

ROMANIAN AND HUNGARIAN OTHERNESS. A WORLD-SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE ON THE EVENT NOVEL

Andreea MÎRȚ¹

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ABSTRACT. *Romanian and Hungarian Otherness. A World-System Perspective on the Event Novel.* The article aims to investigate how the combined and unequal world-system is reflected in two peripheral novels in the modern literary system that focus on the Romanian-Hungarian 1919 military conflict, as part of the First World War. *The Death of a Red Republic* [Moartea unei Republici Roşii] by Felix Aderca and *Anna Édes* by Dezső Kosztolányi are comparatively discussed in order to see how regional and (semi-)peripheral literatures articulate the dynamics of world-systems and geographies of uneven development. The event novel, both recipient and generator of tensions and socio-economic, political, and cultural change, is representative of the articulation of imaginary patterns regarding otherness. In this sense, the article investigates how “frontier Orientalism” is activated in the narrative of the war and how this imaginary reflects the inequalities within the world system.

Keywords: *world-system theories, frontier Orientalism, imaginary, subgenre, Romanian literature, Hungarian literature*

REZUMAT. *Alteritatea română și maghiară. O perspectivă sistem-lume asupra romanului evenimentului.* Articolul își propune să investigheze modul în care sistemul-lume combinat și inegal este reflectat în două romane periferice în sistemul literar modern, romane care au în centru conflictul româno-maghiar din 1919, parte a primului Război Mondial. *Moartea unei Republici Roşii* de Felix Aderca și *Anna Édes* de Dezső Kosztolányi sunt discutate comparativ pentru a vedea cum literaturile (semi)periferice articulează dinamica sistemelor-lume și a geografiilor dezvoltării inegale. Romanul evenimentului,

¹ **Andreea MÎRȚ** is a PhD student at the Doctoral School of Linguistic and Literary Studies of Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. Her dissertation focuses on the representation of the “East” in the Romanian novel. Her interests include modern and comparative literature, translation studies, and contemporary Romanian literature. Email: andreea.mirt@ubbcluj.ro.

ca narațiune care încapsulează și generează tensiuni și schimbări socio-economice, politice și culturale este reprezentativ pentru articularea tiparelor imaginare privind alteritatea. În acest sens, articolul investighează modul în care “orientalismul de frontieră” este activat în narațiunea despre război și modul în care acest imaginar reflectă inegalitățile din cadrul sistemului-lume.

Cuvinte-cheie: *teoria sistemului-lume, orientalism de frontieră, imaginar, subgen, literatură română, literatură maghiară*

One of the most representative (sub)genres of the novel in the first half of the 20th century is the war novel. From Erich Maria Remarque to Ernest Hemingway, war writing has attempted to capture the complexity of the great event that was the First World War. The impact of the event also had the effect of transforming the way the war is recorded and depicted *in* and *through* fiction. The psychological effects of the war made the narratives focus on recording trauma: “modern military technology has rapidly transformed battles in a way that transcends traditional modes of perception, revealing the incompatibility of modern and archaic experiences of combat. It has generated and intensified feelings on the part of combatants that wars have acquired a dynamic of their own, to an extent that may sometimes cause soldiers to lose their hold on reality” (Löschnigg 2020, 143). The different ways of perceiving the traumatic event in fiction also have in common the awareness of the technologization of war. It can be seen that “modern weapons technology has fundamentally altered the locus of agency” (Norris 2000, 16), making possible a “sense of the war as a machine and of all soldiers as its victims” (Hynes 1990, 439), and thus “mechanized war affects the spatial and temporal orientation of narratives” (Löschnigg 2020, 144).

This article discusses two novels, *The Death of a Red Republic* [Moartea unei republici roșii] by Felix Aderca and *Anna Édes* by Dezső Kosztolányi that refer to the same historical moment regarding the interaction between the Romanian and Hungarian nations. On the one hand, the novels belong to two peripheral literary systems (the Romanian and the Hungarian respectively), both influenced by the literary productions produced in the Western literary core. Felix Aderca's novel also has a peripheral place in the Romanian literary system. Often, when the experience of war in the modern Romanian novel is discussed, canonical novels such as *Forest of the Hanged* [Pădurea Spânzuraților] by Liviu Rebreanu (1922) or *Last Night of Love, First Night of War* [Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război] by Camil Petrescu (1930) are invoked. These have been appreciated in Romanian literary history for the way the narration psychologizes the experience of war and for the aesthetic qualities of writing.

