

Layers of Tradition in Lilla Bulyovszky's Travelogue

Norvégiából: Úti emlékek (From Norway: Travel Memoires, 1866)¹

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ABSTRACT

The paper offers an analysis of Lilla Bulyovszky's Norwegian travelogue, published in 1866. An important context for the interpretation is the socio-historical connections of the author's biography, particularly her conflicts concerning gender and nationality. Lilla Bulyovszky's subversive career led to a deprivation of her social roles in two senses: the contemporary press responded to both her "anti-national" and "unfeminine" behaviour with discursive exclusion. The second part of the paper tries to identify the cultural and literary historical traditions that enabled Lilla Bulyovszky to write *Norvégiából: Úti emlékek* in a way that bears virtually no marks of her conflicts concerning social roles. The comparative investigation ends with the conclusion that the travelogues produced by classical authors of European literature (especially Dante), and female writers (above all, Mary Wollstonecraft and Polixéna Wesselényi) provided a tradition to build on and to continue for Lilla Bulyovszky. The confidential conversational tone of her travelogue was the result of a conscious connection to available traditions.

Keywords: female travelogue, conflict of social roles, gender and nation, female literary tradition, nineteenth-century Hungarian literature

1. Conflicts of Lilla Bulyovszkyné Szilágyi's Social Roles

Lilla Bulyovszky (née Szilágyi) was born in 1833 and became a well-known actress at a very young age. At fifteen she was already playing

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serious roles at the Hungarian National Theatre in Pest, and critics of the time predicted a great future for her. Her career showed a steady progress up to the mid-1850s, but from the second half of that decade she became increasingly neglected, presumably due to various machinations in the theatre, and received fewer significant roles. It seems that established older actresses of the time (e.g. Mór Jókai's wife, Róza Laborfalvi) did everything to push Lilla Bulyovszky into the background. The actress made a tour of Western Europe in 1857, emigrated in 1859, and pursued an acting career in Western Europe, specializing in German-language roles. Lilla Bulyovszky became one of the international stars of the era, a roaring success on every major stage in Europe. As an actress, she has not only gained European fame, but also amassed a considerable fortune. In 1875 she returned home, but was never given a theatre contract in Hungary, so at just over 40, she was unable to continue her acting career at home.²

The main reason for her neglect in Hungary was that building an individual career abroad (in a foreign language) instead of cultivating Hungarian-language theatre proved to be an anti-national act, almost qualifying as treason. The dominant discourse of the time perceived Lilla Bulyovszky's successful international career as the assertion of individual, selfish pursuits over communal, national interests and values. Women's self-assertion, the prioritisation of an individual career over community values, ran counter to national as well as feminine virtues (Vega 2002). A fundamental requirement of the nineteenth-century social role of the patriotic man and woman was that the individual should subordinate their own self-interest to the objectives of the community and place his or her life at the service of nation-building; in exchange, the individual (regardless of gender) was entitled to become a full member of the nation. The public success of women (especially if it was of a material nature) was difficult or impossible to reconcile with the nineteenth-century expectations pertaining to the role of the patriotic woman. As a consequence, women who have achieved individual success have typically attempted to construct a life narrative that framed individual goals as subordinate to national and community objectives. Emilia Kánya (the first female newspaper editor in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), for example, was relatively successful in developing her own life story in such a way that her norm-breaking actions and individual career were narrated as a patriotic act of service to the community (Bozsoki 2018). Lilla Bulyovszky made similar attempts in some of her publications, particularly in her debate with Pál Gyulai (Bulyovszky 1858), but to no avail. Theoretically, constructing a framework in which cosmopolitan, individual artistic successes could be seen as serving the cause of Hungarian art should have been possible, since the artist who became famous abroad had after all gained

2 For more biographical details see: Bartha 2018, 69–81.

recognition and popularity for Hungarian art.³ Lilla Bulyovszky did try to employ this interpretative framework in her article by referring to the example of actors who successfully performed in multiple languages: "Jerman is a member of the Berlin court theatre, who played with no mean success at the Theatre Francais (...), and Prussian writers *were proud* of this exploit" (Bulyovszky 1858, my emphasis). However, foreign language (or language-independent) theatre was not conceivable within the nineteenth-century concept of nation that was based on a community of language and tradition (S. Varga 2005).⁴ Although European artistic successes could – in principle – be placed in a framework where an actress born and raised in Hungary ultimately serves the cause of the homeland abroad, since her international successes also enhance the reputation of the Hungarian nation, such an interpretative approach could not become a realistic explanation in the mid-nineteenth century.

