge through reading and taking neat and organized notes of everything that she had come across in her readings.³ It is presumably not by chance that in the book *The Century of the Child*, she emphasized the importance of free education in personal development: in other words, the type of an education that she herself had received.

Influences, religion, interest

Ellen Key grew up as a Christian. As she matured, she gradually stepped away from Christianity. From 1879 onwards, she studied Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and Haeckel. The principle of evolution Ellen Key had come to believe in also influenced her views. Brought up in a liberal family, during the 1870s, her political beliefs became radically liberal. She supported the idea of a republic, and the concept of freedom was essential to her. By the end of the 1880s and early 1890s, she was reading socialist literature and turning increasingly toward socialism.

The authors who were to have the most significant impact on Ellen Key's views were Spinoza, Rousseau, Goethe, Nietzsche, Comte, Mill, and Spencer. Among the nineteenth-century philosophers, Nietzsche occupied an exceptional place in Ellen Key's thinking. However, she alienated herself from his lack of feeling and consideration for others. From Comte and the positivists, she made a link between egoism/altruism. Mill's writings became essential to her grasp of religion and politics, not to mention education. As she adopted ideas from different sources, her views developed and resulted in a synthesis, the core of which was most original. The addition of nineteenth century Buddhism⁴ further contributed to her extraordinary life philosophy.

¹ Åhlinska skolan (Åhlin School) or Åhlinska flickskolan, (Åhlin Girls' School) was a prestigious school for girls in Stockholm. After its founding in 1847, Åhlin Girls' School was one of the first schools in Sweden that offered academic instruction for mainly middle- and upper-class women. This school eventually closed in 1939.

² The Rossanderska kursen ('Rossander Course'), also called Fröknarna Rossanders lärokurs för fruntimmer ("The Miss' Rossander's Educational Course for Adult Women"), was a female seminary in Stockholm, Sweden between 1865-1882 and was an opportunity for adult women to complete their studies. It played a significant role in the development of women's education in Sweden.

³ Ellen Key's notebooks can be found in the Ellen Key's Archive (Kungliga biblioteket. Ellen Keys samling L41) at the Kungliga Biblioteket (the Royal Library) in Stockholm.

⁴ Hedda Jansson's (Stockholm University): "Ellen Key and 19th century Buddhism: orientalism as part of modernity." Talk: Ellen Key International Research Network - webinar 9 – 10:th of October 2020

Another element of her life philosophy was her opinion about conventional morality. At the turn of the century, especially in Germany, the interest in Nietzsche was combined with the interest in sexual science, which at that time was a new field of science. Concerning the question of sexuality, in the Scandinavia of the 1880s, *Sedlighetsdebatten* (the Nordic sexual morality debate) was the name of a cultural movement and public debate in which sexual morals and sexuality were discussed. The main issue raised by the Svenska Federation (the Swedish Federation) in 1878 was criticism of the contemporary sexual double standards. Sexual double standards meant that it was acceptable for men to have sexual experience before marriage while women were expected to remain untouched until the wedding night. Another controversial issue was that of prostitution. Due to the double standard mentioned above, prostitution was considered a "necessary evil," including all the sexually transmitted illnesses that came with it. In this social debate, sexual morality became the topic of newspapers, magazines, novels, and also plays, two sides emerged. The moderate group, of which Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson was the most known representative, opposed the radicals, the leaders of which (Edvard Brandes and Georg Brandes) fought for women to experience their sexuality before marriage, just as men were allowed.

As a radical thinker and advocate of difference feminism, Key opposed the members of *Fredrika Bremer förbundet*. In her 1886 critical article, 'Om reaktionen mot kvinnofrågan' (On the Reaction against the Woman Question), Key argued against the egalitarian tendencies in the Swedish women's movement. Convinced that both genders have equal moral status as persons, Key believed that, due to their gender, men and women imbue different values and qualities. Despite her radical views on love and marriage, Key viewed women's roles in a traditional way. In 1898 she went as far as stating in *Naturenliga arbetsområden för kvinnan* (*Natural Lines of Work for Women*) and *Kvinnopsykologi och kvinnlig Logik* (*Female Psychology and Logic*, 1896) that a monogamous and heterosexual relationship aimed toward procreation is the essence of a woman's happiness and fulfillment.

Yet Ellen Key's progressive views on sexuality and love as the fundamental basis of a marriage or a relationship in which official documents do not count appeared to be a second attack on conventional morality. Ellen Key described her views as a synthesis of individualism, monism, and evolutionism. She presented a kind of religion of love, a life philosophy. Instead of providing an ethical code, she believed in aesthetics: '*Allt vackert är gott*' (Everything beautiful is good). According to Ambjörnsson, Key's conception of life was based on liberal humanism, which believed in human values and reasoning of science rather than looking to religious traditions. This philosophy focuses on helping people to live well, achieve personal growth, and, most of all, make the world a better place (2012, pp 234-235). As early as 1878-79, Key lived according to these tenets.

