

The possibilities of a transcultural narrative in 19th-century Central Europe: Ján Chalupka and Gusztáv Szontagh

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2022.14.3.9>

In the first third of the 19th century, it was an increasingly apparent fact that the long-term model of a Hungarian scholar – as a member of the uniform Hungarian political nation irrespective of ethnic origin – had become untenable. There were linguistically varied identities beneath the universal and neutral (in particular) Latinizing Hungarian mask which outwardly united the members of this group by concealing their differences. The advent of national discourses, which considered the group's language to be its unifying principle, led to the disintegration of this model and to its replacement by the idea of the interdependent nature of the notions of nation, culture and language. Hence, parallel models of culture came to be created within the multinational, plurilingual Kingdom of Hungary. Herder's idea of the significance of a national language (the so-called *Nationalsprache*) cementing the nation and its culture together was the joint point of departure of these models.

In a multilingual country with Latin as the official language up until that date, its replacement by the Hungarian language caused concerns in the non-Hungarian part of the population. The preference for Hungarian and the marginalization of the languages of all the other ethnic groups within the Kingdom of Hungary encountered resistance among Slovak scholars and writers who were already claiming Slovak as their national tongue. Disputes over the forms of new collective identities subsequently became a concomitant feature of the Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak discourse about the languages and cultures of the Kingdom of Hungary. They led to the fact that the canons of these literatures, each representing linguistic groups (nations) within the Kingdom of Hungary, were also constituted in such a way as to deliberately refuse to reflect the context in its entirety and complexity. The idea of a national culture (and literature) as an island, as an internally homogeneous and clearly delimited space resulted in systems, constructed on the basis of isolated views, having a dialogue in the sense of confronting their own with the alien (Welsch 2010).

The relationship between the Hungarian and Slovak literary canons, created in the 19th century as a reaction to the need for documenting independence in this area, is a typical example of the attitude which we may denote as consistently distinc-

This study was supported by the project VEGA – 2/0057/21 “Literary Transfer, Translation and Transnational Literary Phenomena in the Slovak-Hungarian Cultural Space” (2021–2024).

tive (with an emphasis on otherness/alienation and the implicitly conflicting nature of their national discourses). Both canons minimize or eliminate those phenomena that deviate from their monolingual concept. This attitude provides fertile ground for drawing conclusions that may be one-sided, incomplete, or distorted. This also applies to the processes, phenomena and authors of the period of Romanticism. One typical example of the consequences of not reflecting the multilingual/plurilingual context is the work of Ján Chalupka (1791–1871), an early playwright in Slovak and Hungarian and author of a single novel in German. The prevailing critical approach ranks him among the authors of (Enlightenment) Classicism (Mikula 1999, 185–187; Pišút 1984, 225–228; Šmatlák 1999, 41–43), but even when there is a shift, and his work is included in the pre-Romantic period, there is no deeper analysis of it, stressing that the works of the author in question are “explicitly tendentious” (Sedlák et al. 2009, 327–329).

The Slovak canon also interprets Chalupka’s texts in other languages (Hungarian and German) in a way that is in compliance with the idea of a homogeneous whole. The author’s Hungarian comedy (*A vén szerelmes*, 1835) is identified with its author’s translation into Slovak (*Starúš plesnivec*, 1837) and is received through the optics of the Slovak version. Analogically, Chalupka’s German novel *Bendeguz* (1841) treating Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak themes is evaluated on the basis of its Slovak translation.

Opening the space for interpretation, reflecting the multilingualism and malleability of a new, extended context, can also contribute to a deeper understanding of Ján Chalupka’s position in his time. A context change affects all the elements of this new space and, in this case, it alters the appreciation of not only the Slovak Chalupka, but (mirrored) also the Hungarian Gusztáv Szontagh (1793–1858), who is known in Hungarian culture specifically as the leading representative of the so-called philosophy of harmony (Mészáros 2013, 109–116) and as a literary critic. This re-formatting of the space, the interconnection of the other-language elements, renders visible their significance as mutually interdependent, strong nodal points in the network of discourse on the forms of the newly emerging (national, linguistic) identities of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1830s and 1840s.

