
AHEA Newsletter: January 2023

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American Hungarian Educators Association <aheanews@gmail.com>

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Reply-To: aheanews@gmail.com

To: voros@eecs.berkeley.edu

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January 2023 Newsletter

From the Editor's Desk at *Hungarian Cultural Studies*

When, last summer, AHEA honored me with the editorship of *Hungarian Cultural Studies*, the task before me seemed daunting. How to build on Louise Vasvári's outstanding tenure? How would I speedily get a handle on the details of the journal's operation and then give my all to the cause (read: the cultural mission) in a manner balanced with the need to earn my daily bread? I've been the publisher of [New Europe Books](#) for a decade, have translated numerous volumes of Hungarian prose, and have spent many years writing about academic books. I'd spent my younger adulthood in Hungary, where I'd reinforced the native Hungarian fluency I'd begun with life in a Hungarian family near Buffalo, New York, and where I'd founded the English-language news digest *Hungary Around the Clock*. So too, for decades—from the time I earned my MA at Indiana University, Bloomington, in the late 1980s—I'd cultivated friendships with academics, including scholars of Hungarian studies.

In sum, with all this in my veins, I should have been breathing easier. And yet this new undertaking, *Hungarian Cultural Studies*, still seemed formidable. Why?

Because I imagined that I'd need to do it alone. The past few months have been ones of lessons learned, hundreds of emails sent, many meetings held. Much to my relief, of course, as in so many realms of life, the foremost lesson has been this: if I am to embark on a sustainable path ahead, I can't—I mustn't—try to go it alone. I can make it work only in close collaboration with others. Aside from Louise's helpful

advice early on, I would mention three people who have offered invaluable support: **Zsuzsanna Varga**, who became deputy editor and whom I couldn't do without; **Klara Papp**, who has kindly been available to answer my questions and point me in the right directions; and **Katalin Vörös**, whose expertise on the website proved a godsend. Much to my surprise, even the journal's editorial management system—a vital tool in keeping track of submissions—has come to seem like a friend.

Today HCS has an editorial team bigger than ever before, comprising ten noted scholars on two continents. Aside from deputy editor **Zsuzsanna Varga** (University of Glasgow), they include associate editors **János Csapó** (University of Pécs), **Zsuzsanna Cselényi** (translator and editor at *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica*), **Paul Hanebrink** (Rutgers University-New Brunswick), **Sarah M Lucas** (Texas A&M University-Kingsville), **Andrew Ludányi** (professor emeritus, Ohio Northern University), **Judith Kesserű Némethy** (professor emerita, New York University), **Andrea Parapatics** (University of Pannonia), **Balázs Varga** (Eötvös Loránd University), and **Kristóf György Veres** (Migration Research Institute, and, currently, Andrassy National Security Fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies, Washington, D.C.).

What's more, we now have not one book review editor, but two: **Ákos Farkas** (Eötvös Loránd University), who focuses mostly on books published in Hungarian or in Hungary; and **E. M. McQueen** (PhD candidate in comp literature at the University of California, Davis). Together they are following through on the years **Ilana Rosen** devoted to the task.

In short, with this team in place—with our associate editors regularly weighing in on incoming submissions, recommending peer reviewers, and taking the time for quarterly Zoom meetings—I am confident that *Hungarian Cultural Studies* will get Volume 16 out this summer with the same excellence that has long been its hallmark.

What will be in Volume 16? Well, at the moment we're still finalizing the peer review process for most of our articles, and still receiving book reviews, so rather than given away specifics, let me just say that we're likely to bring you plenty of vital new insights and information on history, national identity, linguistics, literature, cinema, music, and even paprika and, yes, on the science behind what makes Magyars, Magyar. I'd add that more than a few of the pieces we'll publish in our general articles section and in our new section, "Perspectives on Hungarian Studies," will, of course, be refreshingly interdisciplinary in nature.

If you're still reading, and you're a scholar in some realm of Hungarian studies, ***please do sign up to be one of our journal's peer reviewers*** if you're not signed up yet by [clicking on the registration link](#). Many thanks! We need you.

I would also introduce our three first-rate copy editors, all based in Budapest, who now stand ready to pore over both peer-reviewed articles and book reviews: husband-and-wife team **John Puckett** (freelance copy editor, Central European University Press) and **Andrea Thürmer** (Department of English Language Pedagogy at Eötvös Loránd University), as well as **Matt Henderson Ellis**, novelist, editor, writing instructor.