As Key became more and more influenced by social democracy, on 1 May 1894, she held a speech that immediately caused harsh criticism and caricatures on the part of the press. In 1896, she wrote *Misbrukad kvinnokraft: Kvinnopsykologi* (*Abused Women Power: Women Psychology*), in which she supported women's fight for freedom but criticized the women's movement for underestimating typical women characteristics. In short, for progressive women, Key was not radical enough; from the male perspective, she was too radical.

After the speech *Torpedo under arken* (Torpedo under the Ark) she gave on Ibsen's 70th birthday in 1898, women started protesting and wrote to the readers' pages in the newspapers to express their disapproval. According to Lindén, Ellen Key's support of the Nietzschean philosophy and thus a secularized life, and a rejection of the old morals of women's self-sacrifice and the highlighting of love and erotics was what caused disapproval (2002, pp.258-260). Ellen Key's view was the opposite of what the Swedish women's movement stood for

as Fredrika Bremer förbundet (The Fredrika Bremer Association), had left its more liberal roots behind and was propagating the ideology of motherhood by the turn of the century. Ellen Key had expressed her dissent of the movement silence regarding the issues of eroticism, religion, and social liberation. In *Tankebilder* (I-II., 1898) (Picture thoughts), Key rejected the criticism she had received and applied a totally new tone to express her latest conviction, monism.

Not long after her views on the women's movement had been questioned, Key's philosophical and aesthetic thinking was also disputed, beginning in 1900 with Carl David af Wirsén.⁵ In his pamphlet, af Wirsén describes her as a not-well- educated lecturer (Leche-Löfgren, 1930, p. 178). In 1902, the philosopher Vitalis Nyström⁶ launched a philosophical attack on her by pointing out that her writings are full of contradictions. In defence of Ellen Key, Oscar Levertin⁷, published an article in the Svenska Dagbladet.⁸ Much later, in 1913, in 'Ungdomens förvildring' (The Bewildering of the Youth), Key states that it was finally Strindberg's attitude toward her that made her leave Sweden and embark on a lecture tour.

In the essayist trilogy *Lifslinjer* (Lifelines) (1903-1906), Ellen Key describes her views regarding a variety of the topics she had been exploring for years, with the exception of pedagogical questions. The first volume in this trilogy, *Love and Marriage*, only fanned the flames of the scandal that had arisen surrounding her views, particularly when she described love as both the female and the male body and soul melting into one (Auer,2005,p.13.) and her opinion that women also possess sexuality. In *Lifslinjer II, Människan och Gud I-II.* (Mankind and God I-II.), Key develops her own philosophy (Hällström, 2008, pp.17-18.) and devotes a chapter to 'Livstro' (life faith), whose motto, " The aim of living is life itself," was borrowed from Goethe. Ellen Key rejected shame, blame, and reconciliation due to her belief that morality originates from the powers that humankind has within rather than from outer sources. Although Key firmly believed in focusing on life here on earth rather than life after death, she was not against Christianity and emphasized that faith has enormous powers. Instead, she was very critical of Christianity and its emphasis on sin, guilt, forgiveness, reconciliation, and obedience, qualities she felt led to fearful and dependent people (*Människan och Gud*1905, pp.148-172). Her 'livstro' is an alternative for the Christian faith, which focuses on life and not preparing for a better life after death. The last volume of the series, *LifslinjerIII, Lyckan och skönheten I-II* (Happiness and Beauty I-II) was published in 1906.

Published in 1903, *Love and Marriage* brought on such a severe attack on the part of conservative male academics and conservative women that she was forced to leave Sweden and embarked on a lecture tour that lasted several years. According to Nyström-Hamilton, in 1903, she started lecture tours abroad, particularly in Germany, then she went to Prague and Vienna (1904, p.157). In 1905, at end of March, she arrived in Budapest.

At this point it should also be mentioned that Ellen Key, influenced by positivism's basic idea, i.e., to live for others, devoted much time to educating women, and especially working-class women. As a part of this endeavour, from 1883 on she was a regular lecturer on various topics such as literature, history and social issues at the Stockholms Arbetarinstitut (Institute of

⁵ Carl David af Wirsén (1842-1912) was a Swedish poet, literary critic, and the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy 1884–1912

⁶ Vitalis Norström (1856-1916) was a philosopher, member of the Swedish Academy

⁷ Oscar Levertin (1862-1906) was a Swedish poet, critic, and literary historian.

