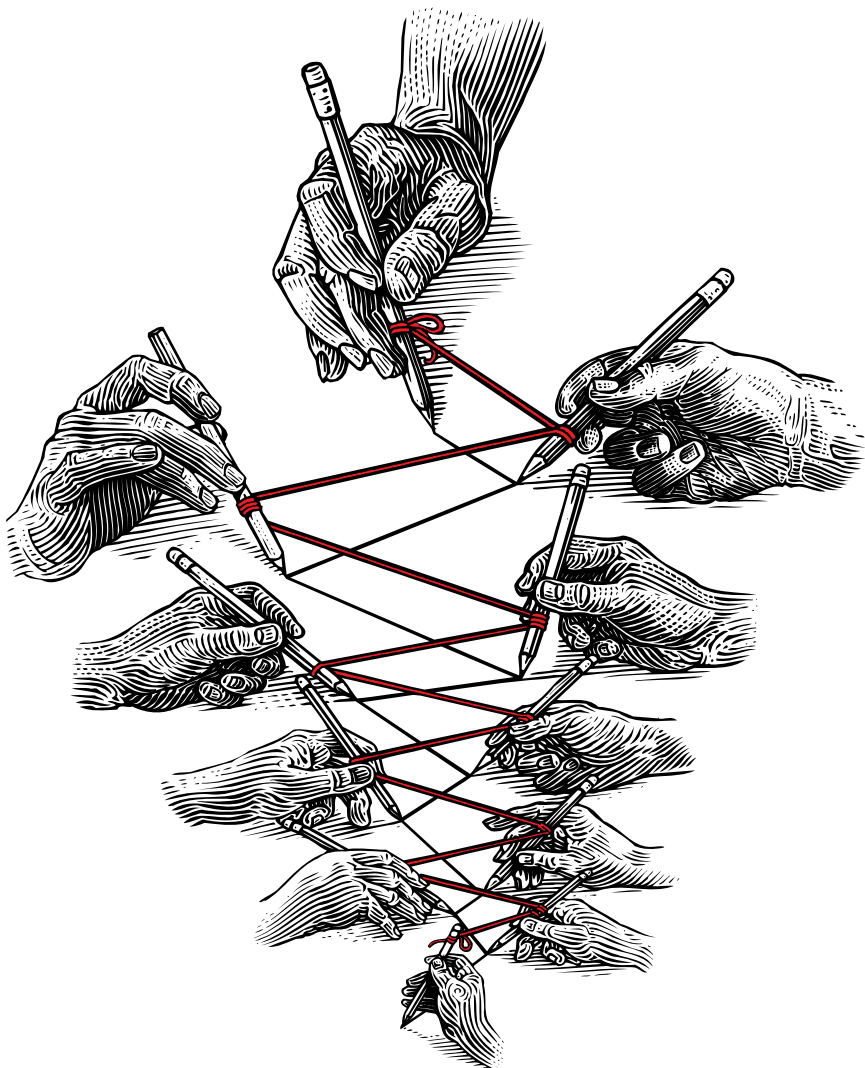


MIKLÓS SZENTKUTHY



TOWARDS THE ONE  
& ONLY METAPHOR

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& ONLY METAPHOR

MIKLÓS SZENTKUTHY

*Selected Other Works by*  
Miklós Szentkuthy

*Prae*

*Chapter on Love*

*St. Orpheus Breviary*

*Divertimento*

*Face and Mask*

*Cicero's Journeyman Years*

*Narcissus' Mirror*

*Europe is Closed*

*Testament of the Muses*

*Frivolities & Confessions*

*While Reading Augustine*

# TOWARDS THE ONE & ONLY METAPHOR

MIKLÓS SZENTKUTHY

TRANSLATED BY

TIM WILKINSON



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ENTERING THE WORLD STAGE:  
MIKLÓS SZENTKUTHY'S  
*ARS POETICA*

*He who is born in imagination discovers the latent forces of Nature... Besides the stars that are established, there is yet another — Imagination — that begets a new star & a new heaven.*

— Paracelsus

**I**N 1827, LONG BEFORE GLOBALIZATION and the institutionalization of multiculturalism, Goethe forecast the disintegration of national literature and the burgeoning of *Weltliteratur*, whose epoch he saw near at hand and sought to hasten. To achieve that, he accentuated the necessity not only of reading works in their original languages but of studying their times and customs in order to best understand them; this was not to offer world literature as a mere cultural product but had the more elevated aim of fostering the “true progress of mankind,” which Goethe thought could be achieved through the concerted efforts of all cultures. The bane of progress aside, that was the grand project. And despite its shortcomings and limits, Goethe also recognized the fundamental role translation would play in acquainting people with world literature, and the eventuality of it supplanting national literature, which he adduced would be swiftly realized due to the “ever-increasing rapidity of human interaction,” “vastly facilitated communications,” and the “constantly spreading activities of

trade and commerce.”<sup>1</sup> What Goethe envisioned, at least superficially, we have in part witnessed, and many would affirm that we live in a compact global community where literature and the arts are less and less dominated by a central canon, though such utopic pronouncements and empty optimism necessitate scrutiny. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gadamer and other critics questioned the validity of Goethe’s concept of *Weltliteratur* as Eurocentric, potentially homogenizing, & possibly normative, while Erich Auerbach made the incisive observation that, “in a uniformly organized world, only one single literary culture — indeed, in a relatively short time, only a few literary languages, soon perhaps only one — will remain alive. And with this, the idea of world literature would be at once realized and destroyed.”<sup>2</sup> If the once largely Eurocentric canon shunted other cultures to the margins, at least there were margins in which to exist — Auerbach’s analysis of *Weltliteratur* is that of a tenebrous, near-apocalyptic dialectic where nothing remains.

Whether these critiques of Goethe’s more nuanced concept are entirely accurate is open to question, as is



1. *WA I*, 42.2, 502f; *WA I*, 41.2, 299; *WA I*, 42.2, 505. Goethes Werke. Weimarer Ausgabe (Sophien-Ausgabe). 143 Bde. Weimarer 1887–1919.

2. Erich Auerbach, “Philology and *Weltliteratur*,” tr. by Maire & Edward Said, *The Centennial Review*, Vol. XIII, No 1 (winter 1969) 3. Translation modified.

exactly what world literature is or can be, if something of the kind is even possible. However, such appraisals warrant reflection and, in our epoch, where the speed of human interaction is Zeus-like, world cultures make contact with a rapidity that outstrips our ability to digest them, even moderately. In an interview made just prior to his death, W.G. Sebald spoke of the utter impossibility of keeping abreast of contemporary literature and cited the near-manufactured yields of Germany and Switzerland as particularly imposing examples. Due to the state subsidization of literature, Sebald laments, writers proliferate, multiplying by the hundreds, as if some kind of pestilential phenomenon: "Just look at Switzerland, there must be about 5,000 published authors there today. Twenty years ago, there were only two known ones, Frisch and Dürrenmatt, and today there are two dozen just in the city of Basel."<sup>3</sup> If to most the prospect of two-dozen writers in a single city isn't unsettling, Sebald noted with alarm that, if one thinks of the sheer "thousands of novelists" in Germany, the possibility of wading through their work is too daunting to countenance. As his anxiety reveals, while we may have a more global consciousness and culture, its sheer abundance often leads to its near figurative obliteration, certainly to



3. Jens Mühlhling, "The Permanent Exile of W.G. Sebald," *Pretext* 7 (Spring/summer 2003).

obscuring what is there, waiting to be discovered, with even the most noteworthy achievements often being left unrecognized. If Germany and Switzerland can hardly be said to suffer neglect, Hungary is one culture long marginalized by the world stage. Although Hungarian composers such as Kodály, Bartók, and Ligeti are known throughout the world, and were during their own lifetimes, that has not been the case with many if not most Hungarian writers. While literature is not as immediately accessible as music,<sup>4</sup> writers such as Sándor Petőfi, Imre Madách, & Miklós Radnóti ought, certainly at this date in history, not just to be better known but better read, especially if one wishes to speak of *Weltliteratur* with even a modicum of probity. In the last two



4. Consider Schopenhauer's metaphysics of music: famously, he argues that music, which he equates with the *Ding-an-sich*, "provides the innermost kernel, prior to all form — the heart of things. This relationship [between the universality of concepts and the universality of melodies] can be expressed extremely well in the language of the Scholastics, where it is said that concepts are the *universalis post rem*, while music gives the *universalia ante rem*, and reality gives *universalia in re*." Cf. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trs & eds Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 291. However contentious Schopenhauer's position is, and it is not without critical weaknesses, music does not need to be translated to be heard, making it more instantly digestible than a work of literature in a language foreign to a reader.

decades, a considerable shift toward expanding the impact of Hungarian culture has occurred; as its literature gains more and more prominence worldwide, contemporary writers such as Péter Nádas, Péter Esterházy, and László Krasznahorkai are becoming nearly as familiar to readers of world literature as Saramago, Banville, and Bolaño. Yet, whereas Nobel laureate Imre Kertész is widely known, another Hungarian writer, Miklós Szentkuthy — who has at times been compared to the holy trinity of Proust, Joyce, and Musil — still remains something of an obscurity even though his work predates that of Kertész & the others just listed, who represent the new, late-Cold War generation, and didn't begin publishing until the end of the 70s and early 80s, long after Szentkuthy had produced all of his major works and established himself as Hungary's foremost modernist. In fact, many if not all of Hungary's leading writers have sent signed copies of their works to Szentkuthy but, in the West, they have largely eclipsed their prodigious herald — Krasznahorkai advancing more swiftly to the world stage in part due to his association with Béla Tarr and Ágnes Hranitzky, Kertész by writing novels on the Holocaust, which accord instant caché and significance. *Fatelessness* will receive more critical acknowledgement than Szentkuthy's *Marginalia on Casanova* strictly because the former will be perfunctorily deemed 'more important' given its subject (which is not to cast aspersion on its merits). Topicality blinds and trumps.