THE TRANSCULTURAL MODEL AS AN ESCAPE FROM THE COMMUNICATION TRAP (SET BY THE NATIONAL CANONS)

Even if, according to Wolfgang Welsch, transculturalism is a concept for the 21st century, the starting points for the model, which reckons with the internally hybrid and (externally) networked character of (so-called) national cultures (2010, 41), also seem to be appropriate for grasping the mutually influencing (multilingual) diversity of Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak literary (cultural) relations in the 19th century. In this context – also in view of some common features of the Central European space – the questions and hypotheses posed and formulated by current research on Czech-German/German-Czech cultural and literary relations focusing on the specifics of writing transcultural literary history are also of interest (see Petr-bok et al. 2019).

From Anders Pettersson's perspective, the transcultural approach is admittedly primarily a tool for altering the discourse on world literature; however, he also emphasizes the need to reach beyond the borders of national literatures, particularly the significance of focusing attention on smaller segments (2008, 472-473). Hence, probes and case studies form the basis made up of fragments of the built heterogeneous and hybrid model which alters traditional ideas of the history of literature.

The prerequisites for a national history of literature (a national canon) include an agreement on a common, unifying view (looking from the inside out), on a single unifying language, and also agreement on those elements that are essential to the self-image of the group. By accepting the norm established on these foundations, the individual joins the group, accepts its traditions and its interpretation of history (Assmann 2001; Krekovičová 2005). However, what is implied within this is the marginalization of anything that would undermine the validity of those agreements.

The objective of the study is to highlight the benefits of extending the reception horizon (Smyčka 2019, 242), the significance of also accepting another, not solely the view of the text and its context preferred by the national canon (by the history of national literature). The alterations brought about by reflecting the heterogeneous, plurilingual nature of the Hungarian space in the first half of the 19th century are traced through the example of texts by the multilingual author Ján Chalupka, as they have been incorporated into the Slovak canon.

JÁN CHALUPKA AS A MULTILINGUAL AUTHOR: PELESKE AND KOCÚRKOVO

Ján Chalupka is a typical phenomenon of 19th-century literature. Living in a multilingual environment, he wrote in Hungarian, German and Slovak, also translating between these languages. Despite the fact that his dominant characteristic is his connection with the Slovak-speaking cultural environment, his authorial identity has been subject to change.

The question of situationally-bound identity (Heimböckel and Weinberg 2019, 87) comes to the fore especially in the analysis of his two foreign-language comedies, where the text of the Slovak version *Starúš plesnivec* (An old codger, 1837) is considered as the author's own translation of his Hungarian play *A vén szerelmes, vagy a torházi négy vőlegény* (An old lover, or the four grooms from Torháza, 1835) which he published under the name Chalupka János. József Bayer (1851-1919) also lists Chalupka as the author of the Hungarian play in the two-volume work on the history of Hungarian drama (1897, II, 104); however, he only refers to him as one of the many epigones of Károly Kisfaludy (1788-1830), the Hungarian "father" of the comedy genre. In this (Hungarian) context, Chalupka is just the author of a single play, which is irrelevant in terms of its significance. In compliance with the then-valid national narrative of Hungarian literature, Bayer applies a homogenizing approach excluding (linguistic) foreignness, which does not allow him to see Chalupka in a broader, more relevant context.

In the canon of Slovak literature, according to which Chalupka is the father of Slovak comedy, the question of authorial identities entering into the dialogue, raised by the existence of the Hungarian play, is traditionally bypassed. Zoltán Rampák vaguely defines the relationship of these two texts in the preface to the 1954 two-volume edition of Chalupka's works, at a time of renewed interest in them. In his understanding, the Hungarian play functions rather as a kind of "first edition" of *Starúš plesnivec* (1954, 500).

Several (widely used) histories of Slovak literature judge the Slovak play in this sense, i.e. as the only fully-fledged text from the perspective of the Slovak canon (Pišút 1960, 187; Šmatlák 1999, 42). However, the theater scholar Zdenka Pašuthová, compiler of the first volume of Chalupka's *Súborné dramatické dielo* (Complete dramatic works, 2012), pointed out that considering these two plays to be identical is a false assumption and that they are actually "two different treatments of the same idea with the same storyline in which Chalupka showed his ability to precisely direct his play and his excellent knowledge of the target audience – either Hungarian or Slovak" (2012, 18).