Lilla Bulyovszky was unable to deliver a narrative framework that would effectively deflect accusations of anti-nationalism and selfish careerism in response to her self-assertive emigration and her international success (in a foreign language). Bulyovszky's individual success brought social disqualification in two senses: her work as a foreign (foreign-language) actress led to the accusation of anti-nationalism, while her high-profile career and financial success, which went against the obligatory feminine modesty, triggered the accusation of unfemininity. By the end of the 1850s, the press scandals surrounding her person had reached the point where Mór Jókai, in the satirical magazine *Üstökös*, could make an unmistakable joke about what Lilla Bulyovszky's body was primarily for. Jókai's joke refers to an article in the Viennese *Theaterzeitung* which mentions the actress' noble origin: "Until now, historians thought that the Szilágyi family of *Horogszeg*, related to the Hunyadi family, was extinct, and now here is a member of the Szilágyi family declaring that she is also from *Horogszeg*."⁵

Jókai makes a strikingly vulgar pun out of the name of the "Szilágyi" family in Horogszeg when he claims that Mrs Lilla Szilágyi Bulyovszky is a woman for the "hook-nail" (the literal translation of the place-name Horogszeg, used as an extremely lewd term by Jókai). The actress's husband, Gyula Bulyovszky, tried to clear the insult from their names

3 A theatrical reportage in the magazine *Szépirodalmi Figyelő* seems to open up towards the possibility of such an interpretation: "According to the referred Pestofner Zeitung, Mrs. Bulyovszky plays in Altenburg to great acclaim. If she chose to become German, it is appropriate not to abandon the Hungarian name!" *Szépirodalmi Figyelő*, vol. 1, no. 5 (5 December), 1860, p. 79.

4 On the concept of a nation based on shared tradition with regards to the views of Pál Gyulai: S. Varga 2005, 496–512. *Delejtű* puts it in what counted as the more typical tone: "According to tidings, Mrs Bulyovszky is contracted to the court stage in Koburg. It would be good to know how it is more glorious to be a member of that court theatre than our very own national theatre!" *Delejtű*, vol. 2, no. 35 (30 August), 1859, p. 281.

5 *Üstökös*, vol. 7, no. 5 (29 September), 1860, p. 39. The pun is untranslatable, see the explanation in the subsequent passage of the main text.

in a duel.⁶ The press scandals surrounding the actress and Jókai's smear of both her body and her name are symptomatic of the clear discursive exclusion that resulted from the violation of the requirements of gender- and nation-related social roles. Jókai's joke was widely spread, and became such a well-known and memorable "bon mot" that Kálmán Mikszáth saw fit to mention it again in his biography of Jókai, 46 years after the incident; even though Mikszáth mentioned the incident as an example of cheap, obscene and far too crude jokes (1960, II.16). Lilla Bulyovszky could not gain the recognition of the community either as a patriot or as a woman, neither could she expect human respect for her person (and her body), or the chivalrous protection due to women.

2. Layers of Tradition in Bulyovszky Lilla's Travelogue *Norvégiából: Úti emlékek* (1866)

In the summer of 1864 Lilla Bulyovszky made a long tour of Norway. Her travel experiences became the source of her Hungarian travelogue *Norvégiából: Úti emlékek* (*From Norway: Travel Memoires*, henceforth: *From Norway*) which she published in Gusztáv Emich's printing press in 1866. By that time the 31-year-old actress had been living and acting abroad for more than six years. However, her conflicting social roles, and the emigration which represented a break or at least a turning point in her life, did not leave much of a mark on her Norwegian travelogue. *From Norway* is similar to Mary Wollstonecraft's travelogue *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796) not simply because of the traversed Scandinavian landscape and the female traveller's gaze, but also the striking contrast between the authors' marginalised social position and the text of their respective travelogues.⁷ Like the missing elements of Mary Wollstonecraft's peculiar course of life (which was all about transgressing social norms, and negotiating the ensuing social conflicts) in the text of the *Letters*, Lilla Bulyovszky's loss of social prestige is a peculiar absence in *From Norway*. Both texts make use of the genre of the travelogue to create a self-interpretation of the individual through the personal reflections on the traversed landscape and the unknown region (Favret 2002).