If Szentkuthy is Hungary's foremost modernist, in some ways, he is not really a "Hungarian" writer — not in any folkloric or nationalistic sense — his work doesn't deal with Hungarian reality or culture, except perhaps in extremely covert or complex allegorical ways.<sup>5</sup> "Homelessness," said László Németh, "is one of [Szentkuthy's] main distinguishing marks, as compared with kindred Western writers." Elaborating further, Németh suggested "homelessness to be a higher form of protection of the mind."<sup>6</sup> Since the first volume of Szentkuthy's *St. Orpheus Breviary* was banned and he was forced to vet each of his further publications with the Hungarian state, and eventually interrupt the writing & publication of the *Breviary* — only to return to it 30 years later — to write biographical 'fantasies,' essentially for hire, on the likes of Dürer, Goethe, Mozart and others, the fortification of that homelessness was clearly vital.<sup>7</sup>



5. For one analysis of this in English, cf. Nicholas Birns, "Startling Dryness: Szentkuthy's *Black Renaissance*," *Hyperion: On the Future of Aesthetics* (summer 2013) 227–242.

6. László Németh, "Miklós Szentkuthy, *Az egyetlen metafora felé*," *Tanú*, № 1–2 (1936). Tr. by Tim Wilkinson.

7. For Szentkuthy's own account of his being charged with "offending against public decency and affronting religious sentiment," *Casanova* being banned, and his subsequent books requiring state approval before publication, cf. Miklós Szentkuthy, *Prae: Recollections of My Career*, tr. by Tim Wilkinson, *Hungarian Literature Online* (April 23, 2012) § 34.

Although Szentkuthy was not *persona non grata* under Rákosi's Communist regime, and his Jewish origins were unknown at the time, he was certainly forced to become a kind of internal émigré. Yet, that he did is noteworthy, takes us to an atomic crux of sorts. After receiving the Baumgarten Prize along with seven other recipients, Szentkuthy was sent to London from February to autumn of 1948 after being chosen by the Ministry of Education — along with Gábor Devecseri — to establish at the University of London, Oxford, or Cambridge a one-to-one language department.<sup>8</sup> That never came to be but, at that time, instead of returning to Hungary, Szentkuthy could have defected, and since his English was expert enough, could have written in that tongue — like Conrad or Nabokov — without fear of censorship. But, although he was not a folkloric writer or a social realist, let alone a nationalist, emigrating remained a form of betrayal for Szentkuthy. Not of some political faction, hardly so, but rather of something intimately

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8. There were a total of eight recipients of the Baumgarten Prize. The others included György Bölöni, Károly Kerényi, István Vas, Zoltán Zelk, Sarolta Lányi, Iván Mándy, Ágnes Nemes Nagy, and Endre Vajda. During his visit to London, since the language department came to nothing, Szentkuthy “roamed round half of England, with cathedrals remaining [his] ‘burning’ obsession.” Cf. Miklós Szentkuthy, *Az élet faggatottja: Beszélgetések, riportok, interjúk Sz.M.-sal* (Budapest: Hamvas Intézet, 2006) § 36.



connected to his being, something he himself might almost see *biologically* — a betrayal of his linguistic identity. As Mária Tompa, the executor of the Szentkuthy Estate, points out, “being a Hungarian writer, he wanted to live out his personal identity, along with all of its difficulties, in his native country.”<sup>9</sup> A keen decision, and one which clearly preserved Szentkuthy since, as expert a writer as he was, even Nabokov lost something fundamental by adopting English as the base language of his art, which he explained in a rare admission:

Of the two instruments in my possession, one — my native tongue — I can no longer use, and this not only because I lack a Russian audience, but also because the excitement of verbal adventure in the Russian medium has faded away gradually after I turned to English in 1940. My English, this second instrument I have always had, is however a stiffish, artificial thing, which may be all right for describing a sunset or an insect, but which cannot conceal poverty of syntax and paucity of domestic diction when I need the shortest road between warehouse and shop. An old Rolls-Royce is not always preferable to a plain jeep.<sup>10</sup>



9. Mária Tompa, “A végső kérdések kulisszái,” *Orpheus*, Vol. V, N<sup>o</sup> 1 (1994) 45–52. For an expanded, English version of this essay, cf. “Backdrops to the Ultimate Questions: Szentkuthy’s Diary Life,” *Hyperion: On the Future of Aesthetics* (summer 2013) 282–318.

10. Vladimir Nabokov, “The Art of Fiction N<sup>o</sup> 40,” Interviewed by Herbert Gold, *the Paris Review*, N<sup>o</sup> 41 (summer/fall 1967).

Szentkuthy was sensitive to this potential risk and, in choosing to return to Hungary, skirted it, yet knowing full well the conditions under which he would have to live. But it was only in Hungary that he knew he could sustain and cultivate his vision, and his attitude toward tragedy was Spartan and stoic:

It is not meant as idle chatter when I emphasize that I live with ... distant stellar constellations... From *that* huge perspective, from among such backdrops, please don't take it as boastfulness on my part that on such a small territory I can't take a historical period like that too tragically... I was one of the regime's victims ... but that way of looking at things has consequences for one's general state of health & character: those few years of dictatorship ... were an insignificant miniature, a weekend compared with the milliards of years of the universe. It would be ridiculous for me to speak about *sub specie aeterni* and meanwhile whine on about tragedy...<sup>11</sup>

To recount this is not to cast Szentkuthy as a martyr for writing, but only to suggest a steely, unblinking reserve, and the character of one who embodies and lives by the principles elucidated in his writing. It is not mere words; it is a living praxis. Out of a cosmic vision,



11. Miklós Szentkuthy, *Frivolitások és hitvallások* (Budapest: Magvető, 1988) ch. XII, p. 340.

*an ethics*. Tompa explains how Szentkuthy “thought it was grotesque and, above all, senseless to light his imagination in voluntary exile, a thousand miles from his native land, and set down on paper the offspring of an imagination which luxuriated in the Hungarian language and artificially create a substratum for that mother language.”<sup>12</sup> If in his subject matter Szentkuthy is not Hungarian, it is then in *language* that he is, through and through — and it is then in language that he is *not* homeless, but profoundly *bennszülött*. A cosmopolitan, indubitably, but autochthonous.

When *Prae*, Szentkuthy’s first novel, appeared in 1934, the book was so startling that András Hevesi deemed him a “monster,” while Szentkuthy, despite his own misgivings about the term, essentially inaugurated the Hungarian avant-garde. He would see such experiments within a vaster historical continuum, “amply demonstrating” that what were “imagined” as “revolutionary innovations” by Surrealists and others, “also played a part, to a greater or lesser extent (better too), in the history of the arts.”<sup>13</sup> To Szentkuthy, the style of the ultra-modernists was outdated. In *Towards the One and Only Metaphor*, he outlines what he sees as the two principal forms of experimentation: “one is strictly rational, self-analytical,



12. Tompa, *ibid.*

13. Miklós Szentkuthy, *Prae: Recollections of My Career*, *ibid.*, § 21.

& overscrupulous, simply a pathology of consciousness," and the other is "the perennial experimentation of nature," such as biological forms of development, where there are no distinctions between 'final results' and 'undecided, exploratory trials.' "If *Prae* & other works I have planned are 'experimental,'" he counters, "then they are so in a specific biological sense: not an apprehensive, exaggerated self-consciousness, but experiments of primal vitality, which are in a special biological relationship with form (cf. the 'forms' of protozoa: experiment and totality of life are absolutely identical, they coincide)."<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Szentkuthy speaks elsewhere of "the experimentalist playfulness of Nature, the thousand variants of sex," and of how "the art of the Mayans & Africans" was never "detached from the iron positives of reality."<sup>15</sup> Despite that anchor to reality, the mercurial *Prae* was considered "an eerie attack on the Hungarian realist novel" and denounced as non-Magyar — a curse, then, against nationalism and folk-culture, with Szentkuthy suffering from the reprehensible malady of cosmopolitanism. This raises a thorny political question to which there is perhaps no definitive answer, for what does it mean



14. See § 43 of this book, which begins with the phrase: "A Haydn sonata and a cactus." Haydn is representative of the first form of experimentation and caeti of the second.

15. *Prae: Recollections of My Career*, *ibid.*, § 16.

to be Magyar, Asian, or, for that matter, Sicilian? If modern physics has sundered the very solidity of matter, how can any form of identity be sustained as solid and absolute, let alone infinitely sustainable? If Szentkuthy is to be critiqued for being cosmopolitan, what happened to the sea change from national to world literature that Goethe envisioned? The Magyar of 1848 is no more, nor the American of 1950. To Nietzsche, “what is normal is crossed races,” and they “always mean at the same time crossed cultures, crossed moralities... Purity,” he continues — upending any nationalistic conception of the term — “is the final result of countless adaptations.”<sup>16</sup> Our artists and philosophers, the visionary ones, are generally far in advance of our politicians. Over 50 years after Szentkuthy was denounced for being non-Magyar, Kertész would suffer similar attacks after winning the Nobel for a body of writings that do not glorify Hungary, prompting many people to question whether or not he was “a real Hungarian writer.”<sup>17</sup> An intractable question, and as Szentkuthy himself knew all too well, cultural diversity has its perils; but then, if, as Nietzsche argues, hybridization and adaptation



16. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) §272.

17. Florence Noiville, “Imre Kertész’s Hungary: A Country on the Wrong Side of History,” *The Guardian* (February 12, 2012).

is what ultimately creates ‘purity,’ the whole swindle of essentializing races and cultures is rendered impotent. Modern physics further obliterates it. And since no language is entirely and absolutely indigenous, then Szentkuthy (as Kertesz, and others who have been similarly questioned) remains thoroughly Hungarian in being both autochthonous and allochthonous.