To write for a Hungarian and, subsequently, for a Slovak audience meant that the author had to adapt to two worlds that were growing apart. The individual and group identities that were also to be (optimally) manifested by the choice of language in public, represented a topical, conflict-generating issue of the given period, and sharp exchanges of opinion also appeared in the pages of literary magazines.

The two texts in Hungarian and Slovak of this comedy about a widower who yearns for a young woman immediately after his wife passes away have an identical storyline (plot and resolution), the same types of characters appear in both, yet despite this, they unmistakably show the dilemma of the time, which in these plays is hidden in a seemingly minor detail, the different naming of the play's location. While the Hungarian play takes place in Peleske, the Slovak version takes place in Kocúrkovo (literally "Tomcat-ville", usually considered the equivalent of Gotham in English).

By locating the play in Kocúrkovo, the author refers to a place already known to the Slovak audiences from his first play from 1830 entitled *Kocaurkowo, anebo: Gen abychom w hanbě nezůstali* (Kocúrkovo, or we're no worse than they) which became the determining point for evaluation of the significance of his works in the national canon. Kocúrkovo acts as a code, not only within the author's Slovak-language works, but survives to this day in Slovak literature, culture and public awareness as a metaphor used to express provincial narrow-mindedness, senselessness of action and backwardness (Vojtech 2020, 255).

However, in Chalupka's case, this code has a more complex meaning than the form in which it is commonly used today. Kocúrkovo does not only represent pusillanimity or narrow-mindedness but also marks a challenge to accept (language) diversity which is considered to be the natural feature of this space. In the Slovak play it is expressed by the acceptance of the Hungarian groom Miška, who as if in return, agrees to his Slovak bride subsequently using her mother tongue and being proud of her origin (Chalupka 1837, 47–48).

A comparison of the Hungarian and Slovak texts clearly shows that acceptance of the above-mentioned diversity as a natural feature of the space is more marked in the Slovak text. The Hungarian version of 1835 still features an attitude that is largely condescending towards expressions of diversity.

However, the choice of the location of the Hungarian play signals possible problems in meeting the projected expectations. Peleske gained recognition as a concept in Hungarian-language culture in the first half of the 19th century thanks to József Gvadányi's (1725–1801) popular rhymed story published in 1790 under the name *Egy falusi nótáriusnak budai utazása* (The village notary's journey to Buda). The village notary from Peleske sets off to Buda to lecture everyone on how to be a real Hungarian (how to dress, dance, what to eat). Although his overzealousness, naivety and entrenched conservatism made one smile, in the interpretation of Hungarian Romantic authors, the notary from Peleske became the prototype of a simple Hungarian, albeit one dedicated to his nation, in 19th-century literature.¹ As the residence of the notary is an inherent attribute of the character, the significance of Peleske was also emphasized as a site of "Hungarianhood" which is unadulterated, clear but still looking to the past.

However, the town of Kocúrko in *Starúš plesnivec* is already built on the opposition between the past, in the person of the old widower Pomazal and his friends, and the future (change), personified by the young lovers, the Hungarian Miška and the Slovak Sabínka.²

THE GERMAN TRANSLATION OF THE SUPPOSEDLY HUNGARIAN PLAY AND THE ANONYMOUS AUTHOR: *BENDEGUCZ, GYULA KOLOMPOS UND PISTA KURTAFORINT*