There are only two passages in Lilla Bulyovszky's travelogue that could possibly be interpreted in the context of the conflict related to national and gender roles. One of these occurs in the preface that addresses readers. Here the author interprets the travelogue written and published in Hungarian as an offering in the service of the nation:

6 The duel was also reported by the husband, Gyula Bulyovszky, in a letter to his wife. The letter is quoted in: Bartha 2018, 77-78. The case appears also in the correspondence of Gábor Egressy, see: Szalisznyó 2017, II. 851.

7 On the paradigmatic impact of Mary Wollstonecraft's travelogue: Walchester 2014, 17-20. On Mary Wollstonecraft and her travelogue (in Hungarian): Péter 2022, 106-119.

“the only thing that inspired me to brave the obstacles was the fact that I could do a service to Hungarian literature with the experience I would gain, and that I could please the Hungarian public by introducing a country which our travellers had hardly discussed before, if they did at all” (I. *Dedication to the reader*).⁸

The text of the foreword portrays the author as the creator of a text for the public benefit of Hungarian readers, so she is represented as an active member of the nation and an enthusiastic patriot. Another example of a story that can be read as a restoration or affirmation of women's role in society is to be found in chapters 5 and 7 of volume I. In these two chapters of the travelogue, the author-narrator worries about her child that she left at home. The beauty of Norway and the excitement of an adventurous journey immediately lose their weight as the travelling mother begins to fear for the well-being of the child she has left behind in Pest. The representation of the anxious mother puts the author in the most highly valued female role, that of the Hungarian mother. In other words, there are at least two passages in the text that can be interpreted as attempts to restore the social role of the author, whose national and gender identity had been offended. However, these are only scattered passages, and have little impact on the overall tone, the themes and the discursive position of the travelogue as a whole. Apart from the two barely perceptible hints at the role of the mother and the patriot, Lilla Bulyovszky's travelogue makes more sense from a personal perspective: the burnt-out actress, completely exhausted from her work, seeks revitalization and relief in solitary travel and unspoiled nature:

“During a walk (...) I told them that I wanted to rest for a few months (...). I badly needed that. (...) I longed to escape far, far away (...) where I am not idolised but not slandered either, where I am not loved but not hated either, where no one finds me but I could invent myself” (I.1. 2-3).

It is clear from the text that Lilla Bulyovszky's journey is not bound to make sense from a predominantly communal perspective, as, for example, Sándor Farkas Bölöni's *Travels in North America* (1834), but offers a solution to an ongoing personal crisis in an individual's life. Public benefit appears in the text of *From Norway* as a mere gesture

⁸ Quotes from the travelogue refer to the first edition (Bulyovszky 1866). Henceforth, quotations are indicated by the volume number, chapter number and page number in brackets.

in the already quoted lines of the preface, which can even be read as a form of self-justification, whereas the whole work is characterised by an individual, private perspective. The autobiographical text perceives the “invention” or construction of the self as an individual, not a communal activity.

Despite the autobiographical nature of the travelogue genre, in terms of subject matter, form, and rhetoric, *From Norway* was not determined by Lilla Bulyovszky's role conflicts and loss of social prestige (as revealed by contemporary journalistic sources). The narrator's voice of the travelogue is that of a confident, free-flowing chatterer who needs no self-justification. Her gaze is objective, her words provide a vivid portrayal of the explored landscapes, while her cultural-anthropological, and social reflections present her as an impartial, benevolent and authoritative interpreter of local customs.

“It was 9 o'clock and the sun was still far from the shadows of dusk when we arrived at the inn. Although I call it an inn, its meaning is not the same as the Norwegian word *Gjestgivergaard*. – We were received by a very respectable woman, with a friendly face and a kindly look, and (...) she led us into a large room on the ground floor, at the door of which we halted with surprise: nothing could ever have been cleaner than this bright white floor, covered with green pine branches spreading a pleasant fragrance (...)” (I. 4. 41.).

This is how she praises the tidiness of the accommodation, where, following local customs, the floor is covered with pine branches serving as an air freshener. When their accommodation fails to meet the fundamental standards of hygiene and comfort, she uses light-hearted humour to illustrate their situation:

“Performing our usual examination of the beds before going to sleep, our first finding was that that they were berths, but hardly beds. The resourceful innkeeper (...) had furnished the room exactly 20 years ago, and it has been left unchanged ever since (...). Finally, a short, colourful duvet, which must have been filled with some unidentifiable material, served as a blanket (...). Olga said that it might contain dry fish scales; I suspected crushed herrings.” (II. 1. 7-9.)

