

deckung der Struktur und Funktion des (literarischen) Kunstwerks zu ermöglichen. Textwelten der Literatur können die Illusion eines Weltausschnitts erwecken, wie zum Beispiel drei bedeutende, unter anderem auch im deutschsprachigen Raum bekanntgewordene Romane der Nachkriegszeit, die neben den Erzählungen von István Császár in dem dritten Teil des Bandes untersucht werden. Sie — es handelt sich um die Werke von Endre Fejes: *Rozsdátemető* (Schrottplatz), György Konrád: *A látogató* (Der Besucher) und Ákos Kertész: *Makra* (Das Leben des Ferenc Makra) — alle stellen Welten dar, die mit Personen bevölkert sind, die zwar am Rande der Hauptstadt, nicht aber am Rande der Gesellschaft leben, die — nach Kriterien des Marxismus — überwiegend der Arbeiterklasse angehören und meist — nach Kriterien desselben — eine kleinbürgerliche Mentalität besitzen. Die Personen dieser Romane sind »Sozialfälle«, Patienten eines Fürsorgebeamten, Mörder und Selbstmörder, sie können aber genausowenig unmittelbar mit dem Begriffsapparat der Soziologie erfaßt werden, wie Gestalten von Dostojewskis *Erniedrigte und Beleidigte*: Personen in Textwelten sind Zeichen, Chiffren, die gedeutet werden müssen, um vom Inhalt her beschreibbar zu werden. Dies kann Veres nicht erst durch die Analyse der Handlung, sondern gar durch die Untersuchung der dargestellten Gegenständlichkeiten, die ja eine niedrigere Schicht der Romane darstellen, beleuchten, indem er zum Beispiel zeigt, daß die »Ästhetik des Wohnens« nicht mit der Soziologie des

Wohnens gleichzusetzen ist. Die theoretische Auseinandersetzung mit der Problematik des Geltenlassens der soziologischen Betrachtungsweise in der Analyse literarischer Werke und der praktische Versuch der Anwendung einer für angemessen gehaltenen Methode unter Mitautorschaft von Éva Bálint erscheint besonders wichtig vor dem Hintergrund weitverbreiteter literaturtheoretischer Überlegungen, wonach sich die marxistische Erklärung eines Kunstwerks eben durch die Sensibilität für soziologische Aspekte des Dargestellten auszeichnet.

Es soll noch kurz erwähnt werden, daß der letzte Teil Beiträge über den sich auch mit der gesellschaftlichen Funktion der Kunst befassenden »Politologen« Oszkár Jászi, über die Psychologie der Kunst von Vigotski, über den Abriß der Ästhetik von Dénes Zoltai, über die Anfang der 70er Jahre erschienen Bücher von Béla G. Németh und über die Schwierigkeiten und Aufgaben des Literaturunterrichts in der Schule enthält. Der letzte Beitrag erlangt erhöhte Bedeutung dadurch, daß Veres Mitarbeiter der ab 1979 eingeführten neuen Lehrbücher für Literatur im Gymnasium ist. Wir wollen jedoch die Besprechung der Abhandlungen von Béla G. Németh aus dem letzten Teil des Buches hervorheben. Sie erweist Veres als Mitstreiter Némeths, der in der Suche nach neuen Wegen der Deutung literarischer Werke ein guter, sich auf die klassischen Prinzipien zurückzubesinnen immer bereiter Gefährte ist.

Árpád Bernáth

György Bretter: *Párbeszéd a vágyakkal*

A Dialogue with Longings. Magvető Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1979, 450 p.

György Bretter (1932–1977) belongs to the best masters of the Transylvanian philosophical essay of great tradition. His volume, *Párbeszéd a vágyakkal* contains the best pieces and the posthumous essays of his two previous books: *Vágyak, emberek istenek*. (Longings, men and gods) and *Párbeszéd a jelennek* (A Dialogue with the Present), both of them published in Roumania.

Bretter's genre has been cultivated on high level in Transylvania by Ernő Gáll and Gyula Csehi from the older generation and István Angi and Győző Rácz among his contemporaries. Bretter is, however, separated somehow from his own generation, since after turning his back to his past and even recent activities he prefers "the new language medium" of his disciples to

that of those "suffering of stubborn anti-dogmatism", for these men have only put new words into the same old grammatical structures. His name is associated with the appearance of a new generation of philosophers in Transylvania. Unfortunately, his early death left only a fragment of an *œuvre* behind, though he did not reveal any intention of constructing an *œuvre* at all. All his writings suggest that the traditional-methodological, conscious way of constructing became impossible for him. He seems to have realized the clumsiness of science and philosophy as such and that inhibition was resolved by the easy way of essay-writing.