In closing, let me share a personal story. Not long ago, in an old suitcase in my mother's attic, I discovered an unpublished, 200-page, typewritten manuscript titled, *A magyar megszálló erők története* (The History of the Hungarian Occupation

Forces)—the title subject as it related to World War II, with a focus on (gulp) Ukraine. The author: my paternal grandfather, István Olchváry, who had been a colonel on Hungary's chiefs of staff during the war. (I read just a bit, but amid what seemed to be an effort on his part at objective analysis, I was struck by his criticism of the Germans' "plundering" mode of occupation. I should stop right there and, once I get the text to the appropriate archive in Budapest, let others assess the contents.) Anyway, I am heartened at the thought that this grandfather of mine, who had decades of exile and a post-military career in New Brunswick, New Jersey, to reflect on the past, would have liked the idea of his grandson doing his part to keep a publication dedicated to the study of his native land alive and thriving. May it be so for a while. With my colleagues at *Hungarian Cultural Studies*—and of course with ever more authors, peer reviewers, and book reviewers contributing—together we can make it happen, better so with each passing year.

Membership Renewal Drive

As we approach the end of the year and look forward to both the next conference and our association's next elections, it is more vital than ever to renew your membership for 2023.

- Only members in good standing can vote in leadership elections;
- Your dues enable you to access "Members Only" section of the website;
- Your annual contribution to AHEA not only helps fund our conferences, but allows us to support your colleagues through our range of [awards and scholarships](#)

👉 [Click here to renew through a convenient PayPal link!](#) 👉

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 **Klára Papp**,
Outgoing President of AHEA

Please tell us a little bit about your career arc, particularly how your work in medicine and health education has intersected with Hungarian Studies?

My PhD is in educational psychology and I spent the better part of my career evaluating the validity and reliability of examinations administered to medical students ensuring that graduates are competent and well-trained medical professionals. I was responsible for ensuring that the faculty constructed reliable examinations that identified students who did not know the material sufficiently and passed those who did. As part of my faculty appointment, I conducted educational research studies using survey methods and cohort studies evaluating the effectiveness of various teaching methods in achieving the objectives of the curriculum. We sought to publish the results of our work to advance the science of medical education. For many years, my career in medicine and health professions education ran parallel to my work in Hungarian Studies (occurring without intersections).

Yet my identity was bound to my Hungarian roots; I taught at Hungarian School and participated in summer camps during vacations, evenings, and weekends. For many years, I could not bring my professional career and my life as a Hungarian together. It was my sister, Susan, who inspired me to do so. The program she organized, now in its third decade, is titled *Students without Boundaries*. It brings ethnic Hungarian students together who live in minority status outside the borders of Hungary with students from Canada and the United States. Her enthusiasm for the program was infectious! She shared letters and comments that participants made following their participation in this experience. She spent hours talking about the amazing young people whom she learned about and helped through this program, about the influence that the program had on them, and the extent to which encountering them changed the trajectory of her life as well as theirs. While I was sufficiently impressed, the skeptical professional side of me noted that these are anecdotes and represent perhaps only a subset of students who expressed their opinions and who took the time to write following the program. I wondered how generalizable the perceptions were. Thus, we began a multi-year project that involved surveying participants (using anonymous survey methods). We assessed students' perceptions of the program and presented our findings at AHEA in a paper titled, "Students Without Boundaries, Softening the Edges of Hungary's Borders: A Student-Centered Program for Hungarian Youth in Diasporas," which was subsequently published.

I was thrilled to have the opportunity to use my professional skills to enable the organizers to better understand the effects of the program and to publish the results, bringing this great initiative to the attention of a wider audience.

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

I was also fortunate to be mentored and befriended by Katalin Kádár Lynn, Judith Kesserű Némethy, Kálmán Magyar, and Katalin Vörös.

It was with Judith's encouragement that I became involved with the leadership of the organization and served as a Board Member and Secretary, and then as President. AHEA has provided me with opportunities to deepen my knowledge of Hungarian Studies, to do my own research, and to provide venues for dissemination. These activities opened doors to the world of my ancestors and contributed to my professional development.