The travel narrative presents the reader with an independent, cheerful, lively and good-humoured sober traveller, who reliably guides us through the rich natural and miserably poor social conditions of Norway, dotted with wild waterfalls and fjords. The foreword to the only modern edition of the nineteenth-century travelogue similarly praises the fresh tone and the sensuous descriptions produced by the traveller's gaze:

"After no less than a hundred and fifty years, her travelogues still feel so fresh and vivid that even if the reader has never been interested in Norway, they will enjoy the original, well-rounded little stories."
(Bulyovszky 2001)

Into the conversational, predominantly descriptive travel narrative of *From Norway* Lilla Bulyovszky has woven another thread of plot: the love story of the narrator's companion, the young and permanently sad Olga. The beginning of the travelogue informs the reader that the author-narrator is not travelling entirely alone, but with a newly met Polish family. Her companions are a Polish colonel, the colonel's wife, and Olga, the young sister of the wife. During most of the trip, Olga and Lilla share a bedroom, and quickly become friends. Olga slowly confides in her elderly companion, and the reader is introduced to the reason of Olga's grief and her tragic love story. The relationship between Olga and the author-narrator (Lilla) appears in the text as a sisterly relationship: "– Olga, I want to be your sister!" – as the author-narrator exclaims (I. 4. 45). And later: "Talk to me Olga, confer your trust upon me, I have grown to love you as if we were two branches of the same tree (...)" (I. 7. 102.). According to the characters' self-interpretation, their protective-defensive sisterly relationship helps the travellers through both the often cruel trials of nature, and the soul-torturing disappointments of love.

Olga's story, woven into the fabric of the travel narrative provides an interpretation of the northbound journey, and vice versa, the Norwegian landscape, and the wild landscape of the North provide an interpretation of Olga's love story. The metaphorical link between the landscape and Olga's soul is reflected in the description of her face:

"I studied her with tender compassion, not knowing which to admire more: the nobility and tenderness of her heart, or her strength and firmness. Such rarely common traits appear together in her, but what is more striking: in spite of her childish mood, her bosom was full of the deepest passion. – I could compare her [i.e. Olga] to a snow-covered field of rocks, such as is often

found in Norway: the rock is smooth, and flowers and depths are concealed beneath.” (I.4. 43-44)

Or later, concerning Olga’s self-control:

“[Her] calm was false and feigned, like a thin layer of ice covering a bottomless abyss, which yields to the first touch and breaks” (I. 5.59.)

In this sense, from *Norway* is a dual travel narrative: the dangerous geographical journey to the north, to the realm of eternal snow simultaneously leads the reader to the dangerous regions of the passions and torments of the soul. The reticent Olga takes the author-narrator Lilla in her confidence, and little by little she lets her in on her love tragedy. The turning point, when Olga first begins to talk honestly about her past and her feelings, is introduced with the following sentences:

“– She looked at me with her big eyes, (...) grabbed at her heart, and fell down in my arms in a swoon. The warmth of my unexpected words *broke the ice*.” (I. 4. 45 Emphasis mine.)

The Norwegian landscape the narrator travels through is more than a simple scenery, background or setting for the travel narrative and Olga’s love story. In the narrative and rhetorical structure of the travelogue, the descriptive parts related to the landscape and the stories embedded in the narrative parts mutually interpret each other: an active dialogic relationship emerges between the descriptive and narrative layers of the text. In the text of *From Norway*, descriptions of the surface, the Norwegian landscape, receive new depths through this process; and the otherwise slightly banal and sentimental love narrative thus turns into a peculiar story sensually painted with unique contours and bright, cold, Nordic colours.

One of the meaning-making layers in Olga’s story is the overlapping composition of the description of the Norwegian landscape and the portrayal of Olga’s complexion and soul. Another powerful interpretive figure in *From Norway* derives from the intertextual aspects of the travelogue. Olga’s story is told and interpreted within the text through multiple levels of allusions to Dante. The first Dante quote in the travelogue appears on the flip side of the medal hanging in Olga’s neck. One side of the medal features a miniature of her lover’s face, while the other contains the famous inscription of the entrance to Hell:

“Olga reached into her bosom, from where she produced to me, on a black ribbon, the coin above which she prayed every night. With a press on the spring, the coin burst open. My eyes fell on the face of a beautiful young officer (...) Such features cannot deceive, I said.

Olga smiled bitterly and warned about the other half of the coin. Here I read in black letters the famous words of Dante:

– Lasciate ogni speranza!