While the scholar or philosopher is entrusted with the task of interpretation, the

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essay-writer, however, is not a scholar but a subjective-lyric self: the authenticity of learning and the responsibility of value-judgement is not weighed on his mind. Contrary to the specialist and the scholar, he is allowed to pick and choose from the cultural memory of mankind, including Greek mythology, Kant, Fichte or even contemporary art. "Essay-writing derives from the level of existence, whatever may be their forms. Its pretext may be a simple, trivial fact or even a fact-like hollowed idea." "The essay is strolling on an intellectual no man's land, sometimes it is poetry, sometimes philosophy or even science: but it is still different: it is contemplation".

The essay-writer, as mentioned above, is a subjective-lyric self, whose virtue (and not fault) to project himself in his object. The scholar proper is obsessed by scrutinizing his object, the essay-writer, however, is not a scholar but an artist. Musil writes that essayism is entrusted with the task of converting the fading consciousness of the world into will. Bretter drops similar ideas in his essays on essays, the best one of the perhaps: *What is the English Essay Like?* The essay, as a lawless genre is capable of creating a wonderful unity of the intellect and the emotion, some fragments from human totality. "It mediates longings, strivings and will towards the intellect, longings are filled by object, the target by direction and the will by activity, abstract things become sensuous glitterings..." Bretter's definition of essay is worth quoting: "it is the genre of truth glowing with emotion". So every pure and sincere manifestation of longings become essay in his view, for example Madách's *The Tragedy of Man* becomes the "greatest Hungarian essay". It is valued for his writings that a theory-minded disciple and critic of his attributes to him: "he is desperately striving for lucidity and normality, but his self-judgement is also important: "some of my writings are characterized by the gloominess of ballads."

The twenty-seven pieces of *Párbeszéd a vígyakkal* are wide in horizon. The episodes of myth-, and philosophy-history are only pretexts for composing his own thoughts. The morals of the *Ikarosz legendája* (The Legend of Ikaros) is a classical proverb of human liberty that is able to create future out of present: "if there is nothing else, then freedom should be the horizon." His totality-demand is revealed in one of the nicest pearls of his essays: *Szükségletünk a filozófia* (Philosophy—our necessity), the one which was — with some really out-of-date early essays — omitted from the Hungarian edition. Let us compensate this want

with some fragments: "Philosophy has been existing ever since we realized that totality was lost for man: the first philosophers were searching for the principles explaining totality... either man was the measure of the world or vice versa. And nowadays one has the feeling that measure itself was lost as well. And we should not comfort ourselves: science is not able to link the scattered mosaics... they have become unattainable for the individual. Nevertheless, we have to embrace somehow the whole, the infinite, that totality."

Unfortunately, we do not have the opportunity of dealing with those writings of Bretter that concern language-philosophy. An authentic study was written on the problem by Péter Egyed with the title *A demokratikus mondat szerelmese* in the last Roumanian edition. I do not even undertake to interpret his *oeuvre* that has remained in torso. I only wish to pick up one motif and its relating context from Bretter's essays. This motif is a hidden stream throughout all his writings; it is a word, though appearing dissonant in its context: whatever strange may it sound, I think it is involved as well as in his early writing on Apollo as in his Kafka-essay and even in his last piece on the Transylvanian village Zsögöd. The name of this motif, as Bretter calls it, is *solidarity*. We have inherited this mosaic from a poster-like language-context but this simple word is given a particular role and rank in the essays.

From an artistic point of view his essay on Apollo has reached the highest level, the didactic tone of the parables turns into poetry, particularly in the interior monologue of Daphne. Apollo is expelled from the realm of gods because of murdering the Kyklops. His punishment is human lot. So Apollo becomes a smith among mortals. The smith-lot was measured on him out of the will of Fate. Should he rebel against his lot, the Measure or should he make a common cause with his lot against the Fate, the "Measurer". Having chosen the latter one, Apollo gained victory. He realizes the identity of the common human lot. "I wonder if he would catch sight if the shining lights of solidarity in the eyes of men... he should not look down on simple men with pride, he should not search for the false pleasure of being different and standing separately, he should be same with the others, the smiths..." Apollo arrives at understanding solidarity with the men, and is adding his energy to their warmth, he meets others in solidarity and risk, so will he be able to gain victory over the world."