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

I consider myself very lucky to have joined AHEA; I have met amazing people, mentors, and friends. The environment at AHEA is welcoming and has allowed me to be part of the Hungarian scholarly community. I have learned so much from attending conferences and have met so many scholars and researchers who inspire me. A few examples of the amazing quality of speakers that I have come to appreciate are Emőke Szathmáry, András Ludányi, János Kenyeres. When they spoke (even though, in some cases, the audience was virtual), the energy shifted and people become excited and interested in the topics and engaged in the thought-provoking topics.

Though I am not an extrovert, I feel quite at home within the organization and especially enjoy the opportunities to network as well as socialize with friends and colleagues. The Board of Directors of AHEA is an amazing group of knowledgeable and "hands-on" individuals who don't shy away from work to advance the mission of this organization. They have inspired me. To name but a few, Helga Lénart-Cheng in her role as vice president has taken the lead on rewriting the bylaws of our organization and led the search committee for our journal's editor-in-chief. Zsuzsanna Varga has demonstrated the ability to work together in program planning seamlessly though in different time zones; no matter what the issue, we managed to figure out the solution. Andrew Behrendt, whose patience in graciously receiving last-minute contributions to AHEA's monthly Newsletter is laudable! There are countless others whom I could name but fear I'm running out of space. Forgive my omissions!

I look forward to learning from and continuing to serve this organization, which has given me so much professionally and personally. I encourage all members to stay involved or become involved in the numerous opportunities and activities that AHEA provides including the Membership Development Committee, the Program Committee, annual meetings, presentation of scholarly work, and contributions to the journal, *Hungarian Cultural Studies*.

Tell us, please, about your current project.

I plan to finish and publish a study I began with my daughter five years ago. We presented preliminary data on our analysis of the contents of Hungarian folktales compiled in a popular book by Illyés Gyula, titled *Hetvenhét Magyar Népmese* (Budapest: Móra Könyvkiadó, 2015). Our purpose was to identify the themes addressed in the folktales in this book. The thematic analysis was guided by previous research on folktales seeking to identify patterns of altruism, qualities of character, themes of morality, emphasis on mate preferences, and differing emphases on male and female physical attractiveness. The analysis consisted of developing the coding form, coding the folktales, analyzing results, assessing reliability, and providing illustrative examples. Though preliminary, the study provided an overview of the scope of the themes in popular Hungarian folktales and considered whether these themes are relevant in helping children develop a moral compass and whether these themes may still be viewed as important in today's culture and merit retelling. After I complete my term as president, I hope to restart this research and seek to publish it in *HCS*.

In addition, I would like to become better acquainted with Hungarian literature. I have only begun to enjoy the amazing works of Magda Szabó, Bán Mór, Mór Jókai, to name just a few. The AHEA conferences have given me numerous tips and wonderful leads on worthwhile authors and have helped to reintroduce me to the sheer pleasure of reading great novels.

Member Publications

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

Steven Kovacs announces that his article "[Hungarian Plays into American Movies: Billy Wilder's *Five Graves to Cairo* and *One, Two, Three*](#)" was published earlier this month in *Bright Lights Film Journal*.

For Students: Hungarian Diaspora Scholarship Information



Hungarian
DIASPORA
Scholarship

Fulfill your professional dreams while you explore your Hungarian heritage – the Hungarian Diaspora Scholarship program is now available for students around the globe.

The Hungarian Diaspora Scholarship was established by the Hungarian Government for those who live in a Hungarian diaspora outside the European Union, Serbia, and the Zakarpattia Oblast of Ukraine, and wish to study at a Hungarian higher education institution to develop their personal, professional, and cultural relations to Hungary.

Students can choose from almost 30 top-tier Hungarian higher education institutions and 1,300 programs offered mainly in English and Hungarian, covering all study fields and levels. The scholarship is available for both full-time studies leading to a degree and non-degree studies including one- or two-semester-long exchange studies. The scholarship covers tuition-free education at the available higher education institutions, medical insurance, and upon request a monthly stipend, accommodation contribution, and travel allowance.

Submit your application for the Hungarian Diaspora Scholarship online until 31 January 2023. For more information, visit www.diasporascholarship.hu!

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. Requests will appear in the order in which they were received and may be edited for space.



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