On the other hand, the novels discussed in this article do not focus precisely on the First World War, but more precisely on the event of the Romanian-Hungarian military conflict of 1919, when the Romanian troops occupied Hungary to fight against Bolshevism, whose representatives had taken power.

Starting from Fredric Jameson's theory that the literary genre represents "social contracts between a writer and a specific public" (Jameson 1981, 106) and from Franco Moretti's famous theory about the compromise between a foreign form and a local content in peripheral cultures ["foreign form, local characters and then, local narrative voice" (Moretti 2000, 65)], I will discuss how both novels represent the otherness (Romanian and Hungarian) and how this imaginary of the other is further seen as the expression of the combined and unequal world-systems. In this context, the foreign form is represented by the event/war novel with a focus on the psychological experience of the soldier. However, the local characters and narrative voices in these peripheral novels do not emphasize the psychological, but the social and political effects of the event. The Warwick Research Collective, following Jameson's theory, considers "'world literature' as the literature of the world-system – of the modern capitalist world-system, that is." (WRk 2015, 8). Therefore, the proposed novels are discussed in this frame of world literature theory in order to point out how the social and economic inequalities are reflected also inside the event of the war because, as the authors of the Warwick Research Collective emphasize, "the literary 'registration' of the world-system does not (necessarily) involve criticality or dissent. Our assumption is rather that the effectivity of the world-system will necessarily be discernible in any modern literary work, since the world-system exists unforably as the matrix within which all modern literature takes shape and comes into being" (20). Therefore, the article aims to investigate how the combined and unequal world-system is reflected in two peripheral novels in the modern literary system with the military conflict event at their centre. It will be explored how the event novel (as a *foreign form*), imported in the peripheries and involving *local characters*, produces a *local narrative voice*, which aims to materialize certain social and/or national stakes rather than to reproduce the authenticity/psychological effects of the military conflict experience, as it happens in the novel of the war produced in the West literary system. Moreover, beyond these social and national stakes, these novels manage to record the combined and unequal world system.

The Hungarian otherness in a Romanian event novel

In the studies dedicated to the (sub)genres of the Romanian novel published in *Revista Transilvania*, based on the data provided by *Dicționarul Cronologic al Romanului Românesc de la origini până în 1989* [*Chronological*

Dictionary of the Romanian Novel from its Origins to 1989], it can be observed that the war novel records 12 entries for the period 1900-1932, respectively 18 novels in the period 1933-1947 – as a percentage representing 2.46 or 2.45% (see Terian et al. 2020). The authors of the article propose instead the *event novel* or *novel of an event* concept to “designate a subgenre that focuses on the impact on the novel's plot of the characters' participation in a major historical event (generally a war, revolution, or uprising)”² (Terian 2020, 58). Anne Fuchs proposes in the same manner the concept of “impact events”, which “can be defined as historical occurrences that are perceived to spectacularly shatter the material and symbolic worlds that we inhabit. Impact also denotes the duration of the after-effects in the material culture and collective consciousness” (Fuchs 2012, 10). These events create “impact narratives”, a concept aiming to “not only designate processes of verbal narrativisation that are so essential in the production of cultural identity. The term ‘impact narrative’ is shorthand for an infectious form of cultural memory that is relayed across diverse genres and media” (12). I consider *event novel* or *impact novel* terms more significant for the novels discussed – there are, on the one hand, different opinions regarding the idea of naming “war” the conflict from 1919, and on the other hand, the novels do not focus exclusively on the military conflict: it is in the foreground of Felix Aderca's novel and in the background of Dezső Kosztolányi's novel, but in both novels the event plays a decisive role in narrative construction, having an impact on the interaction between the characters and their perception of otherness.

It is noted in the article published in *Revista Transilvania* that the most productive period of the genre in Romania is in the interwar period, as an effect of the First World War (60% of the production of this subgenre belongs to the event of the First World War). The First World War produced a paradigm shift in the evolution of this subgenre: first of all, the abandonment of the heroic, glorious rhetoric, and the emphasis on realism, on the individual, traumatic experience. They are novels of trauma and memory, which also problematize the effects of the war's industrialization (see Löschnigg 2020). The modification of the novel form, i.e. the emphasis on personal experience and its psychological effects through narrative means, can be seen in the Romanian literary system in canonical novels such as the two previously mentioned, *Last Night of Love*, *First Night of War* by Camil Petrescu and *Forest of the Hanged* by Liviu Rebreanu. The novels that serve as case studies in this article do not emphasize the psychological effect of the event, but focus on its social and political stakes.