The criterion of solidarity, to complete Bretter, is the realized identity, and the

command of solidarity: "you should know yourself". Apollo gained victory for having realized and undertaken that identity. His first counter-example is Laokoon, the dumb, who is in solidarity only with himself, because he is serving only gods and not men. His dumbness and helplessness becomes a "circling inward."

Laokoon's incapability of entering into relationship is also typical of Kafka. His thesis sounds as follows: Kafka's problem is his solitude, the phenomenology of the man driven into himself, he is unable for solidarity. Kafka's three great novels are a trilogy of self-quest, but the fourth novel is missing — as Bretter puts it — that could have explored the intermediate level, namely, the social one, of the individual and the community. It was a fatal error, says Bretter, that Kafka came to face only with mankind as such instead of a definite social group. But we cannot avoid putting the question: what if we lack — due to certain reasons — the so-called social identity? What if, similarly to Kafka, we are Jews among Christians, indifferent Jews among the orthodox ones, German speaking among the Czech, and writers among bureaucrats...? (G. Anders) In this case the postulation of one's self-existence, however, demonstrates its natural claim for relations in partnership and this will be given for him instead of the material-like community in the immaterial idea of Mankind as such. This is an idea, a mere abstraction. There are two ways out of this labyrinth: religion, "that is a compensation of the lack in a positive sense"; the other one is the myth of a revealed impotence, the absurd, or as Bretter calls it: a negative God.

Bretter, however, offers a new attitude instead of Kafka's and Camus'. He declares that existence is more than a summation of individual lots, there is an "existence-tendency" in existence itself and individual lots reveal the throbbing of existence-structures." What does it mean? It means that the condition of absurd can be counterbalanced by the consciousness of relationship. He offers a real possibility for the self-enclosed individual. He offers "earthly" solidarity instead of "heavenly" transcendence. Well, but if a relationship is possible only through a profound self-knowledge (for when I want to be attached to somebody, I must understand myself), but one's self-knowledge is only complete when one sees oneself from the side of his relations. ("why wash your face? It only washes in the face of others" A. József)

In Bretter's opinion there is a possibility for an outbreak out of this *circulus vitiosus*,

namely in the practice of activity. The outside world is offered instead of the inner one. Solidarity, that is to say, is affirming life and "this-worldliness".

Let us raise our next question: should we say so that Kafka's case is nothing but a certain disease infecting our basically healthy world? Is he only an ill, deviant example among well-dressed normal people? Or is he perhaps something different: the model of an authentic tragic human life?

One of his most beautiful last essays, entitled *Temetés Zsögödön* (Burial in Zsögöd) demonstrates that this question is not easy to decide. The clean identity-consciousness, the natural way of relations, the community of lots, the cosmic past and the power of present is filtered into his mind in the citadel of solidarity: in a popular gothic church. It is the dumb world of immaculate solidarity, where labour also suggests solidarity and in a pantheistic vision the flowers and animals and the pine-woods are also in an organic solidarity. The pure empathy is, however, permanently interrupted by associations to the dreadful visions of an American wild-painter, Jackson Pollock. Bretter could have thought of Kafka as well, whose example also suggests that this identity and solidarity is nothing but a glittering self-deception. The artistic power of his essay on Zsögöd can be pointed out in the vibration and the oscillation between identifying himself with the inner calm of popular gothic architecture and its counterpoint: the depressing associations of Pollock's visions: "I have just understood the sweet feeling of striving for calmness, and somehow... I attach to it, unwillingly, a different feeling, that derives from understanding this feeling only as a mere illusion..."

The rest of his writings are similarly such vibrations between the worlds of desires and realities. The essay was found suitable for this vibrations and so the "genre of experiments" was revived in his hands. That was the frame for the self-realization of his lyric-self. We wonder if there is any age-limit for longings. Longing as such is a relation and the two pillar of this arch are the "this-worldly" longing man and the "other-worldly" ideas that are longed for. The longing man is dead. But what is on the other side? Freedom? Totality? Activity? A different language? Solidarity? The longing man has still carried in something on the bridge of his longings. And this bridge was the essays of longings.

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