

From *I Ching* to the Beatrice Concerts

Esoteric Neoavant-garde Experiments by
Judit Kemenczky

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ABSTRACT

Judit Kemenczky is one of the most important Hungarian neo-avant-garde female poets, although relatively few people seem to know her oeuvre. As a member of the Fölöspéldány [Duplicate] Group, she performed at several „literary evenings” and meetings combined with rock concerts (mostly with the group Beatrice), where participants from literary backgrounds often presented their works in an almost performance-like manner. This subversive way of presentation, or even the neo-avant-garde poetics of her texts, played with and subverted at the same time esoteric themes and motifs borrowed from different historical periods and cultures. East Asian culture was an important source for her work, and she integrated *I Ching* [The Book of Change] also into her writing. In my study, I will focus on this connection in Judit Kemenczky’s works, i.e. the complimentary dualism of tradition and experimentation, as well as of movement and constancy.

Keywords: Neo-avant-garde, Fölöspéldány Group, punk, East Asian culture, *I Ching*

1. Introduction

Judit Kemenczky (1948–2011) is one of the most important Hungarian neo-avant-garde poets, yet relatively few people know her work.¹ As

1 Judit Kemenczky poet, writer, painter, translator, orientalist. She studied at the Faculty of Humanities of ELTE (University Eötvös Loránd) between 1970 and 1978, and she published her first poems in the anthology of young writers entitled *Ne mondj le semmiről* [Don’t give up anything] with János Pilinszky’s dedication. After falling in love with and marrying József Bakucz, she lived - with a two-year break - in Boston, USA, from 1985 to 1991. She returned home after Bakucz’s death in 1990. She published several books (*A vesztő* 1979, *Sorsminta* 1982, *Az amerikai versek 1985–1991* 1992, *NapFutók* 1996, *Templomszáj* 2002,

a member of the Fölöspéldány [Duplicate] Group, she performed at several “live” literary evenings and meetings combined with rock-punk and alternative concerts, where participants from the literary scene presented their works in form of performances. This subversive performance style, or rather, the neo-avant-garde poetics of her poems (both in print and as picture poems), played with and at the same time subverted her esoteric themes borrowed from different historical periods and cultures. An important source for her work was the East Asian culture, including the *I Ching* [The Book of Changes]. In my paper, I will focus on this connection in Judit Kemenczky’s work, i.e. the complementary duality of tradition *versus* experimentation and subversion, and of movement *versus* permanence.

Judit Kemenczky’s debut can be considered a quite exceptional, emphatically successful one. János Pilinszky presented Judit Kemenczky’s poems in the anthology of young poets in this way: “Oh God, how difficult to write a preface to a young poet’s poems! [...] Especially if she is talented. [...] Because the beauty of talent is that it is unpredictable, that it is surprising”. (Pilinszky 1974). Géza Szőcs, who made his debut as a neo-avant-garde poet, says that his generation looked up to Judit Kemenczky who was the same age as them, and expected a big breakthrough from her: “her poetry was exceptionally important to many of us who were in our twenties in the 1970s: it reinforced in us the understanding that there is another canon beyond not only the official but also the unofficial canons. [...]” (Szőcs 2008, 29; Pályi 2011) He continues, however, that this could not have succeeded because Judit Kemenczky refused to meet any expectations, even of this kind, and went her own way, ending up with a version of religiously inspired poetry that was not really in demand in any branch of contemporary literature and art. András Pályi writes in his necrologue, reflecting on the same trajectory, that Kemenczky “went from the ironic-reignified experience of the Duplicate Group to the ecstasy of the ‘sun run’” over the years: “She was one of the most compelling poetic voices of the time, but her contemporaries had no affinity to hear and process it” (Pályi 2011, 1340).

Hullámlovasok 2005). She translated Nō dramas (her work was awarded the Book of the Year prize), and the works of 12th-century mystic visionary Hildegard von Bringen under the title *A megváltás tüzes műve* [The Fiery Work of Redemption]. She won the Milán Füst and Déry prizes. She published – among others – in magazines featuring neo-avant-garde authors, such as *Mozgó Világ*, *Arkánum* and *Magyar Műhely*, but also in *Jelenkor* and *Kortárs*. She started later as a painter, but had several individual exhibitions in Hungary and abroad. The most successful was her exhibition with József Bakucz, which was organized posthumously for her husband in the Vizivárosi Gallery. Here Judit Kemenczky exhibited hand-painted flags with oriental symbols, later she created surrealist-mystical sacred paintings.

2. The Duplicate Group

According to András Pályi, Judit Kemenczky was “a determined member of the Duplicate Group, and in this circle she was considered an eccentric with her disciplined behaviour, her fascination for Eastern cultures and her mystical inclination” (Pályi 2011, 1338). The Duplicate Group was named after the workplace of Judit Kemenczky and Balázs Györe, the Duplicate Centre of the National Széchényi Library of Hungary: a part of the Book Distribution Department, whose function was to recycle and sort out publications that had become useless in libraries. The members of The Duplicate Group were Sándor Bernáth(y), El Kazovsky (El Kazovszkij), Balázs Györe, Judit Kemenczky, János Kőbányai, Ferenc Temesi, Ákos Szilágyi, Endre Szkárosi, along with Athéna Görög and Adrienne Scheer.²

In an essay in 1998, Ákos Szilágyi also recalled the connotations attached to the name, which the members of the group completely identified with, both personally and in relation to art: superfluosness, aimlessness, lostness. “We got the name Duplicate because in 1979 Balázs [Györe] and Judit [Kemenczky] worked at the Duplicate Center of the National Széchényi Library. They put the stamp on the discarded books: surplus copy/duplicate. Almost by itself the name expanded in our imagination, by itself, it acquired existential and ontological relevance to our personal and literary destiny, and by itself it became the name of the zeitgeist of the dying decade” (Szilágyi 1998, 172; Havasréti 2006, 213–214).³ Formally creating a group also had a gestural value in terms of cultural and political considerations, since the contemporary authorities favoured popular front initiatives, and were not really enthusiastic about artistic groups, seeing in them the possibility of becoming a party.