⁸ Svenska Dagbladet 10.2.1902

workers of Stockholm)⁹. According to Ambjörnsson (2012, p.179), her talks attracted more than ten thousand listeners during the twenty years she lectured there. She had a significant impact on her audiences. Nyström, in her biography about Ellen Key, examines the rhetorical strategies and devices Key used. Instead of speaking louder, Key lowered the volume of her voice to keep the audience engaged (1904, p.175).

The 'Women Question' in *Fin-de-siècle* Hungary

In Hungary, as in other parts of Europe and the world, the industrial revolution and its accompanying social and historical changes meant that issues related to women and their status permeated the entire nineteenth century and lasted until the end of World War I. Over the course of nearly a century and a half, women expressed their opinions about motherhood, the family, the home, their sexuality, education, women's politics, and their role in the labour market in a continuous struggle against the expectations for women's social roles that had been set by a patriarchal society. In the era of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the image of women in a fundamentally patriarchal society led to the kinds of role opportunities that fit the patriarchal structure of the sexes, thereby reinforcing and maintaining an artificially inferior position for women.

Yet the growing attention paid to women's issues also meant that women were able to enter an increasing number of territories that had previously only been open to men. From the protected environment of the home, women suddenly entered the public stage and thereby became a significant part of the European historical narrative. Women were still expected to behave appropriately: breaking the expected norms by entering the spotlight was an act that could easily lead to an ambitious woman being accused of prostitution.¹⁰ The women's movement fought for the right to have the same moral standards applied to women that men already enjoyed – that is, to eliminate the double standard in gender morality. For Hungarian women, the long struggle for the right to education, suffrage, and self-determination started in the period known as the Reformkor (The Hungarian Reform Era)¹¹ and ended with some success in the last years of the nineteenth century.

From the 1880s, women's movements primarily focused on educational opportunities¹², a concern that led to the founding at the end of the nineteenth century of many organisations that addressed the education of women. To mention a few of these associations, in 1868 the Országos Nőképző-Egyesület (The National Women's Training Association) was formed, followed in 1879 by the Országos Nőiparegylet (The National Women's Craft Association).

⁹ The *Stockholms Arbetareinstitut* ("Institute of workers of Stockholm") was founded by Anton Kristen Nyström (1842 - 1931), a physician, lecturer, educator, and a Swedish writer, in 1880. He was greatly influenced by positivism and its basic principles such as "live for others" and "work in favour of the consolidation of order and the advancement of things through moral means." His main aim was to fight against alcoholism, asocial behaviour, and criminality. By emphasizing the need for public education and providing lessons and lectures for the working class, he also tried to fight against the influence of extremist agitators among the working class. Nyström was a devoted director of the Institute from the beginning till May 1908.

¹⁰ Zimmermann S. (1999) 'A magyar nőmozgalom és a „szexuális kérdés” a XX. század elején'. https://epa.oszk.hu/01700/01739/00027/eszmelet_EPA01739_42.item682.htm (2022, November 14)

¹¹ The Hungarian Reform Era is a period of Hungarian history which led to the awakening of the Hungarian national identity. Its beginning was marked by the foundation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1825. The era ended with the 1848 revolution. The name refers to the intention to innovate and modernize Hungarian society, which was behind in development compared to the model states - mainly England and France- of Western Europe.

¹² Antoni R. (2015) 'A magyarországi feminista megmozdulások története'..p. 45.

The Mária Dorothea Egyesület (The Mária Dorothea Association) was later established in 1885.¹³ Beginning in 1895, women could enrol in the faculties of medicine, liberal arts and pharmacy at universities in Budapest and Cluj; as late as 1917, women were given the right to attend the faculty of law and the Academy of Arts. Once universities were open to women, a new type of woman appeared in Hungarian public life.

While emerging career opportunities for women (as secondary school teachers, doctors, researchers, etc.) triggered new attitudes in a society that had been mostly dominated by men, this new phenomenon primarily concerned women themselves. The emerging group of female clerks who had been politically active founded their first organizations. The year 1896 marked the founding of the Nőtisztviselők Országos Egyesülete (The National Association of Women Clerks), which in 1904 became the Feministák Egyesülete (The Association of Feminists), the most important women's rights organization in Hungary.¹⁴

In addition to the issue of higher education for women, more and more debates began to surround women's suffrage, the issue of women's employment, and the need to eliminate workplace discrimination. Similar to other countries, women entering the public sphere was not viewed in an entirely positive light by men. From the standpoint of women's changing social role, we can conclude that at the turn of the century, society had to face an abundance of new challenges. Women were no longer satisfied with their place in the world and began to rebel against the patriarchal system. This change inevitably led to a desire for the social system to return to its original state. This nostalgia appears to explain why so many anti-women theories emerged during this period.