The Death of a Red Republic [Moartea unei republici roșii] by Felix Aderca was published in 1924. The novel, written in the form of a diary, focuses

² Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. The original Romanian reads: “pentru a denumi un subgen care focalizează impactul pe care îl are asupra intrigii romanului participarea personajelor la un eveniment istoric major (în general, un război, o revoluție sau o răscoală).”

on Captain Aurel, whose experience with the war brings him face-to-face with the (especially female) Hungarian otherness. The social stakes of the author are visible, especially in the way the heroic spirit is ironized and the soldiers are caricatured. To discuss how the encounter with Hungarian otherness is evoked in Felix Aderca's novel, I will use Andre Gingrich's concept of "frontier Orientalism". He starts from the Orientalism theory proposed by Edward Said (1979) and shows that the relations between neighbouring peoples are not always represented with the same imaginary structures or metaphors that would define the Far East for Western Europe. In this regard, frontier Orientalism is defined as "a relatively coherent set of metaphors and myths that reside in folk and public culture. It places the home country and its population along an adjacent territorial and military borderline which is imbued with a timeless mission." (Gingrich 1996, 119). Thus, a difference between frontier Orientalism and Said's classical Orientalism resides in the metaphors proposed by geographically close communities: they are generated in popular culture, and not necessarily produced by the intellectual or academic community. Another difference would be the image of the other: if the exponents of the Orient defined by Said are seen as primitive barbarians, in the case of frontier Orientalism they are seen as more than that, specifically as rivals. National differences are always accentuated, primarily in terms of religion (Gingrich mainly discusses the perception of Christian Europeans towards the Muslim peoples they border).

Because the experience of war involves the direct encounter with the people on the border, in the following paragraphs I will discuss how the subgenre of the event novel articulates the social imaginary of neighbouring otherness. The analysis aims to interrogate how the direct encounter on the battlefield reinforces certain stereotypes and recurrences of the imaginary or if, on the contrary, it deconstructs them.

In the case of Aderca's novel, there is first a dichotomy between Romanians and Hungarians, the latter seen as absolute enemies. In the context of the depicted military and political event, the Romanians would be the saviours, and the Hungarians would be the "demonic" Bolsheviks: "Maybe you feel sorry for this killed soldier? He was a Bolshevik: look on his cape, his red star" (Aderca 1924, 68).³ Thus, a politicization of Hungarian otherness is noted: it is seen neither as humanity nor as a nation but as a political construct. In fact, in this politicized image, the dichotomy West – East, Occident – Orient is active: the Romanian soldiers, as liberators, become the exponents of the West, the promoters of its civilization, who will free the Hungarian nation from Bolshevism. Bolshevism is seen, of course, as a product of Russia, whose image in Romanian literature has often been exoticized.

³ "Poate că-ți pare rău de soldatul ista ucis? Era bolșevic: uite coala, pe capei, steaua lui roșie."

Throughout different historical contexts, the West-East dichotomy becomes more complex when applied to the relationship between Hungarians and Romanians. In general, Hungarians perceived Romanians as inferiors and their nation as uncivilized, while Hungarians themselves were similarly perceived in the Western imaginary. However, in the Romanian imaginary, the Hungarians do not appear as a civilizing agent, they are not included in the category of Western nations. As Melinda Mitu and Sorin Mitu show, in the case of the relationship between Romanians and Hungarians, it was the Occidental thought that mediated the images and perceptions of one nation regarding the other (See Mitu 2014, 27-39).

In this cultural context, Aderca's novel highlights the excessive politicization of the social imaginary at the beginning of the novel to prove its artificiality. In the beginning, the Romanian soldiers got to interact with the Hungarian soldiers and confirmed that they had enemies in front of them. The stereotype of the Bolsheviks as wild, barbaric, and uncivilized is deconstructed when the Romanians discover that the military industry is also present on the opposing battlefield. Only with the experience of war do Romanian soldiers also discover what lies beyond the mechanism of war, i.e. the real victims: "His discovery was indeed funny [...] a whole people of Bolsheviks: women with babies at their breasts, men from agricultural labour, with drooping heads, ragged clothes and bare feet – some of them held large scythes in their hands, like banners with a steel banner, shining over their head" (90).⁴

Expressionist descriptions in the writings of Felix Aderca contribute to the depoliticization of the idea of war and the humanization of Hungarian otherness. The Hungarian people thus become an otherness that mirrors the Romanian one. Captain Aurel realizes in the end that both Romanians and Hungarians are nothing more than victims of the mechanism of war and, implicitly, of the world-system that generated this mechanism.