The formation of a group requires a high degree of sociability and a strong tendency for cooperation, which the members of the Duplicate Group possessed to different degrees. Their aesthetic ideas also diverged – however, this diversity and fragmentation was also suitable for avoiding the homogenization of the members’ artworks. To illustrate this, Endre Szkárosi recalls in his memoirs a controversy between him and Judit Kemenczky: “Judit was quiet, but sometimes very vehement, and when she sometimes got into it, she said very clever things, and very firmly. Once she was very upset with the way I was performing because she found the *Militarist song* [Militarista dal], but especially the *Army* [Sereg], very aggressive. She almost lost her head, she scolded me so much for them. I hummed, I said, I can’t change what I’m doing once I see fit to do it as I do it. After all, our poetic characters were so different

2 Athéna Görög was married to Endre Szkárosi, Adrienne Scheer to Balázs Györe. They did not take part in the performances, but they were very close to the company.

3 See also: “[...] It excluded man and art from itself as a duplicate. The history of modern art – the history of the gradual awareness of superfluosness – is the history of its becoming a duplicate.” (Szilágyi 1986, 13–14).

that these eruptions were legitimate. This kind of thing has come up on other occasions, and I have always argued that the interesting thing about our collaboration is that we are all very different, and each of us is a rather sovereign creative personality. It's not worth forming a team with the same kind of people. Judit and Balázs are a bit esoteric, János is quite media-oriented, Ákos is philosophically grotesque, Temesi was unclassifiable at the time, and I am, to be honest, a radical avant-garde." (Szkárosi 2011, 110).

By analogy with Lélegzet [Breath] Group, Havasréti calls the Duplicate a "live journal", saying that its so-called „literary concerts" can be described as that. It is a "live journal", because its medium of communication is the verbal, not the written, printed form. That's a decision based on aesthetic, metaphysical, political considerations, and aims to break the hegemony of official and printed literature, to create community and trends, to evade censorship, to accept the metaphysical primacy of the living word, experimentalism and multimediality (Havasréti 2006, 210). Havasréti identifies the patterns and scenes of rock concerts and theatre performances as the model for the Duplicate concerts, and notes that in the performance, in parallel to the authors reading their works, elements and representatives of the associated arts (music, theatre, visual arts) also played a significant role (Havasréti 2006, 209). However, we should note that the concert of Duplicate Group itself was also a performance, in which some of the participants acted on stage, often improvisationally or just by creating works of art as an event. (El Kazovsky, for example, who painted on his own body, or drew on paper, and hung these works on a wall, etc.). The intention of the Duplicate group was certainly to cross genre boundaries, to break conventions, to improvise, to use randomness in the creative process (Pályi 2011, 1338). Otherwise, the literary members were also present – sometimes with the same works, but as individual authors – in the printed press, in organs such as *Mozgó Világ*, *Magyar Műhely*, *Arkánum*, and sometimes later *ÉS*, *Tiszatáj*, *Kortárs*, *Jelenkor*. The important final moment of the group's operation was the publication of the anthology *Ká!Ká!Ká! From the collection of the Duplicate Group, with texts, pictures, comics, photos*⁴ (Parti Nagy 1986). The slim book – which after the group photo opens with Kemenczky's poem *SORsMINTA*, where the author presents, among others, the team members in an amusing cavalcade – announces in its cover text the following, more or less Dadaist (anti-) programme written by Ákos Szilágyi: "Kick the bulging butt of human progress⁵! Speak to the everyday! Avoid today's literary forms before literature throws you out! Anyone who does not do so will himself be reduced to nothing. How to speak to it? With actions, gestures, your life, the way you look at someone, the way you eat breakfast, the way you read the newspaper and browse the housing advertising section,

4 The volume was already completed in 1982, but had difficulty getting through the obstacles of socialist publishing routines.

5 „Nembeliség", a concept by György Lukács.

the way you laugh when filling out a lottery ticket, the way you write a poem, the way you capture a thought, the way you remember, the way you talk to someone.” (Szilágyi 1986, 17.)

The background of the collaboration between punk and neo-avant-garde subcultures is hereby described by József Havasréti. The parallels stated are, of course, mostly based on the rebellion and total denial dada and punk, and their attitudinal, genre and aesthetic similarities follow from this: “The interactions between avant-garde intellectual culture and punk/rock culture are based in part on the fact that punk aesthetics is an exemplary embodiment of subversion and of cultural heteronomy. Affinity between punk and avant-garde can be found in the sign-using techniques, in their subversive attitude, their unconventionality and their use of scandal as a genre. It helped to build relationships and to make the actors feel at ease in what was, in effect, a familiar environment, even when exploring foreign territories” (Havasréti 2006, 242). To understand the analogy between punk’s stylistic features and the avant-garde sign system, Dick Hebdige mentions punk’s provocative collage aesthetic and the components of the punk scene, such as music, lyrics, dress, dance, design and ideology (Hebdige 1995, 182). Bea Hock, moreover, sees in this collaboration the intention to create a platform and to escape political control (even raising the possibility of expropriation): “By doing so, they created an access for the intellectual vanguard (which was otherwise relatively successfully controlled by the political power), to the nonconformist punk culture, while providing them with the band’s crowd as an audience.” This collaboration has not always been successful given that Beatrice’s audience did not always enjoy the avant-garde texts of the Duplicate Group, as can be seen, for example, from the fact that one of her performances had to end prematurely on the beach of the paper factory in Csepel (Szilágyi, 1998).