The peak of the Hungarian women's movement occurred between 1896 and 1914,¹⁵ with the struggles surrounding its first wave easing with World War I. By this time, Budapest had also developed into a large urban centre and become, besides Vienna, a cultural site that attracted young artists, writers, and poets who often gathered in coffee houses or literary salons. Many (including in the field of literature) thought that women are not suitable for intellectual work because they do not have the same skills as men. Literary works written by women were often considered incompetent¹⁶, but during the twentieth century this situation slowly began to change. From the first half of the nineteenth century, more and more women entered literature, mainly by writing poems and translating literary works. In the second half of the century, women started to work as journalists or editors whose articles dealt with the topics of marriage and women's education, and their writings often stirred up a great deal of controversy.

From the 1850s, more and more women began to write novels¹⁷ although their authorship was initially hidden behind pseudonyms. Many women writers came from noble families, such as Countess Sarolta Vay¹⁸. Countess Sándorné Teleki,¹⁹ who wrote under the pseudonym 'Szikra' (Spark), was also the editor of *Nő* (The Woman) magazine and founder and first

¹³ Vashegyi MacDonald. Á. (2010) 'Undoing the collective amnesia: a brief discussion of feminism and women writers in Hungary'. <https://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantia/article/view/177/184> (2022, November 16)

¹⁴ Antoni R. (2015) 'A magyarországi feminista megmozdulások története' p. 46.

¹⁵ Vashegyi MacDonald. Á. (2010) 'Undoing the collective amnesia: a brief discussion of feminism and women writers in Hungary'. <https://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantia/article/view/177/184> (2022, November 16)

¹⁶ L'Homme, I (2003) *A női írók helye az irodalmi diskurzusban 1900-1945*. pp.33–34.

¹⁷ Fábri A. (1998) 'Közíró vagy szépíró? Írói szerepkör és társadalmi-kulturális indíttatás összefüggései a 19. századi magyar írónők munkásságában.' <https://www.kalligramoz.eu/Kalligram/Archivum/1998/VII.-evf.-1998.-januar-februar-Ironoink/Koeziro-vagy-szepiro>

¹⁸ Countess Sarolta Vay (1859–1918) writer, journalist

¹⁹ Countess Sándorné Teleki (born Júlia Kende) (1864–1937) writer, journalist

president of *Magyar Írók Köre* (The Circle of Hungarian Writers). Countess Teleki regularly published political articles and fought for women's suffrage. When, in 1913, the 7th Congress of the World Federation of Women's Suffrage was held in Budapest, 'Szikra' presided over the event.²⁰

As was reviewed above, women intensively began to participate in both literary and cultural life already in the 19th century, a trend that continued in the 20th century. Some of the most prominent women writers were Emma Ritoók,²¹ Anna Szederkényi,²² Lesznai Anna,²³ and Margit Kaffka²⁴. Renée Erdős²⁵ was one of the first writers to depict female erotica. Women's awakening was immediately reflected in Hungarian literature. New types of female characters appeared in various literary genres (primarily in short prose and drama). Interestingly enough, male writers were among the first writers to discuss the new social issues surrounding the fate of women. With his short stories written at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Sándor Bródy²⁶ numbered among the first male authors. He was followed by Károly Lovik's²⁷ novel *Doktor Pogány* (Doctor Pogány)²⁸, which was published in 1902. Some years later, in 1908, Sándor Bródy appeared with another work entitled *A tanítónő*²⁹ (The Teacher). In 1909, Béla Balázs's³⁰ drama *Doktor Szélpál Margit* (Doctor Margot Szélpál)³¹ marked another chapter in Hungarian works written about a female protagonist.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, social gender roles began to change in Europe, at which point many different positive and negative theories related to women appeared. These theories apparently influenced Hungarian intellectuals as well. The negative theories were mostly born from the hypothesis of biological determinism, according to which human behaviour is determined only by biological factors, a theory very popular at the turn of the century. One of the followers of this approach was the Austrian philosopher Otto Weininger³² who wrote *Geschlecht und charakter* (Gender and Character) in 1903.³³ At this time, the ideas of the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud also had a great influence on the view of women. The approach used in psychoanalysis contributed to the spread of Weininger's ideas, because psychoanalysis presented his concepts as scientific evidence. As a result, Weininger's teaching quickly became a part of public thinking. Like Weininger, Freud also supported biological determinism.³⁴ In Freud and Weininger's anti-feminist expressions, their fear and anxiety (which originated from a fear of the women's equality movement, perceived as female aspirations for power) could have been similarly decisive. By the end of the nineteenth

²⁰Vashegyi MacDonald, Á. (2010) 'Undoing the collective amnesia: a brief discussion of feminism and women writers in Hungary'. <https://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlas/article/view/177/184>

²¹ Emma Ritoók (1868–1945) poet, writer, translator

²² Anna Szederkényi (1882–1948) writer, journalist

²³ Anna Lesznai (1885–1966) writer, painter, designer

²⁴ Margit Kaffka (1880–1918) poet, writer

²⁵ Renée Erdős (1879–1956) writer

²⁶ Sándor Bródy (1863-1924) writer, playwright, journalist

²⁷ Károly Lovik (1874-1915) writer, journalist

²⁸ Lovik, K. 1902) *Doktor Pogány*. A Magyar Hírlap kiadása.125.