The mirroring of otherness does not, however, equalize the status of the two nations. Another pattern in imagining Hungarian otherness is its feminization and exoticization. On the one hand, there is a feminization of space: "Pusta lay lazily like a golden woman, rolled under the sun" (80).⁵ Hungarian nature and land acquire these feminine valences, which make Romanian soldiers think about it as being their property (on an imaginary, aspirational level, and then on a concrete level, by conquering this space).

The feminization and exoticization of Hungarian space do not (only) make visible ideological stakes of the direct military conflict — Romanian

⁴ "Caraghioasă era într'adevăr descoperirea lui [...] un popor întreg de bolșevici: femeii cu prunci la săni, oameni de muncă agrară, cu capetele zbârlite, hainele zdrențuite și picioarele goale — unii din ei țineau coase mari în mână, ca niște stindarde cu flamura de oțel, lucind de-asupra capului."

⁵ "Pusta se întindea leneșă înainte ca o femeie caldă, aurie, rostogolită sub soare."

masculinity finding its counterpoint in Hungarian femininity, which becomes property, an object of male desire. The feminization of the imaginary referring to Hungarians also works as an idealization of it, in the same way that the Romanian space is also idealized: “Time had stopped around them and all the Romanian fairy tale — colour, miracle, aroma — had been brought by these souls, in the passionate uniformity of the wilderness” (93).⁶ Even if the nationalist stakes are visible in this type of imaginary, the function is to create familiarity: the Romanian soldier should see in the Hungarian land not just a battlefield, but the same essence and depth that their own homeland has. Therefore, it is shown that the discursive nationalism that generates the schematic dichotomies I discussed earlier changes when the Romanian soldiers encounter the “Hungarian space” directly, without the mediating space of the battlefield, where the nationalist roles must be performed more visibly. It is no longer a discourse that they have taken over, but one that they generate “naturally” – the fascination of the space is almost mystical, the landscape sensitizes them and, in fact, it is a familiarization with the discovered world, which comes into their possession.

The feminization of space in Aderca's novel continues with the discovery of the urbanity by the Romanian soldiers. If the *puszta*, as a rural space, registers the coordinates of a deep, atemporal space, which has the role of preserving (national) values, Budapest, as an urban environment, becomes a space of artifice and degradation. At this point, Felix Aderca suggests implicitly a critique of modernity (that is, of the modern world-system), by caricaturing the Hungarian metropolis. Budapest is placed in line with other Western capitals: “I understood that Budapest is the City of Sensuality. Rome is an archaeological cemetery, Vienna a graceful trinket, Berlin a department store, London a monster with thousands of heads. Paris is a word of the 17th century, Budapest — Budapest is a sumptuous lady of consumption!” (157).⁷ Budapest become an object of consumption and aspiration for the Romanian soldier.

Thus, the meeting between the Romanian soldiers and Budapest leads to the awareness of their inequalities, which are more of an *economic* than *political* nature. The feminization and exoticization of the big city have both the role of suggesting the desire of the Romanian soldiers to appropriate this space as an object of consumption (an aspiration that they would have for any Western

⁶ “Timpul se oprise în jurul lor și tot basmul românesc — culoare, miracol, aromă — fusese adus de aceste suflete, în uniformitatea pasională a pustei.”

⁷ “am înțeles că Budapesta este Orașul Sensualității. Roma e un cimitir arheologic, Viena un bibelou grațios, Berlinul un magazin universal, Londra un monstru cu mii de capete. Parisul un cuvânt de spirit al secolului al XVII-lea, Budapesta — Budapesta e o damă somptuoasă de consumație!”

city, being aware of themselves as part of the peripheral world), as well as to deconstruct the initial stereotype of a Bolshevik city: “the Red Republic has passed — the luxurious women have remained. They laugh ignorantly, they have all the violence and thirst of the East, draped in the delicacies of the West: they have merged here two visions of life” (160)⁸. The artificiality of the city, with its modern vibe, consumerism, and frivolity, is both a critique of modernity and of the mechanism of war itself, which becomes in turn artificial. The political stakes of the Romanian soldiers are left behind in favour of the fascination for the great city which invites to be *consumed*. Therefore, Felix Aderca manages to show the Hungarian otherness as a mirror of the Romanian one: both victims of the unequal system, accentuated also by the reality of the war.