It should be noted here that the concert stage is not the only place where punk and (neo-)avant-garde could make an alliance. It is enough just to consider El Kazovsky’s visual art and perhaps his/her lesser known literary work. If we look at the international scene, the American novelist Kathy Acker’s novels, for example, punk and avant-garde are even more obviously connected, even overlapping (along with a conscious critical feminist position). In any case, it is also questionable if Beatrice’s music was punk in the Western European sense: it was somewhere between rock and punk at the time, although they also played Sex Pistols songs at their concerts. What punk and “bum” subcultures had in common was their social base: originally, their members came from the lower middle and working class, and their music was meant to express their political and social discontent, their anti-establishment, sometimes angry rebellion.

The first performance of the Duplicate Group with Beatrice was in 1979 at Fiatal Művészek Klubja [Young Artists’ Club], when János Kőbányai, who was then involved in hobo culture, and wrote a sociographical study about it, advocated a collective performance

for Beatrice and the intellectual-artist circles enthusiastic about rock music. The collaboration may have been helped by the fact that Sándor Bernáthy, a graphic designer, created several Beatrice album covers and promotional materials, and that – according to his memoirs – Beatrice frontman Feró Nagy also intended to combine the band’s „scandalous” musical activities with “high” art, to create his own subculture (in this, he did not question the socialist system, but instead imagined it within its framework).⁶

For this first evening – where Beatrice not only played their own songs, but also punk songs – Kőbányai invited Károly Csató, Balázs Györe, Judit Kemenczky, Ákos Szilágyi, Ferenc Temesi, Péter Turcsány and Endre Szkárosi from the literary scene. The company later organised other concerts, for example in Szeged, at the JATE Club, then at the Jókai Cultural Centre in Budaörs, and at the beach in Csepel. In the end, however, Beatrice, publicly accused Duplicate of trying to get their mass base for itself and withdrew from the collaboration. As it turned out much later, after the regime change, the reason for the break-up was rather that the band was threatened by the KISZ committee in Budapest, which was becoming increasingly suspicious of the band in 1979–1980, and saw a danger in the cooperation between pop and elite culture. The Duplicate group also performed at the Telecommunications Technical College in Győr, where the evening was banned and no audience attended, apart from the members of the college’s party committee (27 Nov. 1980). They entered the stage in Miskolc at the University of Heavy Industry with the group Bizottság (30 Nov. 1980), and at the Nagykanizsa Jazz Festival with Vilmos Jávori and Mihály Dresch, and in February 1981 with the group Dimenzió (László Dész, János Másik, Totó [Tamás Tóth], István Baló) at the City Centre Youth House, thus expanding their fanbase to the musically attuned and a more intellectual, that is, alternative-underground audience. Collective work did not always go perfectly at the beginning, the musicians found difficult to reach common points, to find ways to play under or alongside the lyrics; but by the time of the concerts, the programme usually came together. On 30 December 1987, they played one more time on the University Stage, where different concerts took place, including Matuska Szilveszter Sound, Art Deco, Endre Szkárosi, Ádám Dévényi, Duplicate.

6 Shortly before the Duplicate period, for example, he had an initiative where he said: “I thought there was a neglected generation, or rather a cursed generation (...) This generation has not been led into social life. Never mind, we will create our own culture! I will prove that the audience who come to the Beatrice concerts are not anti-establishment: they are cultured, decent people. There are one or two idiots among them, but that’s another matter. I have announced at the concerts that everyone is invited to contribute cultural works, paint, write music, short stories, poems, comics, whatever.” This effort failed, however, and Beatrice became even more suspect to the KISZ committee, and they allied with the Duplicate Group. See more: Zoltán 2010, 47.

In 1980–1981, Judit Kemenczky was invited twice to participate in the group called Lélegzet [Breath] – or in other words: in the live journal, that is, in a live performance of journal texts. Lélegzet was a more homogeneous group of mainly writers and intellectuals, with the following core editorial team: Ádám Tábor, Eszter Tábor, Péter Rácz, Balázs Györe, Endre Miklóssy (Artpool, CD 03/55–56). She participated, also with musical accompaniment, in the so-called 3rd live edition of Exit 84, which was founded to replace the banned Mozgó Világ magazine.⁷

The Duplicate group also integrated action and visual elements (costumes) into their literary concerts. For example, this is what Szkárosi wrote about the performance in Budaörs (12 August 1979), organised in collaboration with Beatrice: “Hundreds of people gathered outside, when Bernáthy, in a black caftan, with a shaved, pigtailed head, started to open Kőbányai’s exhibition: he threw watermelons against the wall, which fell red and green and opened on the ground. Inside the stage, everyone was equal to the task, Szilágyi, for example, wrapped himself in a huge nylon bag and read his poems – in the appropriate parts of the programme, of course. Temesi put a garland on his head, Balázs was wearing some kind of uniform. Judit dressed Indian style, I put on a lurex vest with safety pins on my naked torso and women trousers with tiger skin pattern. [...] Meanwhile, János began to read his sociography, and as his lecture became longer and longer, we started to insult him in a show-like manner, walking around, spraying him with talcum powder, shouting into his text, etc. – He obviously didn’t like it, but it needed some kind of extra action. [...] In the meantime, of course, El was continuously painting his body on top of a cupboard, and those who weren’t in action were also doing something quietly.” (Szkárosi, 2011, 106–107.)