Although the *monstrum* had its champions, aside from an excerpt translated into Serbo-Croatian in 1970 and into French in 1974, *Prae* has never been published outside of Hungary, severely circumscribing its legitimate place in *Weltliteratur*’s genealogy.<sup>18</sup> Despite the fact that it foregrounds and presages many of the innovations or techniques of later literary movements, *Prae* currently remains lost to the world, despite the initial intrepid efforts of the Serbo-Croatians, and the French, generally in advance (as they are) in literary and artistic matters. If, as József J. Fekete observed, “linearity of time, coherent characterization, & plotline disappeared from his work and were replaced by something alien, a mysterious secret: authorial method,”<sup>19</sup> Szentkuthy is

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18. Miklós Szentkuthy, *Prae*, tr. by Imre Bori, *Polja*, 138 (Novi Sad: 1970). Miklós Szentkuthy, *Prae*, tr. by Philippe Dôme, Pál Nagy, and Tibor Papp, *D’Atelier*, № 6–7 (1974) 7–58.

19. József J. Fekete, “Outprousting Proust: Szentkuthy, the Proteus of Hungarian Literature,” *Hungarian Literature Online* (July 3, 2008).

then a true pioneer whose work will force us to reconsider not only the genealogy of the *nouveau roman*, but perhaps other genealogies, too. Countering the parallels often made between Szentkuthy and Proust or Joyce, parallels that even Szentkuthy rejected as misconceptions "on the part of people who have never read either Joyce or myself,"<sup>20</sup> Németh perceives a more accurate corollary in Kant:

What is important here is not the sensual material but the introspection of the artistic spirit that goes with it. If we wish to compare him with one of the big monsters, then Kant is much nearer the mark than either Proust or Joyce. *The Critique of Pure Reason* in point of fact is an introspection of the emptied mind. The mind jettisons the world from itself and strives to grasp what is left. As an experiment, it then again repeatedly gobbles one thing or other from the world and watches how space, time, and the categories chew it. It is not the item of food that is important, but the chewing itself; the food is only placed in the mouth so that there should be some chewing to investigate. It is like that with Szentkuthy as well, with the difference being that it is not the scholar's brain that is observing its own mechanism of chewing, but the on-looking and shaping artist.



20. Szentkuthy, *Prae: Recollections of My Career*, *ibid.*

He is the sort of poet who, before throwing himself into his poetic work, carries out extraordinarily extensive prosodic studies, though not in the way that scholars of prosody usually do, but as only a scholar-poet would do it, who, struggling to reach for a novel system of poetry completely suited to his temperament, practices the ideas he has for substitute meters and contents on a hundred different examples. Any of those examples might be a masterpiece in regard to its meaning and content, but the true goal is a prosodic foundation carried to an unheard-of scale.<sup>21</sup>

In effect, a Kantian, but an artistic-poetic one scaling every domain of politics, literature, science, painting, history and the self, down to its biological and quotidian registers. Although this risks hyperbole, to convey the genuine significance of *Prae* as a Rosetta Stone of Hungary's role in the development of world literature, imagine Joyce's *Ulysses*, or Einstein's theory of relativity still being unknown, and the shock — & knowledge — our encounter with them would now bring. But that is the mantle of the posthumous; the works of those who are *Unzeitgemässe* are always in advance of their time. Thus began Szentkuthy's strange fate, with him struggling in the shadows during Rákosi's rule, yet all while



21. Németh, *ibid.*



writing original tome after tome, producing a prodigious and startling body of essays, novels, biographical ‘fantasies,’ to translations of *Gulliver’s Travels*, *Oliver Twist*, & *Ulysses*, as well as a host of other works, including a diary of almost 200,000 pages spanning nearly 60 years, which late in his life the author declared contains his ‘real’ writing.<sup>22</sup> The first part, which dates from 1930–1947, an undeniably fertile and significant historical period, was opened on the anniversary of his death in July of 2013. Revelations surely await, especially since Szentkuthy probably appears in the diary as unmasked, for it may have been the one place where he could stand naked — as naked, that is, as anyone can be. But then, as he himself warns, “the diary is not always a sanctum of frankness; indeed, it is very frequently one of role playing. Particularly with me, being a born comedian... I am always jesting, so in the diary there is a lot of role playing; sometimes outright lying. A person stylizes himself.”<sup>23</sup> If the mask remains, or a host of yet others



22. Szentkuthy first made this statement in 1979 for the *Who’s Who Encyclopædia*, then in *Film-portrait of the 75-year-old Miklós Szentkuthy* (1983), and in *Frivolities & Confessions* (1988). *Film-portrait* was directed by Ilona Török and screened on Magyar Televízió in 1983. Pál Belohorszky was the interviewer. Cf. Miklós Szentkuthy, *Az élet faggatottja*, *ibid.*, 102–114.

23. Szentkuthy, *Prae: Recollections of My Career*, *ibid.*, 116.

are adopted in order to achieve that stylization, then plainly, in the diary, Szentkuthy is at very least free of fortifications, at total ease in the safety of — a home. Here the internal émigré is no longer *hajléktalan*. With the Duc du Saint-Simon, Amiel, and Pepys as but several of his models as a diarist, a certain circumspect *Redlichkeit* surely guided his diary entries and, even in fancy, there is truth — the fantasy reveals the construction of that particular mind, self, body. Through the mask of St. Orpheus, Szentkuthy did avow that, through the perspective of his own life, he could “provide (the malicious of course will say ‘to mask’) a rationale for the diary style of my entire oeuvre, my utter *homesickness* for an endlessly complete diary,” for it is the diary which is his “ultimate ideal in place of the honest superstition of the old-fashioned ‘objective opus.’”<sup>24</sup> Like all the great confessional artists, Szentkuthy is laying his heart bare, with even his biographical fantasies being masks, in part, of himself. Yet, in taking on a multitude of historical personages, there is no mere personal subjectivism in his revelations, nor the torpid self-obsession that rules our age but rather the x-ray of a *typus*. And if in his pursuit of fulfilling the Delphic injunction Szentkuthy betrays what he himself called a “mystic penchant



24. *Marginalia on Casanova*, tr. by Tim Wilkinson (New York: Contra Mundum Press, 2012) § 73, p. 134. Emphasis added.

for self-torment," that is oft (if not consistently) tempered by humor, a genuinely comic — not bilious — irony.

While Szentkuthy's work would experience a renaissance within Hungary during his lifetime, following his death in 1988, his reputation broadened even more: his works were also translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, and Slovakian, earning him some recognition outside of his native country.<sup>25</sup> His lack of such a reception in the Anglophone world is in part ironic considering that he began as an Anglicist, penned a dissertation on Ben Jonson, and would later translate into Hungarian not only Poe, Twain, and Eliot, but Donne,



25. I refer here to entire books since, actually, translation of Szentkuthy's work did begin in the mid 30s, when excerpts of *Prae* and other texts (mostly essays), were translated into German but then never published. The very first published translation of Szentkuthy's work was of an essay he wrote on Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers*. See "Joseph-Geschichten," tr. by Pia Razgha, *Sinn und Form* (1965) 205–217. Mann read the essay and expressed his admiration for it, writing to Razgha that he found it an "exceedingly artistic, spirited, and chromatic review" and that Szentkuthy is "an amusable, very astute, sensitive, and susceptible spirit, blessed with a supreme degree of humor..." Mann concluded his letter by noting that Szentkuthy's critical tone reminded him "very much of something Russian; in the manner Mereschkowsky writes about Gogol, for instance. Anyway: I read his whole study feeling true pleasure from the first to the last word..." The original German letter precedes Razgha's translation of Szentkuthy's essay: "Thomas Mann an Pia Razgha," *Sinn und Form* (1965) 204.

Milton, and even Sir Thomas Browne (who figures — along with Mauriac — at the end of *Towards the One and Only Metaphor* as a key *typus* for Szentkuthy's conception of writing).<sup>26</sup> And that Szentkuthy still remains almost entirely unknown to most readers of world literature, despite circulating in translation since 1990 (in book form),<sup>27</sup> lends heft to Auerbach's foreboding dialectic, and confirms that it is only with his translation into English that he will enter the world stage. Yet this is itself peculiar since, as is well known, the number

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26. Szentkuthy also met both T. S. Eliot and Dylan Thomas at a reading in England, corresponded in brief with Thomas after asking the poet to revise his wife's translation of an essay he'd written on Joyce, and met with Robert Graves in Hungary in May of 1968. Despite these encounters with three of the foremost writers of the 20th century, it did not lead to any greater notice of Szentkuthy's work, nor efforts to translate it into English. For Szentkuthy's own account of his encounters with Eliot and Thomas, see *Prae: Recollections of My Career*, *ibid.*, § 36. For his translation of Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent," see "Hagyomány és egyéniség," *Uő: Káosz a rendben* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1981) 61–72.

27. As noted above, Szentkuthy was first translated into German in 1965, then into Serbo-Croatian in 1970, into French in 1974, into Serbo-Croatian again in 1985 (the essay "Makrokosmos"), and into Polish in 1986 (an excerpt from the *St. Orpheus Breviary*). The first complete work of Szentkuthy's to be translated into another language was *Divertimento*, his novel on Mozart, which was published by Tatran in Slovakia in 1990.

of translations published in English every year is scant. Such is the magic of hegemony. With the publication of *Marginalia on Casanova* in 2012 — volume I of Szentkuthy's *St. Orpheus Breviary* & the first book of his to be translated into English — Contra Mundum Press sought to make his work more well known. In selecting him as our featured author, we will publish further translations of his work — all to be rendered by Tim Wilkinson — over the coming decade, including *Prae*, at last exporting that infamous text in its entirety. And now, with *Towards the One and Only Metaphor*, we offer the second English translation of Szentkuthy's work to date.