– This is my epitaph, she said, with touching serenity (...)” (I.5. 61)

The interpretation of Olga's journey as a Dantesque passage through hell is later clearly hinted at in the text at several points. Thus, the narrative structure of Lilla Bulyovszky's travelogue is connected to the primary root of European cultural history. While engaging in a confident and effortless conversation with the reader at the level of the travel narrative, she also gives subtle signals that the text is both a living continuation and perpetuation of a centuries-old European tradition in which travel is both a journey of self-discovery and a process with metaphysical dimensions. In the final chapter of the first volume of the travelogue, the generic, narrative and intertextual layers of the text are inextricably intertwined in a complex, extensively developed image. The travellers – on the level of the literal travel narrative of the text – are sailing in a narrow fjord with no apparent way out. From the boat, it looks like they are heading straight for an iceberg. The sight is compared by the travelling observers to the deepest circle of Dante's inferno, frozen in perpetual ice. At the same time, the author-narrator calls Olga's attention to the potential similarity between the natural landscape that is coming into their view along with the travellers' journey within it, and the *apparent* absence of a solution to her love tragedy:

“– Olga! (...) do you see the beautiful mountains that block the horizon before us? (...) Look around well: do you see the possibility of escaping from this arm of the sea? (...)

– Indeed not! she replied – (...) I see no opening, and if this landscape were not paradisiacal, I should believe myself in some circle of Dante's inferno, where one can only enter, but never escape! (...)

An hour later, arriving to two huge mountains, when we started to think that our path is closed and we can go no further: suddenly two straits opened up before us; (...) the shut horizon opens out in two directions, and wherever we looked the landscape was surprisingly magnificent (...).

– Behold, Olga – I said, taking her hand – such may be your fate too” (I. 8. 116-117)

The literal, concrete journey to Norway and the metaphorical, inner spiritual journey in Lilla Bulyovszky’s travelogue gain a cultural-historical and European perspective through the allusions to *The Divine Comedy*.

What kind of tradition was Lilla Bulyovszky drawing on when she wrote her Norwegian travelogue? On the one hand, she obviously drew on her own previous work and experience as a translator and fiction writer, as this is not the author’s first book. She was far from being a novice in her own writing career when she published *From Norway*. In theatre history, Lilla Bulyovszky is also noted as a translator. According to the archives of the National Theatre, she translated more than twenty plays, including Alexandre Dumas Jr.’s *The Lady with Camellias*. She was not only known as a translator, though: she also published a collection of short stories and a travelogue of her 1857 trip to Western Europe. In other words, the linguistically and stylistically confident text of *From Norway* is clearly the work of a skilled author trained on many previous writings.

As seen, *From Norway* tells the journey of heartache and self-discovery in the manner of Dante’s *Inferno*. However, not only the cultic texts of European literature constituted an accessible and confidently malleable tradition, for Lilla Bulyovszky’s work as a female travel writer in Hungarian is not without precedent. She was able to construct her fluent narrative voice, the rhythm of her prose and the narrative structure of her storytelling by drawing on the tradition available to her. From Hungarian literature by women authors, Polixéna Wesselényi’s travelogue, *Olaszhoni és schweizi utazás (Journeys to Italy and Switzerland, 1842)*, represented the main tradition for her to continue. Continuity with Polixéna Wesselényi can be seen primarily in the tone of the two travelogues. Lilla Bulyovszky converses with her readers in the same confident and witty tone that Polixéna Wesselényi used in her travelogue from two decades earlier. The direct, chatty relationship with the reader and the educated, yet subject-oriented, and distinctly feminine narrative tone are closely related in the two texts. In addition to the linguistic continuity (reflected in tone, style and the narrator’s attitude), there are also thematic links between the two texts. These include practical and detailed descriptions of dressing and clothing, or reflections on the particular challenges and difficulties of travelling as a woman:

“(...) we took a pleasant walk through the town, where all the children ran after us, every window was full of spectators, and people stopped in the street to stare at us.

In Norway the passenger is a rare bird, and the female passenger is a white raven” (I. 4. 43.)⁹

Perhaps the most striking – but certainly the longest – and most specific thematic overlap between the two travelogues is the partially failed and decidedly risky mountaineering adventure of the travelling women. Lilla Bulyovszky's attempt to climb Snohatten (in her text, Snehätten) (II. 5. 68-77) is a rewriting of the climbing adventure of the *Olaszhoni és schweizi utazás* around Mont Blanc (Section IX). In both travelogues, attempts at mountaineering are discussed as a transgression of the boundaries of women's social roles, as the climbing of the female traveller is met with remarks of concern and, in some cases, disapproval in both texts.