Szkárosi was a bit fooled by his memory, as we can see from the film of the evening (which was planned to be part of László B. Révész’s TV documentary on the relationship between Hungarian hobo culture and punk music, but had to be cut out due to the censorship) (Szilágyi website). From this black and white film, edited to 12 minutes and without sound, it is visible that Judit Kemenczky is not wearing an Indian sari, but a dark kimono with a large embroidered motif on the back, and El Kazovsky is sitting on some kind of seat (although it could be a little cupboard placed on the floor); he paints not only on his own body, but also on paper and next to him, there is a characteristic sculpture of dog, also made of paper. The scenery also includes a cage with birds, a samovar in which the participants make tea, a low table with a small kettle, cups and a thousand small objects, a removable picture frame with glass,

⁷ The two poems performed by Judit Kemenczky: *Fogai között bambusz vívóbot* [Between his teeth a bamboo fencing stick], *A vörös martináslány* [The Red Smelter Girl]. Other participants are Gábor Németh, László F. Földényi, László Márton, Miklós Peternák, András Wilhelm, Endre Miklóssy, Péter Rácz, László Surányi, György Kozma, Endre Kukorelly, János Sugár.

etc. Since the footage is silent, the only thing that can be said about Judit Kemenczky's recitation is that she performed her poem by heart, rhythmically, and behind her, bassist Lajos Miklóski accompanied her on guitar with loose hand gestures, joining in from time to time. After Judit Kemenczky has finished, she sat down on the floor at the coffee table and remained there for most of the film, her back to the audience, who could only admire the large embroidery on her kimono (occasionally she laid back, poured herself tea, etc.). Meanwhile, the others were reciting, reading, playing music, walking around on stage, drinking tea, Feró Nagy was teasing Kőbányai, Bernáthy was examining the others with a stethoscope on all kinds of body surfaces, and playing with a picture frame. They also adapted - probably consciously - the concept of Katalin Ladik's famous performance: they were pressing the face onto the glass plate and distorted it. The silent film extract does not show that Szkárosi would have performed her own poem more aggressively than Judit Kemenczky (although there was obviously some difference in the text content), at most he used more body gestures; Kemenczky was speaking very still, but rhythmically, with great determination.

According to her friends, Kemenczky was a devout Christian even when it was not yet obvious to everyone from her poetry and from her artwork, but she was convinced that Christianity and Zen Buddhism (including Taoism) were essentially one and the same (András, 2016, 28). Her translations were also determined by this approach, as she translated religious literature, such as Nō-dramas as well as Hildegard von Bingen's mystical visions. In the afterword of the former, she describes herself as a Zen-practising, Schintoist mystery play translator, who at the same time clearly identifies herself as a Christian. In her poetry, therefore, there is also transcendence, even behind simple experiences and perceptions, which are closely intertwined with incandescent visions and symbols (sometimes conventional, directly interpretable, sometimes archetypal), permeating the text.

Her poems written in the seventies and eighties - especially the volumes *A veszítő* [The Loser], *Sorsminta* [The Fate Sample] and *Az amerikai versek* [The American Poems] - can be definitely considered avant-garde beyond their hermeticism and esotericism: these are texts constructed like a montage, often in an inorganic way, composed of small fragments of images. Often, these elements are juxtaposed in a surrealistic, dream- or vision-like way, or through associations evoked from the unconscious - or, more precisely, sometimes we can almost feel them flowing, pouring.

At times, however, the structural principle is different: built upon the juxtaposition of different cultural and literary elements or references, of building blocks borrowed from different cultures, religions, periods, sometimes from different languages. In these cases, it is the result of a conscious construction, while at other times the author seems to be playing with them, or even colliding them in a dadaistic way. In some

of her texts, Judit Kemenczky also makes explicit references to the dada, for example, the poem *Azt fogja akkor tőle* [He will then him] written a few years later, seems to contain a dada programme in its fragments, or more precisely, she fixes the fact of mixing dada and mystical poetry in her own poems: „ozone / of Dadaist / freshness (...) they have been fixed to the time machine with Dadaist na/ils since the mystic lip-light punched me / Came the ice rain ice light since then it's been doing it with na/ils since then it's been flying with nails”⁸ (Kemenczky 1989, 6).

She seems to have been influenced occasionally by Allen Ginsberg and Charles Bukowski, especially in the passages presenting the contemporary world – but in her texts, marginality (embodied by bars, heroin) is merely sometimes placed in an American context (see, for example, the “Janis Joplin-poem” “Girl with a Unicorn” in *A veszítő* [The Loser]), while in other cases she evokes the typical, avant-garde, sometimes depressing scenes of socialist Europe, which are also imbued with the anxieties of Eastern European intellectuals. This is visible, for example, when she recalls the cigarette-smoky conversations in *Ádám Söröző* [Adam's Pub], accompanied by a huge amount of beer and shots.