Originally published in 1935 and republished in 1985, *Towards the One and Only Metaphor* — Szentkuthy's second book — is comprised of 112 numbered sections ranging in length from one sentence to several pages. While a unique work of its own, something of a centaur in fact, it is also the seeding ground out of which much of Szentkuthy's future work would come. It is a text that defies classification into any particular genre, yet is perhaps most accurately thought of as *literature* in Blanchot's expansive sense of the term; as he defines it, literature is that which 'ruins' distinctions and the limitations of whatever genre in its creation of a unique, hybrid form. When reviewing the book in 1935, Dezső Baróti observed that *Towards the One and Only Metaphor* is comprised of "unconventional journal-like passages expanded into short essays, plans for novels, poetic meditations that

have the effect of free verse, & paradoxical aphorisms," all of which reveal a moral philosophy, a politics, an erotics. "Its predominant motifs (insofar as one can succinctly describe it in a few words) are most especially nature, love, eroticism, sex. All that, however, is constantly painted over by the *vibration* of the unconcealed presence of a writer constantly in search of himself, & rife with beguiling, stimulating, and ever-renewed surprises."<sup>28</sup> This accords with Szentkuthy's grandiose if not quixotic goal of creating what he repeatedly called "a *Catalogus Rerum*, a listing of entities & phenomena, a Catalogue of everything in the Entire World."<sup>29</sup> Did Flaubert see Szentkuthy in a flash of prophetic light before conceiving of *Bouvard and Pechuchet*? Recognizing the absurdity of the *Catalogus Rerum*, similar in kind (as it is) to the totalizing projects of the Encyclopædists, if not the arch aim of the Enlightenment epoch — *das absolute Wissen* — it gives rise to laughter, even in Szentkuthy himself. Nevertheless, and at the same time, it was to him "a truly noble, Faustian goal" in which he sought to summarize "the untold thousands of phenomena in the world."<sup>30</sup> This included cataloguing "all of nature's



28. Dezső Baróti, "On Az egyetlen metafora felé," *Új tükör* 21, № 1 (1985). Tr. by Tim Wilkinson.

29. *Frivolitások és hitvallások*, *ibid.*, ch. XIII.

30. *Ibid.*

accessible phenomena, all the heavens & hells of love, the whole world of history, and finally a universal review of mythologies (the universal show), all the way to Christian mythology.”<sup>31</sup> What differentiates Szentkuthy from the Encyclopædists *et alia* is that this is only a cataloguing, not a Promethean attempt to harness and dominate nature; and what further differentiates him is his very jocularly, as well as his recognition that the Faustian target will never be reached.<sup>32</sup> The fool is the saving figure, the moral fulcrum, he who sabotages the Socratic project when it stretches toward extremities (the Revolution, the Terror, the Napoleonic Wars) since he knows its perils. Echoing the *ne quid nimis* of Pittacus of Mytilene, both Horace and Ovid respectively warn: *aurea mediocritas* and *medio tutissimus ibis*.<sup>33</sup> Still, Szentkuthy aims for the target, albeit with the rarely recalled second Delphic imperative always in sight: “Not too much!”



31. Ibid.

32. To András Nagy, Szentkuthy's *Catalogus Rerum* is “modeled more on medieval monks and on patristic & scholastic thinkers ... than on the encyclopedia-champions of the Enlightenment...” Cf. András Nagy, “Masks Behind Masks: A Portrait of Miklós Szentkuthy,” *Berlin Review of Books* (March 25, 2013).

33. Terence, the Roman comedian, issues a variation on this warning: “Do not pursue an object too far, too eagerly.” Pittacus of Mytilene is considered one of the seven wise men of ancient Greece.

What, one might wonder, informs this strange *boke*? Szentkuthy is guided or prompted into his Faustian venture by sources as varied and diverse as Paracelsus, Spengler, and Viennese psychology. There is an agonistic element here as well, for *Towards the One and Only Metaphor* is a response to criticisms directed against *Prae*, a novel that so startled the Hungarian literary establishment that its author was viewed as “some sort of book-bug homunculus, a horrific monster, who only ever encountered sciences, philosophies, and mathematics.”<sup>34</sup> “Where,” we can imagine some critics lamenting, “is your humanity?” To combat that image of a *lusus naturae*, Szentkuthy wrote *Metaphor* to establish his humanity, and with a title that signifies the arc, movement, and revolutions through which the book moves, from the maniacal cataloguing of everything in the world to the one and only crystallizing metaphor that will contain it all. First, Paracelsus:

Just as Paracelsus brought the human body, the stars, and minerals to a common denominator, or the way modern physics has a tendency to crop up every now and again, bringing to a common denominator all the material phenomena of the world (material is actually a property of energy, energy is actually a property of space...), so I



34. *Frivolitások és hitvallások*, *ibid.*, ch. XIII.



wished to offer some kind of *summing-up* of art, theology, love, life, death, the everyday, mythology, games, tragedy, the cradle, the grave, jokes, a revelation. A listing is not moonshine: with me those are true 'contrasts.'<sup>35</sup>

And so it is, with Szentkuthy taking up (on his own terms) the Paracelsan ethos and tracing out through his 'lists' not only contrasts, but affinities and analogies: the *vibrating* correspondences that reveal the very fabric or threads underlining the universe. This is — as Szentkuthy explicitly avows with a distinctly spiritual word — a *revelation*. What is it, the indefatigable searcher asks, that underlies all things? What is the common denominator that can link one's organs, a chemical substance, and the most distant nebulae?<sup>36</sup> How can these disparate things be united? Szentkuthy's lists then are not mere lists, not "moonshine" (as he objects), but are gathered from that *sub specie aeterni* perspective; if he catalogues, he does not descend into a mere grocery list of items. Instead, his cataloguing is more mercurial, more chemical, a transplanting of mathematical formulæ into literary style. In this, in the Paracelsan ethos, we have the methodology of his book, though that word sounds too theoretical for a clowning, prankish, iconoclastic author like Szentkuthy



35. Ibid.

36. *Frivolitások és hitvallások*, *ibid.*, 325.

who, much like Paracelsus, believed that “knowledge is experience” and since the “high colleges manage to produce so many high asses ... a doctor must seek out old wives, gypsies, sorcerers, wandering tribes, old robbers, and such outlaws and take lessons from them.”<sup>37</sup> Experiments are for Szentkuthy biological, *essais* of primal vitality.

While a *Catalogus Rerum, Towards the One and Only Metaphor* is also a *confessio*, and this transports us — briefly — into Spengler and Viennese psychology, into the practice of analysis. For Szentkuthy came of age amidst the birth, struggle, & apotheosis of modern psychology, and by the time he wrote *Metaphor*, Freud, Jung, & Adler had published almost all of their major works while the International Psychoanalytical Association had not only been in existence for a quarter-century but had suffered its major fractures and faced its strongest opposing theories, most prominently with Jung’s *Psychology of the Unconscious* (1912), *Psychological Types* (1921), & *Dreams and Psychic Energy* (1928), Rank’s *Trauma of Birth* (1924), and Reich’s *Function of the Orgasm* (1927). In 1933 — one year before the publication of Szentkuthy’s



37. George Constable, *Secrets of the Alchemists: Mysteries of the Unknown* (Alexandria, VA: Time Life Education, 1991) 63. For similar pronouncements by Szentkuthy, cf. *Prae: Recollections of My Career*, *ibid.*, § 22.

*Prae* — Hitler rose to power, Freud's and Reich's books were destroyed on the infamous night of book burning, and Jung published his seminal text, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. In fact, the quite exacting and singular definition that Jung outlines of the "modern man" could very well apply to Szentkuthy:

... the man we call modern, the man who is aware of the immediate present, is by no means the average man. He is rather the man who stands upon a peak, or at the very edge of the world, the abyss of the future before him, above him the heavens, and below him the whole of mankind with a history that disappears in primeval mists. Since to be wholly of the present means to be fully conscious of one's existence as a man, it requires the most intensive and extensive consciousness, with a minimum of unconsciousness. It must be clearly understood that the mere fact of living in the present does not make a man modern, for in that case everyone at present alive would be so. He alone is modern who is fully conscious of the present.

The man whom we can with justice call "modern" is solitary. He is so of necessity and at all times, for every step towards a fuller consciousness of the present moves him further from his original "*participation mystique*" with the mass of man — from submersion in a common unconsciousness. Every step forward means an act of tearing himself loose from that all-embracing, pristine unconsciousness which claims the bulk of mankind almost entirely.<sup>38</sup>

With his *sub specie æterni* perspective of human history, his penetrating investigations of con- and un-consciousness, & his hyper-ever-presentness, Szentkuthy is — if not a modern man — damn near to the mark. Jung's characterization aside, it is in the ferment of a continent-wide political upheaval and intense psychic exploration that Szentkuthy begins his life as a writer. While as a Catholic, albeit a highly unorthodox one, the rite of confession was central to his life, the act of analysis or ruthless self-examination was intensely heightened by his impassioned study of the works of Freud, Jung, and Adler. If there is no explicit trace of their terminology in his work, or overtly psychological representations of characters in them, an *impact* is there, transfigured and digested in Szentkuthy's own way, most prominently in his obsessive, persistent, and dogged pursuit of *the question*. For one of the most conspicuous features of *Towards the One and Only Metaphor* is analysis. "My endeavor," he revealed, points

to a world concept [*világkép*] in which I am able to offer a summation of the ultimate questions of life. (Like the figures seen in old coats of arms — the stylized images of a lion, the moon, stars, a chess table, an arm with a mace, hillocks & stretches of



38. Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (New York & London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1933) 196–197.

water, *et cetera* — a lot of fine things fit into a small space...) Ultimate question is a very good term because in this world of ours everything *remains a question*, at least for the examining brain. As a result ..., it is of much more value to catalogue issues that reach to the very foundations of the world than to give premature answers and solutions.<sup>39</sup>

No answers, no solutions, but a catalogue of questions, though even that is not meant literally: one will not find in this book a single 'list' in the common sense of the word. *Metaphor* is not in any way pedantic; it is a work of aphorisms and *essais* and Szentkuthy is as candid (and as entertaining) as Rousseau. Whatever came to hand, ear, eye, or skin was analyzed by Szentkuthy with exactitude and assiduousness for, to the extent that it lay in his powers, he "endeavored to get to the bottom of things with the same passion as that exerted by the Viennese physician."<sup>40</sup> This is the manner in which the question prevails: in *a thinking in action*, in an elegance of cogitation. Szentkuthy *dances*. And this persistent mania for analysis and summation was also "vindicated," he said, by Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1918). In particular, as Szentkuthy describes it, Spengler's biological view



39. *Frivolitások és hitvallások*, *ibid.*, ch. XIII.