²⁹ Bródy, S. (1908) *A tanítónő. Falusi életkép 3 felvonásban*. Singer és Wolfner.140.

³⁰ Béla Balázs (1884-1949) film critic, writer, poet

³¹ Balázs, B. (1909) *Doktor Szélpál Margit. Tragédia három felvonásban* A „Nyugat” Kiadása. 145.

³² Otto Weininger (1880-1903) Austrian philosopher

³³ Forrai, J. (2016) 'Prostitúcióról szóló diskurzus a századfordulón multidiszciplináris megközelítésben', In: Kaleidoscope - Journal of History of Culture, Science and Medicine 2016. Vol.7. No. 13. p. 311–312.

³⁴ Zsák, J. (2009), *Kiadó 'A női szubjektumról alkotott 20. század eleji kép „tudományos” alapjai és hatása Nyugat-korszak nőfelfogására*. pp.25–26.

century in Europe, the feminist movement was not only fighting for equal political and marital rights, but also for equal rights in intellectual life, art, and work. However, Freud stood up for women's sexual enlightenment and criticized the norms of female sexuality and the double gender morality.³⁵ Sándor Ferenczi³⁶, the founder of the Budapest school of psychoanalysis, spread Freud's ideas in Hungary and was in close contact with the first generation of Hungary's modern literary journal, *Nyugat* (The West)³⁷.

As regards the issue of publicity, there were also those who helped the realization of social equality for women. One such individual was the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel³⁸. In his opinion, all the fields of culture such as art, science or industry were created by men, therefore, according to him, as a phenomenon culture is a completely male culture. Simmel saw the importance of the women's movement in that women's freedom would create a new cultural quality. Also, he supported women's right to education because he firmly believed that women are as intelligent as men and are capable of participating in academic life. His teachings were very popular at the beginning of the twentieth century in Hungary, especially owing to the many Hungarians who attended his courses at the University of Berlin.³⁹

1905: The Visit to Budapest

As was previously discussed, the hostile critical reception of her controversial book, *Love and Marriage* (1903), the first volume of the *Lifslinjer* (Liveliness) series, and harsh attacks on the part of prominent academics in Sweden prompted her to embark upon a lecture tour around Europe that lasted from 1903 to 1909. Ellen Key was invited to Budapest by Augusta Rosenberg,⁴⁰ the vice-president of the Magyarországi Nőegyesületek Szövetsége (The Association of Hungarian Women Organizations). Her tour was well prepared, and her work was introduced and discussed in the Hungarian press, a circumstance that allows us to believe that her audience had previous knowledge regarding Key's writings.⁴¹ To provide some background of how Ellen Key's works were disseminated in Hungary, at the time of her visit, Hungary still belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, where both Hungarian and German were ruling languages. As the main second language taught in schools, German was spoken by educated people. In progressive circles in German-speaking countries, Ellen Key was read and her work was famous. It can therefore be assumed that the audience flocking to her lectures in Budapest must have read the German translations⁴² since both *Love and Marriage*⁴³ and *The Century of the Child*⁴⁴, were referred to in the contemporary press.⁴⁵

³⁵ Borgas, A. (2017) 'Pszichoanalitikus elméletek nőiségképe Freudtól a feminista pszichoanalízisig'. In: *Társadalmi nemek. Elméleti megközelítések és kutatási eredmények*. ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, pp.22–23.

³⁶ Sándor Ferenczi (1873-1933) psychoanalyst, close associate of Sigmund Freud

³⁷ An important Hungarian literary journal in the first half of the 20th century. The poets and writers of the era are referred to as the first, the second and the third generation of the *Nyugat* modern literary movement.

³⁸ Georg Simmel (1858-1918) German sociologist, philosopher, critic

³⁹ Zsák, J. (2009), Kiadó 'A női szubjektumról alkotott 20. század eleji kép „tudományos” alapjai és hatása *Nyugat-korszak nőfelfogására*'. pp.19–20.

⁴⁰ Augusta Rosenberg (1859-1946), teacher

⁴¹ In this passage, the authors of the articles are only marked when provided in the press.

⁴² The translator of Ellen Key's works into German was Marie Franzos (1870–1941) an independent, committed, Viennese translator and cultural mediator of Swedish literature in German around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She had a fundamental role in spreading Swedish literature in German. Franzos' translations were popular and appreciated both by publishers and authors. She used the pseudonym of Francis Marco.