The average reader – who probably has no background in orientalist studies – will mostly perceive the influence of Eastern religions and Western mysticism, cultural diversity, pop-cultural elements, the incompatibility and incoherence, sometimes the typical Eastern European anxiety and sense of alienation, perhaps the playfulness and humour too. If they are more informed in the avant-garde language, they can occasionally hear the voice and the phrases of Lajos Kassák from his long poem, *A ló meghal* [...] [The Horse Dies], and also of *Számozott költemények* [Numbered Poems]. If – and this is probably much rarer – they possess the necessary knowledge of religious history, for example of the symbolic signs and kuans of the *I Ching*, then they can obviously decode them and understand much more of this esoteric content.⁹

3. *The Book of Changes* and the avant-garde montage

There is one more aspect to consider: namely, that this structure of montage, the assemblage (juxtaposition, even superimposition) of different historical periods, cultures, ways of thinking, religions, is

8 „dadaista / frissesség / ózóna [...] Dadaista szögekkel vannak az időgépre rögzít / ve mióta a misztikus szájpaddláfény bevert / Jött a jégeső jégfény azóta szögekkel csin / álja azóta szögekkel röpül”

9 The audiences at the literary concerts were quite heterogeneous, but it is perhaps not worth asking serious sociological questions about how much of this hermetic lyricism the typical Beatrice fan could decode. They may have felt the Eastern esoteric inspiration, but, unlike American hippies, it was too abstract and intangible for a „hobo” or a punk, and they were probably not enthusiastic about it; they were likely more captivated by the performance situation, or perhaps by the humour of the everyday, yet surprising references and incongruity.

highly compatible with the main teaching of one of Judit Kemenczky's main references, the *I Ching* [Jüan Kang, Ji King, Ji Qing, The Book of Changes], and that is the unity of diversity and the eternity of change (i.e. its equivalence with immutability). The *I Ching* is an ancient book, more than three thousand years old, that is closely related to the Taoist belief system: it is an intellectual background of Taoism, while others believe that Taoist thought was already spreading at the time when it was written.

Taoism is not, of course, the only Eastern religious source of Kemenczky's art, Shintoism, Buddhism and Confucianism also appear in it, as do Chinese and mainly Japanese literary intertexts. In the present study, however, it seems revelatory to highlight *I Ching*, firstly because of the frequency of quotations, secondly because the approach presented in this book permeates practically all Eastern thought, and thirdly because its basic concept can be largely paralleled with the specific poetic procedure of Kemenczky's poetry, which her critic Gábor Cyprian Csajka called a "four-dimensional", "montage in development" (Csajka 1989, 393).

At first glance, the *I Ching* contains predictions, but its deeper message is to capture a specific world vision, showing that we are only a part of an interconnected system that is impossible to overcome: the order of the world can only be accepted, not controlled or changed (which is not necessarily equivalent to inactivity, because order itself is dynamic). According to its principles, "first and superior to all is the Universal Rule, the Ultimate Cause, the one and Eternal, which is itself the constant, though ever changing: one, but all at once. From it, from the primordial beginning, all things originate and return, though nothing comes from it and nothing goes towards it. It is not tangible, but it is everything." (Beóthy-Hetényi 1989, 15). So, a creator and omnipotent God, although more abstract, more impersonal than the God of Judeo-Christianity. "The most obvious sign of the Absolute and the Only in this world is the Change (*Ji*)" (Beóthy-Hetényi, 1989, 15): everything moves and changes, from its creation to its passing. Change is eternal, but not random or chaotic: it fluctuates in accordance with the development of the two main organizing forces (the active, celestial, solid, spiritual, „masculine” yang and the passive, earth-based, weak, material, „feminine” yin). In other words, to return to Judit Kemenczky's poetry: if we concentrate only on the two main strands in it, i.e. the religious-mystical tradition and the avant-garde, we can already say that her poetic texts are created from these as different, even opposite (active-passive) force potentials, or in other terms, from the joint operation and dynamics of the two basic text types associated with them. But going beyond that, in the Taoist spirit, we can even conclude: even if the world is in a constant changing state, it only means that it has permanence and universality; thus historical ages, dynasties, cultures come and go, are born and pass away, but since they are essentially one, they can be unproblematically, even necessarily, interlaced in a literary text.

This approach is thus inspired by a strong metaphysical inspiration on the one hand, but also by the contemporary experience of modernity: the acceleration of mass communication and the nature of cultural differences as a unifying or at least harmonizing force. Like a spectator quickly switches between television channels presenting a wide range of countries, historical periods and themes, and practically perceives the world at once, the poem jumps from image to image, from reference to reference. As Gábor Cyprian Csajka articulated in his sensitive and subtly nuanced critique (in which, as we have seen, he called Kemenczky's technique a "four-dimensional", "happening" montage in relation to *A vesztes* [The Loser] and *Sorsminta* [The Fate Sample]): "Her method is the elimination of traditional (homogenizing-metalogical) methods, she absolutizes time, she opens up counterspaces in space, in order to populate with her heroes the already happened and the possible. Visions and facts, segments of reality and fragments of myth, the living and the dead, Buster Keaton and Buddha, Lajos Miklóski on bass and St. Teresa of Avila mounted on the Wheel of Fate, in a single nightmarish collotipia, here is the gift of twentieth-century mass communication, the possibility (and the necessity!) of a total perception of the world, the unprecedented intensity of the world, in whose radiance the entire human past and present are projected onto us." (Csajka 1989, 393).