40. *Ibid.*

of the life cycle of cultures solidified his search for the unifying Paracelsan metaphor:

According to Spengler, the history of the Chinese, Jews, Greeks, Egyptians, Arabs, etc. all displayed one and the same biological progression and formula, the primitive epoch of birth may be seen everywhere, the most splendid era of flowering, and then the over-ripeness in every area at harvesting time, which in turn leads on to total withering and an almost sickly unproductive decadence. Thus, for Spengler at least, world history shows a single picture or recipe — a one and only metaphor! — as, indeed, in several other respects, the histories of plants and animals also do from the earliest times until the present age.<sup>41</sup>

Early critics such as Gábor Halász saw in *Towards the One and Only Metaphor* only a chaos of orality devoid of any organizing principle, let alone a calculating geometry. Instead, it was pure excitability, tension, flair, nerve, intellectual paroxysm; not a unified work, only the precursor to a work; all that “is left is this *prae*,” Halász concluded his review, pointing back, acidly, to Szentkuthy’s audacious first novel, and then remarking, dismissively, that Szentkuthy had still not learned how to write but was



41. Ibid.

simply casting “raw material”<sup>42</sup> at his readers. Clearly, Halász could not recognize the Paracelsan aim of the book, nor that its organizing principle was entirely unique. As with any fragmentary work, its lack of a systematic structure does not betray a lack of *design*, nor the absence of a guiding *vision*. True, *Metaphor* is an essayistic and confessional work à la Montaigne’s *Essais*, or Lichtenberg’s ruminative waste books, or Joubert’s keen-eyed observations. Yet, if it is as fragmentary as those texts, *Towards the One & Only Metaphor* is at the same time ordered like a group of disparate stars: when viewed from afar, they reveal or can be perceived to form a constellation — they *are* sculpted by a geometry of thought, for, as András Keszthelyi observed, the text is essentially something of a manifesto, “an explicit formulation of the author’s intentions, his scale of values, or, if you wish: his *ars poetica*.”<sup>43</sup> And when reviewing the book upon its original publication, Németh elucidated its geometrical and biological dimensions, noting how, through dehumanization, Szentkuthy returns us to the embryo and the ornament. This is done, however, in order to bring us into closer alignment with Szent-



42. “On Az egyetlen metafora felé,” *Napkelet*, № 12 (1935). Tr. by Tim Wilkinson.

43. András Keszthelyi, “Mit üzen a ‘monstrum?’” *Élet és Irodalom* (November 7, 1985). Tr. by Tim Wilkinson.

kuthy's gestures and words, to take us into the very *partic-les* of existence, and the word is germane. To Németh,

There is no form and content in humanity; our protoplasm is more geometrical and our form more formless than the geometry and biology bubbling up in Szentkuthy's U-tube. His method is dehumanizing; he dehumanizes man by mutilating him in the direction of the embryo and the ornament. The dehumanization, at root, is irony, and the type of writer who simply wishes to keep on smiling during the puppet show and gut-wrenching may well feel just fine. But Szentkuthy is not that type; indeed, he is greatly preoccupied with humanity, and in his ecstasy as lyrical agitator-cum-preacher would far sooner push our eyes, ears, and heads under his gestures and words.<sup>44</sup>

And in *Marginalia on Casanova*, through the figure of its narrator, St. Orpheus, Szentkuthy offers a key to his very art when he describes 'the most savage battle of his life': "the battle of the 'descriptive' versus the 'anecdotalizing,' the Romantically luxuriant in statics versus the French moralizing style of a La Bruyère or La Rochefoucauld." While both styles figure prominently throughout his oeuvre, description is undoubtedly victorious, since Szentkuthy finds in it "many more novelties, variations,



44. Németh, *ibid.*



elements, and shades than in any kind of so-called rational thinking. The most complex thoughts, poetic sensibilities, or philosophical sophistications are all stupefying platitudes, oafish homogenizing beside the infinity of nuancing an *object*. Thinking, however, imposes a demand for nuance, a microscopic madness; it goes where it can best satisfy that *insatiability for atoms*.<sup>45</sup> And so he brings us into the very particles of existence through his Paracelsan principle of analysis, his search for affinities & analogies, and his tracking of correspondences, all of which are forms of nuancing. Nevertheless, it is not only objects but concepts, historical phenomena, consciousness, and a host of other things, including language itself, that Szentkuthy nuances, turning them into living creatures, animating them with endless undulations, making them vibrate, viewing them as number, endowing them with color and sound. For to him, words are “chance reflex crystals” which he plays with like a chemist and an alchemist. And through this play — in every book, whether masked or unmasked — Szentkuthy’s *ars poetica* yields up a philosophy of love. It is always Eros which is put through a thousand and one permutations, and which is repeatedly — tableaux-like — animated out of Szentkuthy’s efflux of materials, like the thousand &



45. *Marginalia on Casanova*, *ibid.*, §73, p. 130. Emphasis added.

one figures of Asian temples, such as the Kharjuravāhaka monuments, which are equally spiritual, geometric, and erotic.

It is hoped that the 21<sup>st</sup> century will see Szentkuthy's transcontinental reception and renaissance, and that — as Nicholas Birns predicted in a review of *Marginalia on Casanova* — “Szentkuthy will enter and alter the canon of twentieth-century literature as we know it.”<sup>46</sup> For the canon will not be closed as long as *Weltliteratur* is moving — like Szentkuthy, & now *with* Szentkuthy — towards the one and only metaphor.

Rainer J. Hanshe

April / July 2013

Berlin & Budapest



46. Nicholas Birns, *Tropes of Tenth Street* (October 6, 2012).

TOWARDS THE ONE  
& ONLY METAPHOR

## ≡ I ≡

IN STARTING this book, what else can I take as my introductory precept (or desire) than this: I have no other aim than wild, absolute *imitation*; around me suffocating, swooningly torrid air, in this steamy yet nevertheless certain gilded death the warbling darkness of a pair of sparrow throats &, above all, these million lines, the analytical richness, of foliage, grasses, and nameless meadow flowers. These *lines*, the fantastic richness of this prodigal precision — *they* are what intensifies my desire for imitation into a mania. A *Catalogus Rerum*, an 'Index of Entities' — I am unlikely to free myself of this, the most primeval of my desires.

## ≡ 2 ≡

THE ETERNAL GAME: *to get to know* the world — *to preserve* the world. When I am excited by imitation: is that a sentimental fear of death guiding me, I wonder, a grandpawish fondness for *bibeloterie*, or some desire for

universal knowledge, a Faustian gesture? You, you little blade of grass, here beside my pen: are you the graceful seal of ephemerality of a selfish moment of mine, a small witness of my frivolity — or are you a secret of Nature that is to be discovered?

≡ 3 ≡

HOW INTERESTING the chirping of birds: when I am listening I 'hear' virtually nothing, I only *see*: the black throats of tiny birds, the swelling miniature yet nevertheless *quantitatively* tragic night of cuckoo lungs — those little midnight horns arising in the trail of the chirping are the sole blackness in the morning light.

≡ 4 ≡

TWO KINDS OF HEAT: the summer heat of the outside world & a sick person's fever. Fight in the blue-grey daybreak of the bedroom! That, too, to the 'imitation': the lathes of the roller blinds, the moonlit, milky-blue leaves of the plant creeping onto the ledge (at 2:30 in the morning), the lightness of the street, the gloom of the bedroom, the crumpled-apart eiderdowns, the visible nude-figure syllables — those impressions of mine are the most important, they are *everything* to me.

My body's inner fever, '*paysage intime de la maladie*'<sup>1</sup> — & the summer heat fermenting at daybreak — fight it out. Which wins? Which is due to the girl and which is for the girl? Woman = I wonder, do you, too, come from the daybreak? Stars, flarings-up of marine horizons, birds and avian throats falling maturely to the ground among the loosening foliage hawsers of the trees; in short, the outside world, the Greek or Gundolfian 'cosmos,'<sup>2</sup> are these your anatomical continuations — or is my fever, my body's inner turbulence, your true brother; indeed, your identity? How gratifying both notions are — whether you are an inner hallucination of my heart, my gall bladder, my vagrant hormones ('myth secretions'), or a strange palm on some strange Riviera, an Artemisian, cruel 'objectivity.'

≡ 5 ≡

CAN A HYMNAL LIFE be separated from the analytic life; are a separate Pindar and Proust credible? That question of the two kinds of heat preoccupied me the entire night: with the frantic persistence, the stubbornness of my half-asleepness, I sought an absolute discriminating definition, & at the same time the dream, the semi-reality carried me at a quite dizzying and irresistible pace towards the rich, swirling nullity of the dithyramb.

