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## AHEA Newsletter: March 2022

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**American Hungarian Educators Association** <aheanews@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 8, 2022 at 1:57 PM

Reply-To: aheanews@gmail.com

To: voros@eecs.berkeley.edu

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## March 2022 Newsletter

### President's Corner

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

What's happening in Ukraine is so heart wrenching and so tragic that I cannot leave it without comment.

We, in the United States, think that the unprovoked war by Vladimir Putin was unanticipated and is shocking. We thought the cold war, by all accounts, had mellowed, but not entirely ended. However, students of history recognize that Putin is acting in accordance with Soviet rule book; he is a KGB-trained Russian. It was in just such a manner that Stalin ordered that Transcarpathia be expropriated to the Soviet Union in October of 1944, when the western world's attention was turned away from the Eastern Front and focused on ending the Second World War. Russian troops hardly had any opposition in occupying, pillaging and ravaging their way through the region. My grandfather represented Transcarpathia for many years as a Senator. He learned first-hand of the brutality of the Soviet regime. What followed for those who remained after the occupation was "Malenkij Robota" or "little work" — ordering all men between the ages of 18 and 50 under the pretense of cleaning up war debris following the destruction of the war. In fact, they were gathered and shipped off to the furthest reaches of the Soviet Union as slave laborers. Many never came back and those who did, returned physically and mentally broken.

What we're seeing today in Ukraine is deeply personal to me. It's very difficult to carry on with our daily lives and not sit in horror and anguish watching daily news reports on the unfolding events. The more things change, the more they remain the same. If you have it within your means, please support the people needing humanitarian aid. The flood of refugees is unprecedented. Many organizations are reaching out and collecting donations on their behalf. We have listed several at the

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end of this Newsletter. If you wish, you might specify that funds go to helping those specifically in the Transcarpathian region of Ukraine and specify that donations go to students or academics whose lives have been upended.

On the home front, we are working assiduously on this year's [AHEA Conference](#). The program has now been posted; we are tweaking it in the coming days so be sure to check back before the conference to be sure that you are looking at the most recent version of it. We are pleased to once again offer a program that is diverse and multidisciplinary with presentations by scholars from the US as well as Europe. In fact, the majority of presentations are being given from Hungary. [Registration is open](#) and we look forward to seeing you in April!

Please reach out if you have comments or suggestions on how we might better support your scholarly pursuits.

With highest regards,  
Klara Papp, PhD  
President, AHEA  
[klarapapp@gmail.com](mailto:klarapapp@gmail.com)

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## Collecting for Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine

**The Hungarian Human Rights Foundation**  
<https://hhrf.org/>

**Hungarian American Coalition**  
<https://www.facebook.com/HungarianAmericanCoalition/>

**Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat**  
<https://www.mmlsz.hu/tartalom/show/573>

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## Hungarian Living Podcast: an Interview with Klara Papp on AHEA 2022

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American Hungarian  
Educators Association  
Conference  
2022  
Episode 47

Link: <https://hungarianliving.com/podcast/american-hungarian-educators-association-conference-2022/>

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## Member Spotlight

AHEA is a scholarly organization connecting a diverse set of educators, researchers, professionals, independent scholars and academics who come from many walks of life. Each month we highlight the academic and professional career of a different AHEA member.



This month's featured member is **Teodóra Dömötör**

**Please tell us a little bit about your career arc, especially how you came to specialize in American literature.**

I was 11 when Communism fell in Hungary. Suddenly our life became colorful: we could buy products that we didn't even know existed before, we watched American movies, the themes and settings of which were much different than what we were used to, and we embraced American pop culture and American clothing styles with

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feverish enthusiasm, too. Our Russian teachers were retraining to become English teachers overnight (they were usually one lesson ahead of their students). Also, unlike under Communism when the buildings were all identical, after the regime change, people dared to experiment with colors, shapes, and designs. Transformation was perceivable in all walks of life, which we enjoyed.

It took years for us to realize that with Americanization and globalization, a rat race began. Prior to this, life in Hungary had been quiet and slow. We hadn't had any competition (or its accompanying stress). Now, however, the slogan to memorize was: "May the best man win!" While American children are raised to develop a can-do attitude, Central and Eastern Europeans usually suffer from inferiority complex. The new demand of self-confidence after the fall of Communism was, therefore, difficult to cope with for many in Hungary. Not for me, though... As soon as the American music industry entered Hungary, I fell head over heels for the lead singer of a famous American boy band, and I was determined to marry him. In order to do that, I needed to learn English because—let's be realistic—the chances of him learning Hungarian were slim.

To accelerate the process, I convinced my parents to send me to the US for a few months to practice the language. We had family and friends in Florida, who had emigrated a long time ago and could not speak Hungarian anymore. That was the perfect opportunity for me. Little did I know back then that my first trip to the US was going to be a life-altering experience. My friends showed me around the Sunshine State, which included spending a few days in Key West. They took me to Hemingway's house there. I had already heard about him as *The Old Man and the Sea* was compulsory reading in post-Communist Hungary. When I entered the author's house, however, something changed in me forever. It may sound sentimental, but I felt Hemingway's presence in his rooms, and from that moment on, I set out to investigate his life and work.

I didn't get to become the wife of the aforementioned popstar. Instead I gained something much more valuable in the United States: Hemingway inspired me to study American and English Language, Literature, and Culture at Károli Gáspár University in Budapest, followed by my Ph.D. studies in American Literature at the University of Surrey in the UK. Both my MA and Ph.D. dissertations focused on the Lost Generation, American modernism, and psychoanalytic literary criticism. During my doctoral studies, I made a research trip to the University of Miami to collect indispensable materials for my dissertation. Of course, every time I'm in Florida, my heart still takes me to Key West...