In fact, the volume analysed here, *Sorsminta* [The Fate Sample], contains a text unit with this title, as the last part of the cycle, *Három történet* [Three Stories] is *Harmadik történet: A Változások könyve* [The Third Story: The Book of Changes]. However, the only quotation from the source text is the poem's closing, incorporating one of the kuan and its roughly fixed meanings, re-poeticising them, and associating abstract notions with them (separation, union, consequence). And before that, a (nightmare) dream or visionary text with relatively inorganic juxtapositions of details. First an apparently ordinary apartment interior, the full title and motto of Péter Pázmány's Hodegus, and then the interior - if it is at all the same as the previous one - becomes more and more visionary, with a jasmine bush invading from the outside, which slowly opens up above the lyrical self in the bamboo hat towards the free sky and nature, but all supplication is useless, the devotion turns into horror, "hell blue" tears into the heart, dead birds pour from the wall. Finally, it seems as if the quoted kuan both interpreted (rather vaguely) and perhaps dissolved with its prediction what had been said:

Finally, the
sunshine brings the I GING to life
The third Book of Changes
holy sign
L I

— — — —
— — — —
— — — —

The fusion, or

the separation the pheasant, the eye the fire
 the sun the posterity the soldiers' weapon the
 the tortoise shell in summer the fruit, hanging from the stem
 the consequence the emerged
 belly the snakes (55)¹⁰

4. The Duplicate Group and the *Tao*

The last section of this paper gives examples from one of the books of this period, *Sorsminta* [The Fate Sample], of how mythological and religious elements (including those of Eastern belief systems and philosophy) are mixed with fictionalised representations of the Duplicate group, its members as individuals, and pop cultural references as well.

Poem 9. OPENING GAME or THE NŌ OF GODS AND POETS

The very title of the first poem refers to the Nō-dramas, whose worldview she later presented in the preface to her translation of the volume with the characteristics of *The Book of Changes*, as described above, and of Eastern and mystical approaches in general: “take place in a world where, at the bottom of things, the principle of identity and unity with everything is at work; a tangled web of events, seemingly made up of only, incomprehensible and incoherent fragments of the world. In fact, it is a sacred unity: mercy and love pervade and permeate the world of passions, sins, power, revenge and madness. Here, the convention system that we value has and can have no meaning” (Kemenczky 1994, 13., Pályi 2011, 1339).

At the same time, the environment depicted in the poem is predominantly 20th century: indoors with a typewriter and a glass, outdoors with a light pole, chewing gum and a carousel. An opening presents a young woman or a centuries-old image of a god's face seems to connote the Eastern world, but then Paracelsus and later a porcelain Christ enter the picture. The “leaking sky” carries away the wreckage of airships with the kitchen rubbish, “in the sugar bowl a dwarf / changes his sky-blue dress / scrubs the pan / washes his head / the silver thread of his wig / traces translucent lines / behind him / on the white paper” (10) – this image, which recalls later Lynch films, also contains strong traces of its own creation (the wig strokes as brushstrokes on the paper, which can refer to painting, but also to writing, calligraphy, similarly to the typewriter of the opening image). It is only towards the close of the

10 Végül a / napfénytől életrekel az I GING / A Változások Könyvének harmadik / szent jele / L I / ——— /
 — — / ——— / Az egyesülés, vagy / a válás, a fácán, a szem a tűz a villám / a nap az utókor a katonák fegyvere a / teknősbékapáncél a nyáron szárán függő / gyümölcs a következmény az előreugró / has a kígyók (55). The translations of the poems published in the study are my own. (F.Gy.)

poem that we come again to a golden statue of Buddha laughing on a lotus throne, to whom the lyrical self seems to put the question: "Is this my heart?" (13).

Poem 8. A long journey

The poem, which opens with a young prince (obviously an ancient-medieval figure) living with nomads, leads to overt punk references towards the end. The young man could be the Japanese protagonist of *The Tale of Genji*, the oldest novel in the world, who also appears in other Kemenczky texts, or the prince ('leader') of *The Book of Changes*, whose figure is, moreover, linked to the basic meaning of Ch'ien, 'heaven', and its qualities of 'creator', 'active', 'solid', 'clear'; tigers and dragons are also featured in the text. The poem also talks about iconic phenomena and figures of the modern world, the TV shows of the Western bloc, and a socialist party secretary from the socialist bloc cautioning by raising a finger; but the perfectly eclectic declaration is that of an old man bowing several times, in response to whose bowings something is happening in all parts of the world:

He bowed a third time
He cried and begged
With
the voice of a rabbit
The sound of falling iron crumbs
with electric amplifiers' sound
the otherworldly voices of dead people
On the voices of those
who are born now
on white
leatherette beds:
OH ELOHIM
ELOHIM OH OH OH ELOHIM OH AMIDA
BUDDHA AMIDA BUDDHA DAIOSHO RAGORATA
DAIOSHO Sogyanandai BODAIARUMA
O MEIN HERR IM DEINEM LEIB
IN DEINER GNADE EWIG VERNICHTET" (19)¹¹

On this, as if by magic, the lyrical self begins its journey on a scribbled "imaginary map", moving like a flying carpet, rising and falling in the air, or even „on yellowed strips of paper", or perhaps "wrapped in oil-soaked linen, Torah and bamboo rolls, in peeled bark of cedars". Here, the question is certainly legitimate whether the point here is the various

11 Harmadszor is meghajolt / Sírt és könyörgött / Egy /nyulacska hangján / lehulló vasreszelék hangján / elektromos erősítők / halottak másvilági hangján / Azokén / akik most születnek / fehér / műbőrhuzatos ágyakon: / Ó ÉLŐHIM
ÉLŐHIM Ó Ó Ó ÉLŐHIM Ó AMIDA / BUDDHA AMIDA BUDDHA
DAIOSHO RAGORATA / DAIOSHO Sogyanandai BODAIARUMA /
O MEIN HERR IM DEINEM LEIB / IN DEINER GNADE EWIG VERNICHTET".

actual physical mediums (described in their materiality) of the old man's transcultural and translinguistic supplication's: the paper, the Torah or the bamboo scroll. Or perhaps it is also the question of the written avant-garde poem incorporating all of them – at least virtually –: that the text of the poem emphasises its own textuality as well as its fixedness and its mediality (in this particular case).