≡ 6 ≡

I READ SOME POEMS BY GOETHE before going to bed: perhaps the perverse marriage of banality and *rhyme* caused this thirst for dithyrambs. *Voyage curieux*: the *Spieß*-ness of the *rhyming* makes one more anarchic than the anarchy of the rhyming.

≡ 7 ≡

THE MOST BROTHERLY BROTHERS, the sole relatives: they are here beside me — sleep and precision, the feverish fiction of possibilities and imitation.

≡ 8 ≡

DRAWINGS COOL ONE: if I look up at the optical mosaic of trees, the sharpness of a million contours is cooling.

≡ 9 ≡

TWO female gestures. One of them, really petite but, in terms of her curves, a plumply, well-proportionately skinny woman (fairly elderly), adjusts her dress in the

street — but how? She *picks at* the silk on her shoulder blades with the thumb and index finger of her right hand — on precisely the part of the body which is par excellence the place for being caressed by a man's hand, a broad and wavy *planar* sensory area (in itself a constant curved Minkowski erotic *space* or *plane*):<sup>3</sup> the woman picks at *points* there just like a bird with a sharp beak picks at a cherry. Of course, it is all much more unashamedly provocative than if she would smooth her dress by stroking it. Elderly woman — girlish figure — silk dress: good.<sup>4</sup>

The other: a woman on Gellért Hill in Budapest is cutting her toenails in the sun. That, too, is 'coquetry,' there is no doubt about it. The vulgar intimacy is erotic. Go your double route, Eros, on the high-minded ways of geometric metaphors and facts — go on the kitchen-smelling pathways of vulgarity & demotic sloppiness.

⇐ IO ⇒

EROS: something geometric, something ethical, something demotic, something natural. — The two kinds of primitiveness: demos and nature.

Demotic = the *animal* part of love.

Natural = the *floral* part of love;

it is also evident here that animal and flower do *not* denote the same nature — they are two different worlds.



⇐ II ⇒

A LITTLE *moral philosophical* (yes: moral philosophical)  
typology: from the portrait gallery of plants =

a pine: each cone a brown central point around which the needles branch out like a porcupine or star, with each such star ball sweetly taking up position next to another — they barely bump into or intersect with each other;

a young acacia: pure half-light & half-shades, in point of fact, optical hypotheses incarnated as lamellæ. What a significantly different *moral* physiognomy from the pine tree. How different the deer-paw graphology of the branches, the Io-embracing with the winds, the swaying, skirt-like rubbing against themselves.

When they turn out in the wind and suddenly display their silver reverse sides; pine needles are unable to turn out like that (different psychological temperament).

The 'monotony,' the fact of the repetition of forms with the pine-tree and the acacia — there are *many* pine needles, *many* transparent acacia leaves, but how fantastically *differently* many those two manys are;

unknown bush: Corot-like, it reaches into the picture from the side of the picture — its branches display some kind of aquarium-like eternal and nostalgic horizontality, the leaves are also sparse, resembling samples of bridge cards, and amazingly flat. Full of waving horizontal silhouettes as if one were looking from the bottom of a lake at lotus leaves swimming on like embodied shadows over one's own head.

Are these not world historical profiles, the teachings of saints, the victories & fall of politicians, the 'grand' style and petty mannerism of poets =

pine needles

acacia ovals

lotus shadows?

Or if you prefer it, the reverse — hence a little *botanical* (yes: botanical) typology — from the human portrait gallery: St. Francis, Hitler, Rabelais, Lincoln, Jacob. (To elaborate, *ad libitum*.)

⇐ I 2 ⇒

'FORM' and 'order': different entities.

The nature of 'form' will perpetually have light cast on it by *plants* (conformation of leaves & flowers; clustering

of leaves & flowers; relationship of leaves and branches; wind and resistance of foliage; directions of roots).

On the nature of 'order': consistent Freudianism = *botanical* harmony (conformational harmony).

≡ I 3 ≡

*Foreignness* — *sibship*

*Motherhood* — *lover*

— An auburn-haired woman is stretched out before me on the hillside. She is lower down, I am higher up (who is below and who above is just as decisive an issue here as it is for an army at war): when we look at each other and our eyes meet (how plastic & precise an 'encounter' like that, excluding any misjudgments — when one can sense fancying a person more objectively than the most sensitive physical sensor). I wonder what causes the pathos: one another's human *community*, our biological sibship — or the *foreignness*, the space between our 'individualities'? Can it be determined which sensation is the 'more justified': animal attraction to a fellow animal or a burning isolation from the eerily other and *different* ego? How do both simultaneously have an influence on Eros: it is the biological common denominator at the bottom of the entire human race yet equally the most fiercely *personal* thing, the individual's chief

individualizing and isolating factor. This woman: how absolutely familiar, familiar to a *cosmic* degree, we have between us an acquaintance going back millennia, dating to Paradise, our ‘geological’ memories are shared — the natural history epic of the Homo animal makes its mark in every urban nuance and ‘flirting’ dodge, “...when we were as yet still *fish*, on the third anniversary of the Creation — Do you remember?” — And at the same time how *alien*: how rigidly, fatefully, and furiously, how impossibly alien.

She is feeding the child cherries, piece by piece: the child cannot even be seen, it’s lying in the grass, hidden by green — it’s as if the woman were throwing the fruit on to the ground. Whether she is a mother or *Fräulein*, I do not know. But there is something uneliminable in that feeding cherry by cherry, something elementarily *amorous*. The most coquettish, shallowest dodge, it seems, is: maternity.

≡ I 4 ≡

THE BIGGEST and most important liaisons of my life were these: at certain intervals to see the same female face in the same surroundings without our ever having met before. For instance, at the opera: the girl has a ticket for the same performances as I do. At times like that there is something dream-like, a silent confidentiality

between us: the infinite richness of time, the past, of memories, which is to say the principal nutrients of love, and all the same I don't even know the girl's name; we are strangers. Is this not the chief charm of holiday places: the *familiar* unknown? That is why they are the greatest *loves* (the word can never be written down with such total justification as in precisely these situations), because in that kind of liaison truly the *only* thing which plays a part is the essence of Eros: a lovely portrait and passing time: the *nude* figure of Venus being born from the billows of *time*, which reimmerses into time — “for out of it wast thou taken.”<sup>5</sup> What fantastically unsettling moments those are when, years later, one again meets such a pseudo-acquaintance: greet, no, not just greet, but hug and kiss her, and only at the last minute is one able to hold back one's pathos, reminding oneself that one is not meeting an old acquaintance but, quite the reverse: an old unknown.

≡ I 5 ≡

HOW MANY forms 'seduction' takes:  
 cutting corns from unwashed feet,  
 feeding flipped cherries to children,  
 stretching out lazily, eyes closed on the grass:  
 animal nonchalance, playing mother, playing death.

⇐ I 6 ⇒

THE STRANGE SITUATION of the woman's body: both the woman & the man 'ogle' — meanwhile a three-year-old girl is combing, or, to be more accurate, she is tearing the woman's hair with a comb, and the woman is lazily letting her. Through what meandering paths nature introduces the body ("tiré pas les cheveux"<sup>6</sup> — once in earnest!), an indispensable character, into the eyes' flirtatious-Platonism. Laziness, vanity, game, a touch of idyllic sadism, Narcissizing, pose, desire, blasé indifference — for how long is it possible to string more nouns onto this auburn hair?

⇐ I 7 ⇒

IS ANY GAME in the world more refined or verity more poetic and live than the underlying tone of Goethe: the *West-östlicher Divan* = sobriety & banality, triviality and an eastern story-setting which is as colorful as *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. Is it not *immoral* to awaken one's desire at one and the same time for a peasant-axiomatic, level-minded 'common sense' talking in adages — and also for the night, for the Orphic mystery, and the anarchically kitsch (i.e., true) East?

≡ 18 ≡

THE PROLOGUE to a summer morning: the agony of the bedroom at daybreak — the secret of dreams, the secret of *raison*, the secret of infiltrating flowers, the secret of secrets. And the epilogue in the boiling midday heat? Conversation with a tram driver: he had drunk no beer for two years as that made him fat; he preferred a pint of wine (“if it is good,” he emphasizes) with soda water, beer is dreadfully expensive here, the big heat wave had arrived quite unexpectedly. It is fair enough that I am reading the *W.-Ö. Divan*: is that not what I am experiencing? The eternal duality of banality and demonics (never its *battles!*).

I like a bedroom at daybreak; there is something universally human about it, a laboratory and fate simultaneously. The laths of the roller blinds: with their blackness, their complicated systems of filtering light, and their even more complex reflections on the open panes of glass — those laths are symbols, realities, of line, geometry, form, dramatic monotony, baroque simplicity, satisfiers of a primeval instinct of mine. It’s the same as the keyboard of a piano: at home I keep the lid of the keyboard constantly open in order to see the sensuous abstraction, the amorous cubism, of the white and black lines. Just as non-linear black roses of music grow into the air out of the primitive linearity and numericalness of the keys

— so here the billowing, highly non-*orderly* paradoxes of the lighting propagate out of the fairly cheap physical orderliness of the roller blind. Every parallel, refrain, and repetition excites me: the rings of ripples on lakes, the escaped powers of ovals on branches, of acacias, fence laths, etc. *Un poète des parallèles*: that poet is *not* classical and does not write rhyming couplets, that is for sure. From the bedroom can be seen the Moon, stars, flowers, every muscle, mask, and *décolletage* of the atmosphere step by step. ‘Garden’: that is some magnificent middle way between biological wildness and scientific laboratory, resembling the old pieces of the goldsmiths’ art on which crystal, a diabolical ‘libertinage’ of precious stones, and the pedantic ordering business of a working craftsman and artist are brought together. The tree that happens to be overlooking the window and is in keeping with it is quite different from trees in general.