But the two texts also share a lively sense of humour in the language used for description and characterisation. Both travelogues introduce readers to the characters they meet along the way with a similar witty humour. One of the most amusing passages in Polixéna Wesselényi's travelogue is where she ridicules the Hungarian chauvinist young soldier (at the very end of Section VIII). Lilla Bulyovszky introduces us to several memorable characters. George, the Norwegian cicerone, suffers from reading fever, so he tries to speak in the delicately sensitive and extremely rhetorized language of sentimental fiction – most of the time, defectively. The groom, who is a mouthy braggadocio but is in fact a coward, joins them on their climbing adventure, and never fails to add the justification “on my word”:

“ – My Ludmilla (...) is not a great beauty, on my word, nor can I say that we would be madly in love with no restraints” (II. 5. 68.)

The scene in which the groom, who, on his word, truly pities his companions because God has not given them a man's heart as brave as his own, falls off his horse, is particularly comic. The almost Chaucerian wife of Bergen, who compares her first husband to a sheep

9 A common feature of nineteenth-century Norwegian women's travelogues is that the narrators reflect on the fact that women travellers are rare in Norway and are therefore stared at by the locals. More details on this topic: Walchester, 2014, 30-34.

and her second to an ox (“I wonder,” I said, laughing, “what her third husband would be like if she were to become a widow again?” II. 3. 33) is an equally memorable character. The linguistic humour of her characterisation, and her vivid, sensitive descriptive-narrative voice make Lilla Bulyovszky’s text a pleasure to read even today. “I’m dying for a good chat,” the narrator bids farewell at the end of the travelogue. And this self-portrayal is quite authentic. The narrator of Lilla Bulyovszky’s travelogue – like the narrator of Polixéna Wesselényi – not only loves to converse with her readers, but she is also capable of doing so in a lively and witty way.

3. *From Norway* as a self-shaping and community-building travelogue

Public benefit journeys in the nineteenth century often led to the more developed societies of Western Europe, and possibly the United States, where travellers studied the more sophisticated and civilised social conditions than at home (Popova-Nowak 2006). The Nordic trips to the seemingly untouched natural world of Scandinavia occasioned a different kind of reflection. The rural, almost medieval society of nineteenth-century Norway, as seen from Western Europe, evoked an often nostalgically conceived old world, but also provided an opportunity to imagine the idealistic societies of social utopias (Kassis 2015). The sparsely populated countryside and the wild yet unspoiled nature became the ideal setting for romantic seclusion and an individual’s journey into the self.

Above all, the series of nineteenth-century women’s travelogues about Norway beginning with Wollstonecraft meant an opportunity for reflection on individual emotions (Favret 2002) and for private conversation (Walchester 2014). Lilla Bulyovszky’s travelogue fits naturally into this Wollstonecraftian tradition, insofar as in her case, too, the ongoing crisis of her individual life (burnout in her work as an actress, fatigue, exhaustion) justifies her expedition to the North, which transforms into Olga’s journey of self-discovery and an inner journey of her personal, love and emotional crisis. The travelogue is primarily informed by the reflections on inner, individual emotions and self-shaping. Although neither Wollstonecraft, nor *Letters* is referred to in the text of *From Norway*, Lilla Bulyovszky followed in Wollstonecraft’s footsteps both in a concrete geographical sense and as an author who broke social norms in her lifestyle – but also as a confident writer.

4. Conclusions

Lilla Bulyovszky’s travelogue is not a work of public benefit in the national sense, since it primarily deals with private matters. *From Norway* leaves

the national context and its text cannot be interpreted in terms of the author's conflict concerning social roles. At the same time, the layers of tradition and the literary patterns to which the text of *From Norway* is connected, however, do spell out a network of literary connections where the text does not stand alone, but identifies with a community of related works. When Lilla Bulyovszky adds a metaphysical perspective to her Norwegian journey through the references to Dante, she also opts for a tradition. References to Dante place the text of *From Norway* in the stream of European cultural history, and in the community of European culture. The similarity in tone with Polixéna Wesselényi's travelogue, the shared humour of the texts, as well as the striking thematic overlaps establish a textual link with the community of female travellers and female authors.

As an author, Lilla Bulyovszky could draw on a rich European literary tradition, but also on a modest Hungarian-language tradition of women authors and genres. The intertextual references in the travelogue mark the position of *From Norway* within the universe of European and female literary texts, and provide a framework for its interpretation. The layers of tradition in Lilla Bulyovszky's travelogue elevate the speaker out of the national role conflict, and make her a member of a wider European cultural community and a sisterhood.

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