From the carpet, the lyrical speaker sees post-apocalyptic urban images all over the world, and then – and here he reaches the punk subculture – the Punk Jesus with Madonna and a pagan world tree: an associated fashion code, that these three are linked by a needle. But finally, in the poem's conclusion, he seems to be holding the golden apple of Chinese culture, shining with jewels of knowledge, spirit, peace and harmony.

(A LETTER to YANG) (LEVÉL YANG-nak)

As we have already seen, Yang in the *Book of Changes*, and in Taoism in general, is one of the inherent - masculine, active, spiritual – forces, which is here personified: it is to him that this poem, the last poem in the volume, is written. However, Mr K'ung-Ci – also known as Confucius – in the opening image is the addressee of the heroin sent in the chest. He is also indirectly connected with the *Book of Changes*, since on the one hand, one of its prefaces was long attributed to him, and on the other hand, the authors of later medieval Confucian teachings also made frequent reference to this book. The addresses are both Kaifeng, a centre of ancient China and San Francisco, an important city of modern Western culture. However, other important texts from Eastern culture also appear in the poem, including *The Tale of Genji*, considered to be the oldest novel in the world, written by the 11th century Japanese noblewoman and author Murasaki Sikibu. The medieval story tells of Genji, the handsome and clever prince who falls in love with his stepmother, but also becomes involved in a number of other love affairs. The text of Kemenczky's poem does not make a coherent narrative, several temporal and narrative levels are merged in it, yet, not only the protagonist of the old Japanese novel, but also its author are fictionalized, and it seems as if the pronoun „at them” in the following verses also refers to them. This might lead us to the conclusion that the Duplicate Group disc as 20th century Budapest objects are available in the shops of these two persons, and that the lyrical self asked to save them for Yang.

YANG!

Today I sent the first case of cocaine
for Mr. K'ung-Ci San Francisco

Kaifeng

They asked what it was: I said
a bowl of Sunflower Sutra

[...]

Meanwhile

I visited Murasaki's shop
 - you know that little curvy Japanese lady
 from the 11th century with her ivory pipes
 Sweetheart
 so longs for it,
 who has already passed over the mountain of Death
 I can't even look at the traces he left behind

Prince Genji messaged
 on the death of his young wife
 And I saved it
 to them
 a „Duplicate” disc for you
 literary concert from the 80s Budapest.
 He who among bran
 will be eaten by pigs
 That's what you said about me back then. (94)¹²

7. *vers. Jőspálca* [7. Poem Oracle-stick]

Most explicitly, this poem draws a parallel – somewhat dubious, but at least ironic – between the two networks of reference or codes, the Chinese thought (religion and philosophy) of the necessity of calm and inner peace, and the punk subculture of chaos, loudness and rebellion. It is probably not a surprise, but rather a logical consequence, that by the end of the poem the oracle sticks mentioned in the title – the usual instruments of divination in *The Book of Changes* – dissolve on their own.

„The mood should be a mirror-like lake,
 on which the signs of superhuman existence are clearly recognizable.”
 Not that it makes much difference
 the cobbled concerts of the Duplicate group
 and the procession of Asian horde
 The master
 riding on a white tiger's back
 to the gates of heaven
 but YOU
 are all fools
 He concluded
 the Chinese Co K'iu-ming

12 YANG! / Ma föladtam az első láda kokaint / K'ung-Ci Úr részére San Francisco / Kajfeng / Kérdezték mi az: Mondtam / egy tál Napraforgósuttra (...) Közben / Beugrottam Muraszaki boltjába / – tudod az a kis töpörödött japán hölgy / a 11. századból az elefántcsont szipkáival / Szívem / annyira áhítozik utána / aki már túljutott a Halál hegyén / hogy itthagytott nyomaira / sem bírok nézni / Üzente Gandzsi Herceg / fiatal felesége halálakor / És félretettem / náluk / egy „Fölőspéldány” lemezt Neked / irodalmi koncert a 80-as évekből Budapest. / Jó születésnap ajándék mi? / Aki korpa közé keveredik megeszik a disznók / mondtad rólam akkoriban. / Alászáll és felemelkedik. (94)

(who was a disciple of Confucius and was blinded at the end of his life) (23)

But security
is no finer jewel
than around the neck of bassist Lajos Miklóška
a leather necklace with a zip fastener” (23-24)¹³

6. *vers.* *LEVÉL RIESEN-RA(N)D óriáskerék ÚRNAK SORSMINTÁVAL* [Poem 6. LETTER to Mr. RIESEN-RA(N)D ferris wheel with FATE PATTERN]