In the bedroom is the clock and a sleeping woman’s body, there are morality, death, and Eros. Human beings in a bedroom are *ethically* rather than physically naked. A bedroom is simple; smooth walls, hygiene. And between hygiene’s nurse-like walls the poppy of dreams grows: dusted with poppy seed, sooty, rancid, opiate-dosed, cyanic blue, and with a black calyx. A wife: the morality of marriage. A dream: the freedom of *nihil*, its all-toppling anarchy, its orgy of problems. That is all *together* in a bedroom — hence it is a great big place.



I grasþ this arch, shall kiss it to the day I shall die: woman, garden, time, dream, morality; from the day-break pillar of geometry to the tram driver's noonday pillar. ("A pint with soda"? *Benedicte!*)<sup>7</sup>

≡ I 9 ≡

*Huberman*<sup>8</sup>

FROM THE MOMENT the first notes of the F minor Adagio sounded the violinist could not be seen, all the more the violin: it suddenly appeared, as in a vision, in a pale Moon sheaved in chandelier-light, with infinite tenderness and energy as it were cast into the air, just like a long-lost jewel that is now thrown up at the head of a suddenly breaking high wave (not like an open-mouthed sack but one forcibly slit at the side) or a communion wafer waved towards a packed church congregation — the violin's greyish-brown wood: whereas most musicians had a bright yellow, vividly blackish-red colored violin, this one hovered in provocative neutrality between sky and earth in front of the half-built organ.

The vibration of the initial notes and the drawn-apart slow rain of the light were in the closest relationship (the individual rays twisted and the solitary sparks drew apart as when someone stepping through a vertically hanging curtain composed of strings of pearls is forced to deflect the vertical strings slightly to the left & right).

The voice was so precise and soft, so airily dreamy and Annunciation-style dogmatic, that the choir and the rest of the audience thought that it did not derive from the flying violin suddenly thrust into the air but from somewhere else, and the arrow-shooting of the body of the violin into this agonic high was just a mysterious semaphore signaling that one's strings and bows should be sent away, all earthly violin playing should come to an end and one should listen to the celestial philharmony.

The notes were so gorgeous that there was something perverse, an immoral 'negativity,' streaming out of them: as if they were surprising from behind the bars of the cadence, plastic in their uncertainty, like the elders spying on Susanna<sup>9</sup> — in itself it was a bathing of notes which had been stripped nude, chastity in a crystal-clear ethereality, with her provocative, unmistakably whorish gestures. The dead-beat choral singers closed their eyes; with a helpless smile of awe the conductor chewed the tip of his baton as if he wanted to play flute on it. With a curious, ornate Moon-round hand, the tones inscribed into intoxicated souls; there with a harpoon of melody at its edge while others, coming directly afterwards, paraded with their golden surfaces among the foliage of their dreams to build a triumphant, reverential-coquettish nest.

In the subsequent minutes the violinist, too, became visible under his crookedly hovering violin: the instrument continued to rock like a gold-leaved branch in the

wind, with the violinist virtually hanging from it like a sleeping bird dangling on a branch, a hanged man, or a black rag. He threw the violin so high from his shoulder that his head slipped right underneath it, and for a goodly time it pitched & rolled there in the shade. The contrast between the sloth, so to say, clasping to the violin from below and the inhuman sweetness of the music was marvelous: it was evident that, out of asceticism, virtuosity, and lust, he was tossing his soul, his pathos, and his instrument too far and too high from himself, and now only, with distorting grimaces of fingers, arms, & face, was he able to catch up with himself and again completely cover with his body whatever remained of the melody in his soul.

When the orchestra began to accompany him with a quite soft pizzicato, the violinist's pose suddenly changed: within a trice the violin swooped into the depths, as if the unexpected weight of the bubbling passages had carried him down from on high and he was now struggling under a hailstorm. At that point the violinist's face could be seen well. An enormous skull was placed above a short, flat-footed, rickety-kneed hunched body. The size of the skull is to be understood as residing in its width: there was a horizontal, virtually flattened monumentality about it; even his 'lofty' forehead was somehow 'spiritually' lofty, though in reality it was rather broad. On certain Aztec idols, on the slightly puffed-up belly, drooping to left & right, of statues of

Buddha, and on the lazy and tragically melting diadem of archways of Babylonian gates, one can sometimes see this paradoxical melting into each other of domed height and the flat sprawling & slipping to the ground of swelling, half-leavened dough. Spirit and animal bone, artistic Gothic and mineral Romanesqueness are good expressions of the fundamental problem of art: sentimental transcendentalism and material dormant-swirling mass, which predicate, murder, and demand each other. The brow was pale, combining the tints of the Moon's Astarte silver & a nervous *Schwächling*<sup>10</sup> standing outside life (mystery and bad neurasthenia — is there not something *par excellence* 'artistic' about this fist-mimicking head?); shades of ash grey 'secondary planets' spread across these pallidly gleaming fields, especially two large bumps, with those pale-strong contours that snails usually leave as a trace on green leaves when they slide further.

Why that, after all, flat hunk of a head, inclining to left & right into the depths, nevertheless created an impression of 'loftiness' was easily explicable by the fact that bodies rising on high from the depths usually display those kinds of arched forms, and willy-nilly one saw in the material the strength which was pushing it towards the spheres; an arc of distant hills which just managed to rise up at the edge of a desert: a ribbon which was still half-submerged, but one could sense that a big internal spasm of the earth had squeezed it out of the darkness

into the sky; the backs of seals and whales popping up for air from underwater; the rising sun's horizontal yet nevertheless tower-spined arc: the whole enormous skull was, in point of fact, a parallel band above barely curved eyebrows, which stretched from the nose practically to the ears.

The gesture was the most congenial gesture of art: the amorphous, barely analyzable big mass, rigid rather than waxily melting, sheer weight, dream, slow-breathing, nervelessness & pulselessness, but the whole was nevertheless raised and driven by something, a hidden divine leaven, ferment and flood-tide. How much more intellectual is a head like this, resembling a sea-rounded egg-stone, than a so-called Gothic truly tall & therefore 'intellectual' head, towering like a cone set on its apex.

The geological strata of horizontality were repeated right through the head: the gigantic (but only occasionally presenting) furrows of the forehead, the eyebrows, the eye movements, the frames of the nostrils, the black continuo of the lower jaw, and the closing curve of the chin all ran from right to left. The eyes were narrow and, as has already been pointed out, reached back all the way to the ears. At times two dark cavities were apparent like the ineffective channel of a reed cut lengthwise in two — an expressive, unrepentantly melancholy blindness emanated from them: while the diluvial globes of the brow shone their sporulating whale's belly in the moonlight, ghostly spaces under the eyes gaped a

demonic night with the slogan of “not worth looking at, no need to look, color & form are sick heresies vis-à-vis the sound” — a night which, besides all its mystic nihilism, seemed to be a concrete, slightly dirty, gummy eye disease: chaos and trachoma simultaneously.

One of the eyes had an outward squint: this alternatively dancing pupil at once intensified the protozoan-style amorphousness of the whole face and look running across it, continually recapitulating the horizontality of the earth’s surface. The pupil sometimes raced lightning-quickly from the nose to the ear with its sick muscular freedom, the whites not even evident at such times, and with a dark spot filling the eye. On other occasions, in sharp contrast, the eyes grew totally confused, darting frantically here and there in the huge eye area, hummingbirds in their cage, so to say. The eyes slipped almost into the forehead so that they had to be jerked back into position with the butterfly net of the upturned eyebrows; on other occasions they sank behind his cheekbones so that they had to be spooned to the surface by the elevators of the neck muscles, then again lose their way in the whites of the eyes, and the eyelids tormented them with all manner of painful, eelish waves; in the end, it often happened that the eyes more or less catapulted the pupils from the corners of the eyes, over and beyond the ecstatic boundary — the *limes* — of cross-eyedness, among the choral singers or the audience.

His nose, in relation to the archaic plasma tempi of other parts of his skull, accommodated to vulgar ghetto clichés: it was hooked and at the lower end a swollen printing error in the text of the alluvium. The lower lip detached from the face like one side of boiled fish from vertically placed fish bones: drooping, curled, twisted under itself, like a black scroll of papyrus, or stretched nostalgically forward, like Oriental vases or the rim of a well. The sometimes gigantically dilated eyelids and this black fin or salad leaf followed a uniform rhythm as they were also uniform in their lobular outsizedness. It was also obvious that there was a close agreement of muscle between the shadow flesh of the mouth and the nose, constrained as it had been into a hook by all the horizontality: it was gratifying to pull apart the nostrils in the 'maelstrom' of horizontality, to annihilate the entire nose by endlessly straining forward & rolling the lower lip up under itself — or *vice versa* to tuck an enormous plinth from the mouth, after a brief drooping, beneath the flattening nose.

How much more expressive, more defined, & more analytical a mimic is that pair of hawser-thick wrinkles on the brow, the sick & 'senseless' cross-eyedness of the eyes, each sudden sea-swelling on the chin of a lower lip provocatively fattened into a caterpillar, the movements of the head clumsy in an octopus fashion — than the confused and indiscriminately psychologized and humanized play of features of a professional actor able to

control every muscle and nerve. That head and rhythm were the true, the sole possible parallels to the string of tones, uniting as they did all the bestiality and mathematical character of the sound, which beaded out, crystal-clear, from the violin. The enchanting '*dulcor*'<sup>11</sup> of the Adagio did not call for a portrait of a transfigured seraph but this sort of sloth-bodied & moldy-skinned Caliban above the bone cushion of the violin.

⇐ 20 ⇒

IT IS POSSIBLE to 'distance oneself' from life — possible to 'draw nearer' to life, to reality. Distancing or nearing — all the lyrical perfumes of imprecision issue from those words, but still they are justified & possible from some viewpoint (I am too lazy to define it).

I frequently experience three such distancings: through the techniques of love, science, and sleeping.