I consider that this novel can be discussed from the perspective of world-system theories because it deconstructs a nationalist or militant perspective on war. The period in which the novel appears is not devoid of thesis literature, because of the nationalist ideological movements that encourage such writings (see Bogdan Crețu 2019, 102-110), towards which Aderca takes a critical position in his own novel. In this regard, the novel can be seen as representative of the “reflexive mode of literary remembering”, using the classification proposed by Astrid Erll. She makes a distinction between the experiential, the monumental, the antagonistic, and the reflexive mode of remembering in literary works that aim to register the war event (Erll 2009, 40). Novels with a nationalist stake can be considered as part of the “antagonistic mode” because they “help to maintain one version of the past and reject another” putting at work the “negative stereotyping” (41). As the author observes, there is no fixed delimitation between the four ways of literary remembering, they can work simultaneously in the same work, and their implementation makes literature “a major medium of critical reflection upon such processes of representation” (42). The representation does not aim, as can be seen in Aderca's novel, to depict only the war event, but also how one nation interacts with another, deconstructing or creating new stereotypes that remain in the collective cultural memory. The imaginary reflected in cultural stereotypes about otherness reveals, in fact, ideological constructs behind the ideas of civilization, modernity, and development that a nation has. Felix Aderca's novel instrumentalizes the event of 1919 to show, even implicitly, the social and ideological neuroses of inter-peripheral interaction as an effect of capitalist modernization.

⁸ “Republica roșie a trecut — femeile de lux au rămas. Ele rîd neștiutoare, ele care au toată violența și setea Orientului, drapate de gătelile de gust ales ale Occidentului: s-au contopit aici două viziuni ale vieții.”

The Romanian otherness in a Hungarian novel

As a counterpoint to Aderca's novel, I discuss the image of the Romanians in a Hungarian novel, *Anna Édes* by Dezső Kosztolányi, published in 1926. It can be considered more of a social novel than a war novel *per se* – using psychological elements, the narration depicts the decadence of the Hungarian bourgeois class. The plot follows the way a maid, Anna Édes, ends up killing her masters, as exponents of the upper class. The choice of the novel as a counterpoint is justified by the event that takes place in the background: the invasion of the city of Budapest by the Romanian army, more precisely, the event of 1919. In this sense, as *The Death of a Red Republic*, *Anna Édes* can be considered an event or impact novel as well. There is obviously a correlation between external events, the war, the invasion of the Romanian army, and the crisis of the bourgeois class, which represents the main focus of the novel.

In the first part of the novel, the narrator depicts the general astonishment on both sides (Romanian and Hungarian), caused by the conquest of the city:

This was something that neither Hungarians nor the Romanians themselves would ever have been able to imagine, not in their wildest dreams. They glance at each other astonished at this miraculous turn of events. It was literally incredible. Hungarians at their windows watched Romanian vehicles cruising the streets below but they didn't believe it. Not even the Romanians could believe it straightaway.... A dream. All heaven lay before them, nothing barred their way. At first they didn't know what they should ask for and in their childish greed they grabbed at showy knick-knacks rather than things of real value. (Kosztolányi 1993, 27)

One can observe in the description of the amazement a kind of infantilization of the Romanian soldiers, who take over the city for themselves. This infantilization shows that the political and ideological content delivered before being part of a war is an artificial construct in front of the reality of the encounter with the Romanian otherness. At the same time, the inferiority complex of Romanians compared to Hungarians is also suggested. The stereotypes activated by frontier Orientalism (Hungarians/Romanians as absolute enemies) will be deconstructed with the celebration of victory.

The encounter between two nations event, like any war event, contributes to the fluidity of a stable image of otherness. If the Hungarians generally imagined the Romanians (from the Kingdom of Romania, not from Transylvania) according to the economic gap, the direct encounter with them in a military conflict produces a transfer of the imaginary: from backward, uncivilized, the Romanians become enemies. How the imaginary of otherness changes its emphasis in conflict situations is obviously determined by nationalist stakes (see Bárdi, Pál 2022, 14-22). In this regard, Dezső Kosztolányi's novel,

critical to the national stakes associated with the bourgeois class, offers an image of Romanians, especially from the perspective of the social class they belong to.