This picture poem, which indirectly gives the title to the volume, is already playful in its title, varying the name of the fictitious letter's addressee – Mr RIESEN-RA(N)D – meaning both Ferris wheel (Riesenrad) and huge edge/border (riesen Rand). The former, the Ferris wheel, will appear on the first page of the poem as a picture poem element, the latter as a page frame on the other pages, surrounding the (half-)long poem base (and, from a thematic point of view, it may even be associated with the rubber band of the edge of the subway platform or the handrail of the escalator, which appear several times in the text). On the front page under the wheel you see this: The “Fate pattern spins the Ferris wheel”, which makes it even clearer, we are actually seeing the wheel of fate, which in Western thinking might suggest that fate is changeable, down one day and up the next; in Eastern religions – Hinduism, Buddhism – as samsara, it rather denotes the cycle of the soul's destiny, the wandering of the soul in different beings until it reaches enlightenment. The red axis of the wheel is a pattern of number lines from zero to nine, then backwards from nine to zero, and so on (the same pattern is already present in the title and structure of the volume). The wheel blades are also made up of fragments of text, which add up to a highly fragmented and incoherent monologue in the form of indirect speech about the horror of a soul arriving at the gates of heaven, the house of God, a city created by a saint and a lion, and „blades and knickers of Toledo”. This is followed within the text by the (semi-) long poem, which – as a framework, a “giant edge/border/perimeter” [riesen Rand] – is surrounded by mixed and in this form somewhat

13 „A kedély legyen tükörsima tó, / amin az emberfölötti lét jelei világosan felismerhetők.” / Nem mintha / Sok különbség lenne / a *Fölőspéldány* összeácsolt / *koncertjei* / és egy ázsiai horda / ünnepélyes felvonulása közt / A mester / fehér tigrisháton lovagol / az ég kapuja felé / de TI / egytől egyig hülyék vagytok / Szögezte le / a kínai Co K'iu-ming / (aki Konfuciusz tanítványa volt, és az élete végén megvakult).
(...)

De a biztonság
nem díszesebb ékszer
mint Miklóška Lajos basszusgitáros
nyakán
a cipzáras bőrnyakék” (24)

gibberish-like philosophical reflections on subjectivity, grasping the depth of consciousness, morality, Platonic references, etc.

The basic text itself is a montage or a surrealistically assembled mixture of actions, events and quotations, in which all the members of the Duplicate Group also appear, their actions and reactions drawing the main "narrative". Some seem to be doing everyday activities. (Szilágyi) Ákos, for example, carries the food he has bought up the escalator in a bag – but when they mend their shabby linen shirt with Temesi, it becomes unreal because of their palm-sized size and because they converse in the ancient language of the Persians. Balázs (Györe) buys milk and croissants, lights a cigarette and selects books at the National Library's Duplicate Center. (Greek) Athena adjusts (Szkárosi) Endre's scarf and wraps his sandals in newspapers and takes them to a shoemaker – indeed, in accordance with her first name, she leaps out of Zeus' leg and lies on the linoleum floor of a coffee shop as a marble statue with broken fingers. (El) Kazovsky adjusts a lace collar around the neck of one of his papier-mâché dog statues. However, the others perform only surrealistic actions. Kőbányai (János) with his helmet down in the subway shoots into Kazovsky's sportbag, while Bernáth(y) behaves in the strangest way: some of his actions are clearly Kassák-intertexts (he's flying „with vulture and parrot wings”, with ECET [vinegar] inscription in his beak), at other times – although the poem contains Kassák linguistic structures and the image is surrealistic – it can be suggested that we are watching a typical Bernáth(y)'s performance in Budaörs (1979), seen in the film:

and Cato was a true Roman
added Bernáth(y)
he raised a blue plastic gillyflower
and seventy-nine times
spun his rattle (32)¹⁴

Some intertexts and quotations are simply introduced into the poem associatively, through an analogy of sonorities – or vice versa, some surrealistic images are derived from cultural quotations. The example of Cato cited above and the „ECET” inscription in Bernáth(y)'s beak, for example, are linked in this way:

with vulture and parrot wings
with ECET
inscription in his beak
Bernáth(y) Sanyi flew by
There was a disturbance in the monitors
CETERUM
CENSEO CARTHAGINEMESSEM DELENDAM (31)¹⁵

14 s Cato igazi római volt /tette hozzá Bernáth(y) /kék műanyag szekfűt / emelt a magasba és 79X / hetvenkilencszer / megforgatta a kereplőjét.

15 Keselyű és papagájszárnyakkal /ECET / felirattal a / Bernáth(y) Sanyi repült arra / A monitorokban zavar állt be / CETERUM / CENSEO CARTHAGINEMESSEM DELENDAM.

Judit Kemenczky in her later poetry also drew on Taoist, Buddhist, Confucian, Shinto and Western mysticism, but her main question was clearly about the possibility of creating transcendence through textual means, whereas in *A vesztes* [The Loser], *Sorsminta* [Fate Pattern] and *Az amerikai versek...* [The American Poems...] she had still adopted a more ambivalent and ironic approach. Although she richly incorporated these allusions into her poems, and her images were sometimes visionary, she also dissolved the seriousness of the situation with a palpable doubt, subtle irony, and sometimes playful humour. Later on, this loosening will be less present, and there she will put together her material in larger patches, and perhaps more didactically and pathetically. From this point of view, her poetry became perhaps more monotonous, more boring, and could no longer be considered clearly avant-garde. And all of her work from the last decade of her life, which was largely afflicted by illness and pain, remained unpublished and in her legacy collection.

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