⁴³ ELLEN KEY (1904) *Über Liebe und Ehe. Essays*. S. Fischer Verlag. 495. (Translated by Francis Marco)

To summarize Key's reception in Hungary, the first article to feature her work was published in 1904 in *Újság* (The Newspaper)⁴⁶ and provided a detailed introduction of *Love and Marriage*. The author, Mouche (presumably a pseudonym for an author who was presumably a woman) exalted Ellen Key as an excellent writer and supported all of Key's thoughts regarding the role of women in marriage. The article concludes with a call to women to fight for their rights. The newspaper *Új Idők* (The New Times) published an article on women's issues that also introduced Ellen Key. In 1905 on 1 March in *The Pesti Hírlap* (The Pesti News) Erzsébet Kemény authored a report about Ellen Key's lectures in Berlin. On 5 March, in the the readers' column of *Pesti Napló* (The Pesti Journal), one reader wrote a good summary of Ellen Key's work, with a focus on *The Century of the Child*. On 19 March in the *Tolnai Világlapja* (Tolnai's World Paper), another report was written about Ellen Key's talks in Berlin. This author emphasizes that Ellen Key was a difference feminist. On 22 March, the *Magyar Nemzet* (The Hungarian Nation), published an article about education and Ellen Key's book on education. On 23 March, *Pesti Napló* advertised her forthcoming talks. On 25 March, the *Budapesti Hírlap* (The Budapest Newspaper) issued a detailed biography and several passages from her work with a special focus on *Love and Marriage*.

On 26 March, only two days before her visit, two articles were published about Ellen Key: one in *Hét* (The Week) and the other in *Vasárnapi Újság* (The Sunday Newspaper). The *Hét's* author, N., focuses on *The Century of the Child* and reports on the talk held in Vienna. In *Új Idők* (The New Times)⁴⁷ yet another article about Ellen Key and her life was published.⁴⁸ The *Vasárnapi Hírek* wrote about her life and emphasized that she would certainly have a big audience since she was widely read amongst women. The article gives a good and detailed biography and summary of her pedagogical work, her role in the women's suffrage movement and her views on the role of women in society. The author, 'r.a.', knew a great deal about Ellen Key and had undoubtedly read several of her works. 'R.a.' introduced *Love and Marriage*, *Essays*⁴⁹, *Abused Women Power* and, of course, *The Century of the Child*. Based upon the initials, we may assume that 'r.a.' was Augusta Rosenberger herself, the event's organizer. On 28 March, Key was scheduled to hold a lecture entitled *The Evolution of the Soul*, followed by a second lecture on 30 March bearing the title of *Rainer Maria Rilke*. The venue for the first lecture was the *Vigadó* (usually translated as "Place for Merriment"), Budapest's second-largest concert hall. Two thousand tickets were sold, even though only roughly half of the audience could be seated. The event organizer ensured that only women from the aristocracy could sit in the first two rows; press representatives therefore did not have a chair or table where they could have taken notes. Slated to start at 7.30, the lecture began half an hour later and lasted for two hours. Ellen Key appeared in a black dress and carried a bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley in her hand. According to an article written by Daniel Jób⁵⁰ in the *Magyar Hírlap* (The Hungarian Newspaper), by the third sentence in Ellen Key's talk, a table fell and caused minor trouble; he also added that Ellen Key spoke very quietly, which meant that people in the back could not hear anything. Neither did Jób, who did even elaborate on the audience's reactions in his report.

⁴⁴ ELLEN KEY (1902) *Das Jahrhundert des Kindes*. S. Fischer Verlag.391. (Translated by Francis Marco)

⁴⁵ ELLEN KEY (1901) *Die Wenigern und die Vielen*. S. Fischer Verlag. 351.(Translated by Francis Marco)

⁴⁶ *Újság* 1904.június /2 (2.évfolyam,166-180.szám) 194-06-19/169. szám

⁴⁷ *Új Idők*,1905 (11. évfolyam,1-26.szám) Társdalmi Ismeretterjesztő Cikkek

⁴⁸ Author: Peisner Ella (1887-1942) teacher

⁴⁹ *Essays* was published in Germany and only comprised of writings in German.

⁵⁰ Jób Dániel (1879 -1955) writer, translator, director and journalist for the *Magyar Hírlap*.

In the *Pesti Hírlap* article, Jób mentioned that in 1905, a respectable number of feminists visited Budapest. With its sentence of 'Those mothers of girls who are afraid of the invasion of spinsters,' the article's tone was firmly set. Compared to other feminists, only Ellen Key attracted such a huge audience. Key is described as speaking beautifully and very quietly while Jób adds that the 'evangelist of motherhood' would have been a perfect grandmother if she had ever married. He believed that those who had expected a female apostle must be disappointed: this 'kind' matron did not belong to the group of radical feminists. According to Jób, given Key's defense of the rights of women within marriage, many people would find it odd indeed that the kind spinster's most famous piece of work discusses educating and bringing up children.