The novel further presents the festive atmosphere: the Romanian soldiers discovering the great city, as in Aderca's novel. The fascination and the process of accommodation to this mundane life, which comes as a crowning of national success, is performed:

The Romanians move into their immediate vicinity. Those at whom she had stared in astonishment in the first few weeks of the occupation now strolled before her house as if they had been born around the corner. [...]. On Sundays, reeking of scent, the slim dark corseted officers promenaded up and down the Var with their entourage of chorus girls, or took excursions in the hills, or picnicked on the grass with their latest sweethearts and took photographs to commemorate the occasion. They were serenaded by gypsy bands at the Philadelphia, who played them old Hungarian tunes such as they might once have heard and passionately sung as students back in the Transylvanian hills. (39)

It seems that the conquest of Budapest as a political and national gesture remains in the background, giving way to the city as an object of Western, metropolitan consumption. As in Aderca's novel, the city becomes the symbol of modernity and triviality. Celebrating the victory also represents compensation for the situation to which the soldiers are subjected, especially through the prism of their social class (the obligation to participate in this war, the precariousness of life on the front, etc.). The position of the Romanian soldiers on the "winning" side of the conflict leads to the attenuation of the situation of being part of a lower class, and hence victims of the war's political mechanism: the way in which they take possession of the city reflects their social and economic aspirations. Just like in the case of the Romanian author, the city is conquered by Romanian soldiers through the Hungarian girls:

Lajos, Katica's boyfriend, had a long record as a burglar and had been arrested, so the girl found herself a Romanian, a shepherd boy from the 'old kingdom' barely out of his teens. The tinhelmeted warriors had never seen such a beautiful woman. His arm wound around her waist, taking her hand in his, he walked her round and round the Vérmező, admiring her rouged lips and her tinted blonde hair. He communicated to her by signs that he would marry her if only she would return to Romania with him. (39)

Dezső Kosztolányi's novel problematizes the idea of enmity between the two nations, showing that this is a construct. The cohabitation between Hungarian maids and Romanian soldiers suggests that otherness functions as a marker of

class identity. The ideological stake of the novel is visible, especially in the imagining of the intersection between Romanians and Hungarians: the experience of war can lead to class consciousness and putting aside the national one. The novel suggests how the unequal and combined world-system is perceived by the lower classes: the principal victims of the war mechanism, the soldiers and the maids, stand in a way in solidarity, even if they belong to different nations, as the revolt against the upper classes and, implicitly, the modernization that they produce for their own benefit. The occupation of Budapest, the novel also suggests, has not only a national significance but also a social and economic one for the Romanian soldiers and the Hungarian maids. *Anna Édes* shows that the national consciousness imposed on the lower classes can be questioned through the interaction between two groups which identify themselves as part of the same social class, even if they belong to enemy nations. In the end, the questioning of the national ideas leads to the transformation of the imaginary regarding otherness.

Conclusion

The novels discussed highlight the social and ideological stakes of the conflict from 1919 between Romanians and Hungarians, rather than the psychological effects of it. The “imagined communities” (Anderson 2006) of the characters living the experience of the war reproduce the specific stereotypes of frontier Orientalism. However, as seen in Aderca’s and Kosztolányi’s narratives, these stereotypes are brought into the discussion in order to be deconstructed. The images of otherness are created according to the outcome of the war (the idyllic image of peasants, Romanian soldiers, and maids in Budapest is motivated, in the case of the Romanian novel, by the effect of military success, and in the Hungarian one, as an effect of the decline of the bourgeois class, promoter of nationalism and representative of social inequalities).

Although the novels have realistic stakes, one can see the functionality of the national/social constructs or the ideological visions of the authors in the configuration of the imaginary. The imaginary of otherness and the depiction of the city work, however, in the case of both authors, by unmasking the artificiality of the war and by highlighting the real victims of it. The soldiers, like the other representatives of the lower classes, through the interaction with the so-called enemy nation, end up changing their perceptions of otherness and realizing, as the novels suggest, that they are victims not only of one precise event but of the entire political and social mechanism of modernization, which produces and instrumentalizes wars to deepen the inequalities between the core and the periphery.

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