Chalupka was one of those authors who, for a variety of reasons, repeatedly favored anonymity. From his works mentioned so far, only his Hungarian comedy was published in 1835 under his name, and he presented himself as a Slovak author with his real name for the first time in 1836 in the collection *Hronka* as the creator of the prosaic *Kocúrko*. However, not even after admitting his authorship of this work did the use of his real name become standard practice. He even published his most comprehensive and most voluminous work, the German novel *Bendegucz, Gyula Kolompos und Pista Kurtaforint* (Bendeguz, Gyula Kolompos and Pišta Kurtaforint; 1841) anonymously; with this work he won the recognition of part of the younger generation of Slovak authors (Ján Kalinčiak, Viliam Pauliny-Tóth) and, at the same time, provoked an indignant reaction from a part of the Hungarian-affiliated audience (Emőd 1841, 656). Unlike the comedies *A vén szerelmes* and *Starúš plesnivec*, in the case of the novel, the author is just teasing the reader when he states on the title page that the audience is getting the German translation of the Hungarian work: "Dichtung und Wahrheit von P.P.-s. Aus dem Magyarischen übersetzt von L. von Sch."³ (1841, s.p.). Although the title page projects a supposed author who wrote the work in Hungarian and a translator who translated it into German, the preface makes a strong statement against the idea that the author of the novel could be a "native" Hungarian (vi-vii). It is also clear from the text that Slovak is the personally-preferred language of the main characters, and the dialogues about language relate particularly to the new

relationship between Hungarian and Slovak, wherein German is just an intermediary of this dialogue. Hence, the language of the novel is not key to the determination of the author's identity. However, the layering (or rather networking) of languages also has a profound effect on the context, which is relevant for its reception. It is essential that in a monolingual context the interpretation/reception – by the very nature of the concept – is always incomplete. It defies homogenizing trends, which is also one of the possible reasons why, from the late 19th century up to the 1950s, almost no attention was paid to the novel. Ján Ďurovič (1894–1955), the author of the publication *Tvorba Jána a Sama Chalupku* (The works of Ján and Samo Chalupka) published in 1947, even refers to the text as a surprisingly voluminous play (54).

The first complete Slovak translation of the novel was published only in 1953, and its interpretation was subsequently limited mainly to a critique of the main characters Hungarian-assimilationist tendencies which was based on and supported by the national narrative. The translator himself, Ján Vladimír Ormis, indicated that the novel was written for a broader, linguistically non-uniform audience: “for the domestic, Hungarian readership” and “the author assumes knowledge of Hungarian and Slovak languages” (1953, 229). However, even Ormis waives the possibility of interpretation in a broader, multilingual context and focuses on the above-mentioned, internally relevant elements.

The novel was written in a period of the gradual adoption of laws on the Hungarian language (1830–1844) and due to these laws, the use of Latin, which was neutral from the perspective of identity issues, was gradually replaced by the Hungarian language as the new language of the public sphere. The author of the novel deemed István Széchenyi (1791–1860), the most significant pro-reform politician of the first half of the 19th century in the Kingdom of Hungary, to be the key figure of the ongoing discourse. His pronouncements are quoted and paraphrased in the text, in particular from his work *Világ* (Light) of 1831 (whereby Chalupka returned to Széchenyi repeatedly, for example also in the polemical writing *Ungarische Wirren und Zerwürfnisse* of 1842). Despite the critique of the prevailing attitude of Hungarians to all the other languages and cultures in the Kingdom of Hungary, the attitude to Széchenyi and his reform proposals is mostly positive in the novel's text; however, there is also a certain detached view which manifests itself in the occasional ironic comments of the novel's narrator. In particular, the description of the horse races (Széchenyi established their tradition in the Kingdom of Hungary) is couched in the spirit of undisguised irony, where the narrator comes to the conclusion that not just the jockeys but also the horses should be purely Hungarian (Chalupka 1841, 169). Among further references in the text to the reform politician are the announcement of the protagonists' travelling successes in *Jelenkor* (a magazine established by Széchenyi), their invitation to the Casino in Budapest (Széchenyi initiated its establishment) and their presence at the meeting of the Academy (which came into existence thanks to Széchenyi's financial donation). The use of “Budapest” in the text of the novel indicates the constant presence of the perspective of which István Széchenyi is the bearer. This was Széchenyi's suggestion which appeared in his work *Világ* but became reality only in 1873 by the law on the naming of the city.