The other prominent Hungarian journalist to report on Key's lecture was Sándor Bródy,⁵¹ who only wrote about it later in his newly launched magazine, *Jövendő*⁵² (The Future). In his article series entitled *Új asszonyalakok* (New Women Characters), Bródy describes Ellen Key as a clever and respectable, yet old and fat woman. Bródy also emphasizes that she had included her dilettante knowledge of natural science knowledge within her exceptional philosophy. The tone of the article cannot be called favourable and there are some doubts as to whether Bródy had even read any of Key's writings. In his article about Ellen Key's visit to Budapest, Bródy shows ignorance of the different types of feminism and its types. If he had read any of Key's books, essays or articles he would have known that Key was the advocate of difference feminism. Furthermore, apart from fighting for some basic rights for women, she emphasized the differences between the two sexes and thus earned the wrath of radical feminists. By no means was she the kind of feminist Bródy depicted.

Ellen Key's second lecture took place in dr. Gabor Terry's (an art historian and a museum director) flat in the Museum of Fine Arts⁵³ and was organized by *Múbaratok köre* (The Maecenas Circle of Friends), an organization that supported art and literature. At this time she gave a talk about the then unknown Austrian poet and novelist, Rainer Maria Rilke.

After her talks, it can be said that most of the major newspapers and magazines in Hungary reported on Ellen Key's lectures⁵⁴. The most interesting were the ones in the *Magyar Hírlap* as already seen above, because it published two completely contradictory articles about the event, that of Zemplényi P. Gyuláné Elek Irma⁵⁵ and Daniel Jób's. The former described Ellen Key as the evangelist of motherhood. She pointed out that women's moral freedom can never be equal to one of the men. However, within the limitations of the law of nature, some form of both moral and spiritual perfection can be reached. For example, Zemplényi P. Gyuláné Elek Irma considered it essential to mention that Ellen Key, in *The Century of the Child*, fights for the highest freedom of women, such as having the privilege of upbringing children. A couple of days later in the same newspaper, Daniel Jób described Ellen Key as a third-rate Scandinavian curiosity who was nothing more than a conformist who had come to terms with the authorities for the sake of women. He also adds that Ellen Key is an opportunist and a moderate revolutionist. He went on and pointed out that Ellen Key had not said anything apart from using puffed-up phrases and cliches. Jób emphasized that Ellen Key

⁵¹ Bródy Sándor (1863-1924), a writer and journalist.

⁵² *Jövendő*. 14.

⁵³ In *Pesti Napló* (1905. március (56.évfolyam,69-90.szám)195-03-29/88.szám, the advertisement of the lecture explains that due to an exhibition, the talk would be held in the flat of dr. Gábor Terry, in the Museum of Fine Arts.

⁵⁴ *Alkotmány*, 1905.március (10.évfolyam,52-78.szám)1905-03-29/76.szám; *Pesti Napló*, 1905.március (56. évfolyam, 60.szám)1905-03-28/87.szám, author: Sz.Gy.; *A Hét*, 1905.január-június (16.évfolyam,1-26.szám)1905-04-02/14. szám; *Budapest*, 1905.április (29.évfolyam,91-119.szám)1905-04-01/91. szám

⁵⁵ Zemplényi P. Gyuláné Elek Irma (1868-1944?), was a journalist, writer and editor.

quoted from Goethe, Nietzsche, and Spencer but visibly had little understanding of them. He concludes that nobody listens to Hungarian feminists, even though they displayed more content, invention, originality compared to Ellen Key.

In *Hét* (The Week), an anonymous author wrote that Ellen Key could not influence Hungarians because, similar to Russia, Hungary had no middle class to whom such ideas would appeal. Moreover, there are so many aspects in married life to consider that such revolutionary thoughts as love and the union of souls are unnecessary. The unknown writer went on and wrote that only those women think of equality who had been 'left on the shelf.' The author also reflected on Erzsébet Neményi's essay about Ellen Key written one day before she visited Budapest. In the *Huszdik század*⁵⁶ (The Twentieth Century), a summary was published about Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Ellen Key's visit to Budapest. Ellen Key is described as a knowledgeable woman who is far from consistent. The author is Sch-r R-a, presumably Rózsa Schwimmer.⁵⁷ The *Pesti Napló* published a detailed description of the lecture and a cynical and sarcastic article about Pest's morals on 28 March. On 31 May, the report written by Plume also utilizes a cynical tone, albeit the article reporting on Ellen Key's second talk was concise and positive. *Független Magyarország* (The Independent Hungary)⁵⁸ initially criticized Ellen Key's German skills and the lecture's organization but, on the whole, gave a fair interpretation of the event and emphasized the importance of nurturing the soul.