Is it not the chief distinguishing mark of the state of being in love that one has no connection with the world: the image of the girl hardly crosses one's mind, the time of the next rendezvous barely presents itself to one's consciousness, one's sensual desires (in a positive direction) are negligibly slight; by & large: the woman is zero from a practical point of view — admittedly, a 'dynamic nil.' What one actually experiences, by contrast, is a certain inner relaxedness, looseness, spleen, a sleepy objectivity



vis-à-vis matters of this world, a 'precise indifference' — the whole thing is a 'grey magic,' 'listless ecstasy' insofar as one becomes alienated, on the one hand, from the world, from other people's functions, the whole history of the rest of humanity, from the nature of nature (this is somehow an 'ex-static' feature) and, on the other hand, a passionate viewing, a hallucination, a satisfactory possession of a new phenomenon (of the girl, for instance) is missing — one's last remaining individuality is not a blazing fire rose in the world's gloom of boredom, but a flickering rose of boredom, just as pale as the world (that is what is listless about it). There was a time when it irritated me dreadfully if, in my amorous condition, I was obliged to meet men carrying out intellectual labors: poets (1°), essayists (2°), theoretical physicists (1,000°). I felt an excruciating antithesis between my self, who was finding nothing positive and pleasurable, and my friends, who were finding many positives and much pleasure in the electrons and expanding fogs of the world. If it had at least been in my power to confront the woman and her raw film negative or her fruitful-fermenting mythology with their poems, judgments, and realities, but no: love's biggest torment was that it withered from the world, it made me foolishly negative, the woman was shrouded in obscurity. Is there a bigger antithesis (I wondered) than that between my little sexual hypochondria and, let's say, Eddington's *Mathematical Theory of Relativity*?<sup>12</sup> Never did I feel the lyrical person-

ality to be more of a nullity, more paradoxical, and sicker than at times like that — mathematics more dehumanizedly true or more lethally objective. Of course, as in every *minderwertes*<sup>13</sup> and neurotic person (cf. the pursuit of paradox, synthesis, and morphology by German humanities) there suddenly awakened desires for synthesis: maybe I could be the person who was able to unify in my life the absolutely 'limited' hypochondria of the lyric poem, the shivering filth and qualm oozes of the *ego*, and the most sadistic objectivity (sadistic in relation to the lyricizing), *fact* character, and mathematical perception of the objective world.

Yesterday a friend of mine, who for me will be a permanent symbol of a *non-lyrical*, 'objective' person (an absolute musician and absolute mathematician temperament, with heaps of ethical '*douceur*') took me into the observatory and, among other things, pointed out a ball-shaped star cluster (Messier 13)<sup>14</sup> on the telescope; on his table I found masses of mathematical books (afterwards I bought Eddington's *New Pathways in Science*). Nowadays I do not perceive nil in love and a mathematizing scientific realism as being an antithesis: these scientific truths can lead 'out of' life just as much as poetic lyricism. Life is: *comble d'imprécision*. What do I mean by life, I ask myself? In what way do I arbitrarily narrow down and broaden out the word, the elastic boundaries of which everyone has already exceeded with the most comical irresponsibility, whether they be a buffoon politician

or a dogmatic religious nut. By life I mean the life of an average man on the street, an ordinary Joe, but at the same time also of a few sober 'heroes.' For him poetry is not infralife, science not ultralife.

The face of the star cluster: on a dark grey or blue-black or numb-brown background a silvery, glaucous comet's tail the color of a genuine pearl — a whitish gloom in a darkish loom — how marvelously the picture united the laboratory, geometrical staginess of a magnifying glass, the natural, elemental solitude, and the biological material of distance.

The antithesis between the huge apparatus of the telescope and the extraordinary narrowness of the aperture through which one looks at the stars — how much smaller it is than those of a pair of binoculars. That is why one has the impression one is observing the star cluster by chance as the eye can barely gain access: there are sharp screws grazing and digging into the nose, needles, scales, screws and tubes into the ears, temples, and upper jaw at the least movement — to a lay mind *those* are the essence of 'scientificity': there is an instrument, the object of which is to see afar, and on that the fitness for seeing is hardly apparent — such an absolute visual device that one's eyes can at best only just get near to, and if one has somehow managed to get close to it, the visual field is as restricted as in those unpleasant dreams when the eyes stick together and one is unable to read anything at all even if one were to sweat blood.

I am unable to shake off the contrast: the teeny-weeny regular round opening, the screws, arms, the pulsing of the timing machine, the forced contortions of the neck resembling tortures by the Inquisition, and at the same time the Pascalian horror of the celestial night sky, the velvety, embryonic intimacy. The perpetual prank of magnifying lenses: one is both 'there' and far away at one and the same time.

It seems it is impossible to live: women & telescopes show the way *out*. Dreams also show the way out — especially those in the daytime (morning and early-afternoon dreams). While tree boughs, birds, lights and vehicles chirp in the streets, I freely indulge the laxity of my guts, my blood, and my fever: I stew, stammer, and swoon on a sofa. Oh, poor body of mine, sailing as it is to death, you '*materia*': you most show the way out. My uncertainly vibrating cross eyes, my horse's head crowned with its giddy-rainbow-hued turban, my truly chronic inner ear, my nervously sporulating bowel juices, my puny, rotting legs, my fiery, eczematous mitts, in short, my 'positive' idol and statue part: you are the greatest bar in my way towards a 'normal' life. Should I curse you: girls desisting due to love, heavenly secrets dressed in mathematical constellations, & neurotic body? Or should I bless you? The motto of my agony will be of the following sort: "Had I not been enamored, had my body not had the body it has, had I not been 'true': might I perhaps have been able to live?"

## ENDNOTES



- 1 'Intimate countryside of disease.' This, and all of the notes that follow, are those of the translator & were not part of the original Hungarian publication.
- 2 Friedrich Gundolf (1880–1931) was a German-Jewish literary scholar, poet, & one of the most famous academics of the Weimar Republic. *Shakespeare und der Deutsche Geist* (Shakespeare and the German Spirit), which Gundolf wrote to obtain a university lectureship in 1911, was a turning point in German language and literature studies.
- 3 Hermann Minkowski (1864–1909) was a mathematician who used geometrical methods to solve problems in number theory, mathematical physics, and the theory of relativity.
- 4 In English in the original. All further instances of Szentkuthy's own English will be signified with the font Scala Sans.
- 5 See Genesis 3:19.
- 6 In French, as in Hungarian, this phrase means that something is introduced out of the blue, incongruously, without having anything to do with what is being talked about. In a word, far-fetched.

- 7 A grace word meaning essentially *Benedictus benedictat* (May the Blessed One bless).
- 8 Bronislaw Huberman (1882–1947) was a celebrated Jewish Polish violinist of the first half of the twentieth century.
- 9 The reference is to the painting of *Susanna and the Elders* by Il Tintoretto (1518–94), a work that also figures prominently in §95 of Szentkuthy's *Marginalia on Casanova*.
- 10 I.E., weakling.
- 11 'Sweetness.'
- 12 Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington (1882–1944), a British astrophysicist of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, had a gift for explaining the concepts of relativity. This particular textbook (published by the University of Cambridge Press in 1923) was considered by Einstein to be "the finest presentation of the subject in any language," but his later insights into this and other abstruse topics were gathered into other books such as *New Pathways in Science* (Messenger Lectures of 1934 & published the following year).
- 13 I.E., with an inferiority complex.
- 14 M13 (or NGC 6205) is a globular cluster almost visible to the naked eye in the constellation Hercules and was discovered by Charles Messier in 1764.





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Unique in Hungarian literature, at the time of its first appearance in 1935, *Towards the One & Only Metaphor* was greeted with plaudits by such leading Hungarian critics as László Németh, András Hevesi, and Gábor Halász, with Németh declaring: “Szentkuthy’s invention has the merit that he pries writing open in an entirely original manner... Where everything was wobbling the writer either joins the earth-shaping forces, or else he sets up his culture-building laboratory over all oscillations. Seated in his cogitarium, even in spite of himself, Szentkuthy is brother to the bellicose on earth in the same way as a cloud is a relative to a plow in its new sowing work.”

Szentkuthy referred to this nearly unclassifiable text as a *Catalogus Rerum*, “an index that is of entities and phenomena, a Catalogue of Everything in the Entire World.” In a sequence of 112 shorter and longer passages, Szentkuthy has recorded his experiences & thoughts, reflected on his reading matter as well as political, historical, and erotic events, moving from epic subjectivity to ontological actualities: “Two things excite me: the most subjective epic details and the ephemeral trivialities of my most

subjective life, in all their own factual, unstylized individuality — and the big facts of the world in their allegorical, *Standbild*-like grandiosity: death, summer, sea, love, gods, flowers.”

Similar in kind to the ruminative waste books of Lichtenberg and the journals of Joubert, while *Towards the One and Only Metaphor* is a fragmentary text, at the same time, it is ordered, like a group of disparate stars which, when viewed from afar, reveal or can be perceived to form a constellation — they are sculpted by a geometry of thought. Szentkuthy conjures up and analyzes spectacle and thought past & present with sensitivity, erudition, and linguistic force. As András Keszthelyi observed, the text is essentially something of a manifesto, “an explicit formulation of the author’s intentions, his scale of values, or, if you wish: his *ars poetica*.” Through dehumanization, Szentkuthy returns us to the embryo and the ornament, but so as to bring us into the very particles of existence. *Towards the One and Only Metaphor* is also a confessional, a laying bare of the heart, even through masks, but in moving beyond the torpid self-obsession that rules our age, Szentkuthy’s revelations yield forth the x-ray of a *typus*, and like Montaigne and Rousseau, he is equally revealing, entertaining, & humorous. Now available in English for the first time, *Towards the One & Only Metaphor* is destined to stand as one of the principal works of world literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *B'*



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