BENDEGUCZ/BENDEGUZ AND HIS DIALOGUE WITH HUNGARIAN ROMANTICISM

Despite the fact that the Hungarian work declared as the source text on the novel's title page appears to be fictitious, in addition to the already mentioned *Világ* we may register other Hungarian texts (mainly from the late 1820s) which are referenced in Chalupka's novel. The mottos of the individual chapters refer, for example, to authors and works included in the literary handbook and textbook of the theoretician and aesthete of the emerging Hungarian Romanticism, Franz (Ferenc) Toldy (1805–1875), entitled *Handbuch der ungrischen Poesie* (1828, Handbook of Hungarian/Ugrian poetry), which applied the selective principle to the choice on the basis of language affiliation (in favor of Hungarian). Also in 1828, Gusztáv Szontagh's one-act comedy *Egy scena Babelüinkből* (A scene from Babel) was published in the literary appendix to the periodical *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* (Educational proceedings), whose editor at that time was Mihály Vörösmarty (1800–1855), an important playwright and poet of Hungarian Romanticism. Published under the author's assumed name Tuskó Simplicius, it was also performed at the Hungarian National Theatre in Pest (Bayer 1897, I, 392). Despite its brevity, Szontagh's play became a certain pre-text for Chalupka's novel.

Szontagh was an author who came from Upper Hungary (the Gemer region), with his family's languages being German and Slovak. The choice of the Hungarian language, and thereby also an exclusive Hungarian identity, was his own personal decision which markedly influenced his attitudes. At the turn of the 1830s and 1840s, in magazine polemics on the topic of languages and identities in the Kingdom of Hungary, Szontagh was one of the most uncompromising supporters of Hungarian as the determining/sole language of the public sphere. Specifically, he had a sharp exchange of ideas with the important scholar and ethnographer Ján Čaplovič (1780–1847), which also had an impact on the change in Čaplovič's public image. Through the prism of this dispute, Čaplovič (known in Hungarian transcription as Csaplovics) who was considered a Hungarian Slovak (Csaplovics 1841a, 22), became the “spokesman for Slovaks” for the Hungarian-affiliated audience, fighting against windmills and jeopardizing the unity of the nation (Szontagh 1841, 205).

In his comedy, Szontagh presents the opinions and polemics known from magazines of the period, which also infiltrate the content of Chalupka's novel. This highlights Szontagh's importance as the nodal point in the Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak discourse of that time about emerging changes in the use of languages and the related new problems of the variability of identities.

In his memoirs *Emlékezések életemből* (Memories from my life), Szontagh justifies the emergence of the one-act play with the need to react to the linguistic Babel dominating his native Gemer region (Szontagh 2017, 111). From today's perspective, the text of his play is interesting not only with regard to its reflection of the processes of the emergence of national stereotypes, but also thanks to their hyperbolizing in Chalupka's novel, which immediately questions their universal validity.

Szontagh's *Egy scena Babelünkből* highlights the need for a language "purification", the bearer of which is the Hungarian Pelsőczy from the Gemer region, devoted to the nation and declaring this devotion with his clothes, who thus triumphs over the other suitors of the hopeful bride Klára – old-fashioned Roturides, who over-uses Latin expressions even in his civilian speeches, and his former school-mate, the Slovak Vimazal. The latter enters the dialogues of the Hungarian play with the Slovak sentence "Pre Pána Jána, Brat Mikuláš!" (For God's sake, brother Nicholas!; Tuskó [Szontagh] 1828, 74). The Slovak language is present throughout their dialogue and its function is to mainly highlight the alienated attitudes of the generations over the issue of the use of language. At the same time, it creates a simplifying, stereotypical and conflicting image of the foolishness of Vimazal and people of his kind.

Chalupka's novel responds to Szontagh's stereotypes by making the Gemer region the place where his protagonist, Bendeguz (who was born and lived in the Slovak environment in the Turiec region) learns how to be a "true" Hungarian (Chalupka 1841, 8). However, it is also the place that restricts his horizon in a way that refers directly to Szontagh's character Pelsőczy. The attributes of the "true" Hungarianism are represented in Szontagh's play, for example, by the Gemer region, the Hungarian steppes of Etelköz (the living space of Hungarian tribes prior to their arrival in the Carpathian Basin), the leader of the "Hungarian conquest" Árpád, the God of the Hungarians, the Kingdom of Hungary as the new, Hungarian "Canaan", and quotes from the works of the Hungarian poet, Csokonai. The attributes of "dearth" are present as the Tower of Babylon, Trantaria (Xanadu), potatoes, the tale of the white horse, and the problem of Thucydides's veracity. In Chalupka's ironic exaggeration, they become a tool that also directs attention to the failings in the discourse on nation and language.