I spent almost 15 years in the UK where I taught American, Anglophone, and World Literature at university level in addition to running several lecture series at libraries and cultural centers. I attended professional development courses in bibliotherapy and psychology, too. My family and I moved back to our homeland a few years ago, but we continue dividing our time between Hungary and the UK. I am very mindful of the need to foster international conversations, partnerships, and publications. I live across two locations and multiple contexts, always slightly concerned about not giving more preference to one side than the other. Currently, I teach very exciting subjects, such as American Literature and Social and Cultural Challenges in the English-speaking World, at my alma mater Károli Gáspár University in Budapest.

### **How did you find out about AHEA, and what led you to join?**

As my personal and professional interests are all connected to the United States, I was eager to locate an American organization that shared my passion for American and Hungarian culture and literature. This combination is a rare one, but taking advantage of the benefits of the internet, I managed to find AHEA fairly easily. As soon as I familiarized myself with the organization, I was convinced that I had to join them. AHEA is not simply a professional society whose interest is narrowed down to a single aspect of scholarly work. Quite the opposite is the case. They are devoted to the dissemination of our rich Hungarian culture in several ways, including literature, language, history, folklore, music, and fine arts. They also proudly promote Hungarian scientific achievements globally as well as preserve archival collections and artifacts. They also foster multicultural programs and events. This way, they

cater for and attract a diverse audience, and provide a real platform for education, knowledge exchange, cross-cultural understanding, and international networking. The friendly, welcoming response that I received to my initial query about membership only reinforced my positive feelings about AHEA. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to be a member here.

**What impact has your involvement with AHEA made on your career and/or your work?**

Shortly after arranging my membership, I came across a grant opportunity offered by Helena History Press via AHEA. By that time, I had already been involved in a comparative literary project concentrating on the works of Ernest Hemingway and Sándor Márai. I planned to conduct a research trip to New York and San Diego to acquire materials unavailable in Hungary. The potential outcome of this trip was going to be the publication of my first monograph. Therefore, I submitted an application, and to my greatest joy, I was selected as the winner of the generous Helena History Press Scholarship in 2020. This grant was going to help with the costs associated with my long-awaited research trip, which I had to postpone due to the pandemic, but which I am going to undertake as a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University next month.

In addition to this scholarship, I was also blessed to have an opportunity to present some of my findings at the AHEA conference last year. Even though it was an online event, the members made one other feel relaxed, supported, and valued – which, for me, was an unprecedented experience. I have attended numerous conferences before, but not once have I felt so embraced and energized than at the AHEA conference. Furthermore, I have published one article already in *Hungarian Cultural Studies* and have a book review on the way. I can safely say that I made friends for life, with whom I have kept in touch ever since and whom I am prepared to assist in any way I can.

**Tell us, please, about your current project.**

As mentioned before, I'm working on my first monograph focusing on the narrative representation of psychologically traumatic experiences triggered by expatriation, which have an interminable impact on gender and national identity, emotional competence, and social functioning. This book would make an original contribution to existing knowledge by challenging essential tenets of the classics of transnational literary criticism. Among some other aspects, the study concentrates on the portrayal of immigrant men's infantilization and symbolic castration in the works of Hemingway and Márai. In a transnational context, I juxtapose the authors' American and European experiences, and investigate in depth Márai's works along with Hemingway's short stories to explore their shared interest in the performative aspects of identity construction abroad. This project delves into the expansive ways literature by immigrants negotiates diasporic spaces to create "imagined communities" where estrangement and engagement coexist. The works of the two main authors of my research mirror the misfortunes of their native societies in the twentieth century, hence their own expatriation. Interestingly, however, both authors also highlight their restlessness in their new "homes". Hemingway (who moved from America to France) and Márai (who moved from Hungary to Italy and then America) depict living uncomfortably in a space between two worlds, one perhaps dead and the other struggling to be born. Such themes as ambiguity, resistance to total immersion, nostalgia, depression, and divided loyalties appear in the texts under scrutiny. The complex way identity is negotiated by immigrants writing about their home abroad experience plays a central role in my study, as do tensions concerning language and belongingness in the struggle for home. I am committed to interdisciplinary research: psychoanalysis, gender studies, social history, and literary theory form the basis of my arguments.

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# Member Publications

The listing of publications is for our members' information and does not signify endorsement by the AHEA.

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[Marlene Kadar](#) (York University, Toronto) announces the following publications, both of which are open access:

1. "[Reading the Trapper Point Blanket: Coded Conquest](#)," *British Art Studies* 19 (February 2021)
  2. "[Lives Outside the Lines: a Symposium in Honour of Marlene Kadar](#)," The International Auto/Biography Association – Chapter of the Americas Conference (2017)
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## Have a New or Upcoming Publication?

We would love to help share news of the impressive and diverse work that AHEA members are doing! If you have a recent book, article, or other scholarly/artistic work you would like your fellow members to know about, send a brief description/promotional blurb and a link to further information to [aheanews@gmail.com](mailto:aheanews@gmail.com). Requests will appear in the order in which they were received and may be edited for space.

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## Don't Let Your Membership Benefits Stop!

Renew your 2021 membership to ensure uninterrupted membership today to ensure access to an expanded network of scholars and academics working in multidisciplinary fields of Hungarian Studies.

AHEA's membership dues enable you to access "Members Only" section of the website, participate in the governance of AHEA through your vote on our newly revised Bylaws as well as officers and board members.

We are pleased to announce membership discounts as well as the option of a new **lifetime membership**. Visit <https://ahea.net/members/membership-information>.

Only members in good standing can vote in leadership elections. Please remember to renew yours! **Click here** to access our PayPal link, or to get information on paying by check or bank transfer.

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