In the Budapest 1 April, a positive reflection on her second lecture was written. On 29 March in the *Magyar Nemzet*, an affirmative article was published about the lecture. In the *Újság* (The Newspaper) on the 2, April, Gyula Wlassics jnr.⁵⁹ wrote a constructive article about Ellen Key's second talk, which was about Rainer Maria Rilke, but allowed her to elaborate on her evolutionist views. In *Újság*, Gyuláné Huzella⁶⁰ wrote about *Love and Marriage*. In the *Pesti Napló* 6 April, Gyuláné Deák reported on Ellen Key's *Mankind and God* and provided a good summary of Ellen Key's *Livstro*. In July 1905, supporting article was published in the *Kecskemét* written by Rezső Altai⁶¹ about *The Century of the Child*.

Conclusion

Ellen Key received the same criticism and reception in Budapest as in Sweden and was mainly despised by men and glamorized by women. By 1900, her name was on many lips, not just in Sweden but also in significant parts of Western Europe. Together with Selma Lagerlöf and August Strindberg, she was the most well-known Swedish author both abroad and in the Austro-Hungarian Empire alike. After having toured Germany, she came to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. First to Prague, then to Vienna, and finally to Budapest, where the press devoted significant attention to her visit, works, and life. As a result, the timing and location for each lecture was well advertised. In the first decade of the twentieth century, most of the articles written about her targeted her most controversial work, the first volume of *Lifelines*, *Love and Marriage*, a work that describes the superiority of love, the question of morality,

⁵⁶ Huszdik Század, 1905 1. szám

⁵⁷ Rózsa Schwimmer (1877-1948) a feminist, pacifist, women's suffragist, the first woman ambassador in the world, and the founder of the Feministák Egyesülete (Federation of Feminists) in 1904.

⁵⁸ Független Magyarország, 1905. március. (4. évfolyam, 1061-1091) 1905-03-28

⁵⁹ Ifj. Classics Gyula (1884- 1962), a culture politician and writer

⁶⁰ Huzella Gyuláné (?-?) journalist and writer

⁶¹ Altai Rezső (1873-1956) teacher, linguist, writer

erotic life, motherhood, and marriage. Rather than debating her views, Key was mainly criticized because she had neither married nor born children.

To conclude, it can be stated that Ellen Key's lectures and reception in the Hungarian press were determined by the state of mind of the era, as well as the contemporary image of women. In 1904, before Ellen Key's visit to Budapest, Elisabeth Neményi⁶² devoted an essay to Ellen Key in German.⁶³ It can be assumed that this essay had been read by the progressive elite. Ellen Key's very first piece of writing translated to Hungarian was published in 1905⁶⁴, after her visit to Budapest, in the Easter edition of *Jövendő* (The Future), the editor of which was Sándor Bródy. Between the two world wars, in 1921, her first independent work was published in Hungarian: her most notorious piece of writing *Szerelem és Házasság* (Love and Marriage)⁶⁵. Another piece of writing in Hungarian, Ellen Key's preface to Sofya Kovalevskaya's⁶⁶ biography⁶⁷ written by her contemporary author friend, Anne Charlotte Leffler⁶⁸ was published in 1922. In 1938, an essay was dedicated to her pedagogical work.⁶⁹ The Hungarian press continuously reported on Ellen Key until her death in 1926. Parallel to *Love and Marriage*, her primary work, *The Century of the Child*, was also reviewed. Yet only one or two articles refer to her literary work as an author of a significant number of essays examining women writers and biographies. Years after her visit, during World War I, Key's thoughts regarding the question of war and peace reappeared in 1917; interestingly enough, in 1939 and 1940, the Hungarian press again returned to Key's adherence to pacifism. Since only a total of four of her writings were and have still been published in Hungarian and the hegemony of the German language as the first foreign language soon came to an end, her writings no longer reached Hungarian readers. Ellen Key's most famous work, *The Century of the Child*, was only translated into Hungarian in 1976, albeit in a highly excerpted and reedited form. As in her own country, in Hungary, too, it is Key's pedagogical work that is mentioned, even though she was one of the most significant and – as her contemporaries, Edmund Gosse⁷⁰ and Georg Brandes⁷¹ wrote about Ellen Key – one of the most knowledgeable Scandinavian literary critics. Despite the importance of her outstanding literary work, Ellen Key is predominantly referred to as only a reform pedagogue.

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⁶³ Neményi, E. (1904) *Ellen Key*. Gose&Tetzlaff, Verlagsbuchhandlung. 40.

⁶⁴ Key, E. (1905) 'Vallásos nevelés és az iskola' In: Bródy Sándor (ed) *Jövendő* 1905/17. pp.26–30. (Fordította Faber Oszkár)

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⁶⁶ Sofya Kovalevskaya (1850- 1891) Russian mathematician writer

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