The presence of quotes from and references to Csokonai Vitéz Mihály (1773–1805) deserves specific attention. This is not unusual for Szontagh as a Hungarian author, but they also appear in each of the texts of Ján Chalupka mentioned so far, regardless of the language in which these works were published. They are quoted without translation, in the Hungarian original and with an ease of reference which is inherent to a naturally multilingual space. The connection of Chalupka's works with that of the most important poet of Hungarian literary Classicism is in apparent harmony with his place in the Slovak canon, in the history of Slovak literature which predominantly ranks him among the authors of Slovak literary Classicism or Enlightenment. Csokonai, the symbol of the struggle for an autonomous authorial existence is, however, for Chalupka still largely a shared tradition. This is demonstrated also by the interconnectivity of the worlds of Csokonai and Gvadányi in his Hungarian comedy *A vén szerelmes*. The character of the spinster called Dorottya who is vying for the favors of the widower Quoniam from Peleske refers to the main character of Csokonai's comic epos *Dorottya vagyis a dámák diadalma a Fárságon* (Dorottya or the triumph of the ladies at the carnival, 1798). Their dialogue, reminiscing about common experiences from their youth, is only an echo of the past (Chalupka 1835, 47–48).

A DONQUIXOTIADE ACCORDING TO THE LATEST FASHION

The most obvious example of Chalupka's interest in themes that resonated in the broader (linguistically pluralistic) cultural space of his time and were also crucial for the representatives of the first generation of Hungarian Romanticism, is his novel *Bendeguz*, according to its subtitle *Eine Donquixottiade nach der neuesten Mode* (A Donquixotiade according to the latest fashion). From the perspective of the history of Slovak literature, there was no context by which to explain the author's interest in dialogue with Cervantes' work. Hence, commentaries on the work have concurred that the Donquixotiade of the subtitle refers only to the absurdity of the characters' actions, mainly of Bendeguz, a zealous and delirious Magyar who sets out on a journey, accompanied by his friend Gyula and servant Pišta, to find the cradle of the Hungarian language as a knight knighted by the father of the Hungarians, Árpád himself. The interpretation horizon is limited from the above-mentioned perspective, focused on the national awakening and didactic aspect of ridiculing naivety, ignorance, obsession and manipulation, and he anchors the reception of the novel within the bounds of Enlightenment satire.

However, taking into account the broader (also non-linguistic) context, we see that Chalupka's text was written in a period for which Cervantes' novel became one of its reference points. Romanticism in Hungarian literature appears in the early 1820s through the emergence of the almanac *Aurora* (1822–1837). Károly Kisfaludy founded and issued it, inspired mainly by German models, primarily by the Schlegel brothers (the so-called Jena Romanticism) and their magazine *Athenaeum*⁴.

Cervantes' novel (just as, for example, Shakespeare's plays) became a sort of objectification and confirmation of the validity of the ideas of modern, romantic art, and the new German translation of the novel by Ludwig Tieck was a prototype of translation that succeeded in mediating the poetics of the text in the spirit of the original (see Schlegel 1799, 324–327). In the Hungarian-speaking culture of the Kingdom of Hungary in the first half of the 19th century, the question of the need to translate Cervantes from the Spanish original was a strongly resonating theme, as evidenced by the translator's preface of Cervantes's short story *A bőkezű szerető* (The generous lover; Lukács 1843, 5–28). So far, few reflected traces of the presence of interest in Cervantes can be found in this period in the Slovak-speaking sphere, as evidenced by knowledge acquired within the current research into Cervantes in Slovakia (Šišmišová and Palkovičová, 2021).

Chalupka himself studied at the university in Jena in 1816–1817 and it is unlikely that he would have failed to notice the new literary direction. As the history of Slovak literature (up to the 21st century) identified Slovak Romanticism almost exclusively with the advent of Štúr's "Hegelian" school, understood as a monolithic whole (Zajac 2005, 348), those authors who were outside of this framework were considered either as representatives of the preceding Classicism or the subsequent and incipient Realism.

The recent and ongoing processes of reconfiguring the space of Slovak Romanticism have already drawn attention to its internal fragmentation and to the adoption of elements of Schlegelian Romanticism by Slovak writers (Zajac and Schmarcová

2019). Highlighting romantic irony as the key to interpretation also led, among others, to the “declassicization” and the “derealization” of Jonáš Záborský’s works (1812–1876). The elements within the canon were changing, their mutual arrangement was changing, and one of the outcomes was the reaffirmation of Ján Chalupka as an Enlightenment rationalist whose self-affirming irony contrasts with Záborský’s self-refuting irony (Zajac 2005).

Bendeguz’s relationship to Szontagh’s pre-text, the nature of the dialogue of these texts and its context invites an attempt to read Chalupka’s novel even in a romantic key. The ironic distance, the detachment that questions the validity of the images of “authenticity” and “inauthenticity”, highlights the comic and paradoxical heterogeneity, the heteronymity and ambiguity of the novel’s world. At the same time, in the interconnected Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak space of Romanticism, the novel’s subtitle acquires a new, more complex meaning: a Donquixotiade according to the latest fashion.

The author and editor Viliam Pauliny-Tóth (a member of Štúr’s school) also recognized *Bendeguz’s* contribution and sought also to popularize it by publishing several chapters of the novel (in Slovak translation) in 1862 and 1863 in his humorous-fictional magazine *Černoknažník*. Pauliny-Tóth himself was one of the authors in whom we can find a direct reference to Cervantes’s novel in his work *Španielska komédia* (A Spanish comedy), published in *Národné noviny* in 1873–1874 (Palkovičová 2021, 317–320).

Chalupka’s novel is of particular interest from today’s perspective for the extent to which it adopts the specific creative practices of Cervantes, and the way in which it creates (functional) replicas of them. In the interpretations of the first half of the 19th century (before Ivan Turgenev),⁵ Don Quixote is a mad fantasist whose skewed relationship to the world is corrected by his pragmatic accomplice Sancho Panza. Chalupka’s quixotic Bendeguz does not defy the ideas of the period either. However, although this period did not yet favor the idealization of the character of Don Quixote, the fight against windmills was already an iconic gesture.⁶ The Hungarian public also knew Cervantes and among others Čaplovič refers to him in his reaction to Szontagh’s statements when he derisively calls him the windmill-fighting Hungarian Don Quixote (Csaplovics 1841b, 205).

In the light of the themes and vocabulary of public discourse in the first half of the 19th century, the reference to *Don Quixote* can seem like only a fashionable lure to entice readers. Only a detailed analysis of the text of Chalupka’s novel reveals the breadth and depth of its intersections with Cervantes’s text-forming means, and from this perspective *Don Quixote* becomes an unavoidable background for the reception of *Bendeguz*. A closer comparison reveals that from Cervantes Chalupka adopts not only motifs but also characteristic procedures. The multiplicity of the narrator’s voices is one of the most important ones. While Cervantes refers to the Arab chronicler, the historian Cide Hamete Benengeli, as the “second voice”, in Chalupka’s case, the implicit presence of the “second voice” is pointed out by reference to the translator from Hungarian, a certain L. von Sch.⁷ Further parallels are, for example, the adoption of another name and the function of a dream as instruments

of confirmation of the “true” (new, knightly) identity of Don Quixote and Bendeguz, imitation (both follow in the footsteps of their role models), the use of a language that differentiates them from others and also the constant presence of the pragmatic anti-pole of their actions, the armor-bearer Sancho Panza and the servant Pišta (Dušíková 2021).

The relationship/dialogue between the texts of Chalupka’s *Bendeguz*, Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* and Szontagh’s *Egy scena Bábelünkéből*, as well as the relationship between the texts of Chalupka’s Hungarian and Slovak plays *A vén szerelmes* and *Starúš plesnivec*, set in the open, joint sphere of the Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak sphere of Romanticism, raises the question as to whether it is possible to read Ján Chalupka’s texts outside of this sphere.

CONCLUSION

Today Ján Chalupka does not belong among the most frequently discussed authors. In the canon of Slovak literature, he is credited with being the first to naturalize the genre of comedy, but literary history emphasizes the didactic, polemical, and national-defensive character of his work. Gusztáv Szontagh is only an occasional author; however, he is remembered in the history of Hungarian literature as a prepared and argumentatively proficient, educated literary critic who contributed significantly to the development of the novel (Sóttér 1965, 536). The dialogue between their texts and the context of this dialogue draws attention to the connection between Chalupka’s works with the Romanticist space of the Schlegeltype and notes that:

- intersections and interpenetrations of texts and contexts are a characteristic feature of the multilingual cultural-literary sphere of the first half of the 19th century in the Kingdom of Hungary;

- homogenizing, monolingual models of the history of national literatures (literary canons) display deficits when determining the nodal points of multilingual discourses;

- transcultural research has the potential for pointing out not only the inner plurality (hybridity) of these literatures but also the mutual interlinks between their narratives and emphasizing the significance of the external communication networks in which they are incorporated.

At the same time, the trilingual corpus of selected texts by Ján Chalupka reflects the importance of research into situationally-tied identities and the author’s translation as a specific form of intertextuality.

Translated by Ivana Musilová

NOTES

- ¹ We can mention Sándor Petőfi’s poem *A régi jó Gvadányi* (The good old Gvadányi) of 1844 as an example.
- ² The confrontation of the old (the past with a limited horizon) and the new (modern, open) world is a typical feature of the discourse between literature and the open space within István Széchenyi’s reform concept aims.
- ³ The Poetry and Truth from P. P-s. Translated from Hungarian by L. von Sch.

- ⁴ The significance of this influence is also attested by the fact that representatives of Kisfaludy's group (Mihály Vörösmarty, Ferenc Toldy, József Bajza) established their own magazine entitled *Athenaeum* (1837–1843) after his death.
- ⁵ His lecture of 10 January 1860 (“Hamlet and Don Quixote”) changed the view of the central character of Cervantes' novel. Don Quixote is not only a lunatic but also a type of individual-idealist who sacrifices himself for others without thinking about the consequences of his deeds or calculating the advantages that he could obtain (Turgenyev 1965, 94–95; 1890, 39).
- ⁶ Even Chalupka mentions him in 1834 in an ironic context in an anonymously published German polemic treatise; see Dušíková 2021, 347.
- ⁷ The narrator's commentary inputs sometimes disappear in the Slovak translation (Chalupka 1841, 164 and 184–185; 1953, 133 and 147).

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The possibilities of a transcultural narrative in 19th-century Central Europe: Ján Chalupka and Gusztáv Szontagh

Ján Chalupka. Gusztáv Szontagh. Literary canon. Monolingual perspective.
Multilingual networks.

Simultaneously with the disintegration of the concept of the Hungarian nation (*natio hungarica*), which was considered to be valid up to the 19th century, the process of creating parallel, self-enclosing literary canons that promoted homogeneous monolingualism began in the Kingdom of Hungary. The dialogue of enclosed spaces built on the opposition of “the self” and “the foreign” evokes, in particular, the need to highlight elements of otherness and becomes a source of conflict. Although the term “transculturality” is largely used to describe the culture of the 21st century, it also appears a suitable tool for overcoming some of the language-related barriers to reception (overcoming the limits of the original reception horizon) in the environment of Slovak-Hungarian/Hungarian-Slovak literary/cultural relations of the 19th century. The study (using examples of texts from the Slovak author Ján Chalupka and a one-act play by the Hungarian author Gusztáv Szontagh) explores the intersections and interpenetrations of texts and contexts of the first half of the 19th century, considered as reciprocally “foreign”. Its conclusions draw attention to the fact that the transcultural perspective is of importance in determining the nature of the dialogue/relationship of the national literatures of the Kingdom of Hungary. This makes it possible to uncover contexts and to identify those nodal points of discourses that are invisible in the monolingual, homogeneous spaces of reciprocally isolated national canons.

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