

Lóránt Kabdebó

Lőrinc Szabó and Max Stirner¹

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A Change of the Poetic Paradigm in World Literature (1927--1930).

Lőrinc Szabó's poetry enables us to create a synchronic view of Hungarian literature and world literature during the 1920s and 30s. When I studied Szabó's progress as a poet, I became aware of a paradigmatic shift in the last third of the 1920s, which was also retraceable in world literature. As I realized that earlier critical assumptions concerning the dates of the shifts in Lőrinc Szabó's poetic attitude were mistaken, the comparable events in the contemporary scene of world literature appeared in a new light. More precisely, certain points I observed in Szabó's poetry helped me understand similar features in the work of his contemporaries abroad.

Former critical assumptions included his volume of poetry, *Te meg a világ* [You and the World] (1932) in the first stage of his poetic development. In a study of his poetry (written in 1955 and published in 1956²) a contemporary Hungarian poet Gyula Illyés, compared *A sátán műremekei* [Satan's Masterpieces] (1926) to *You and the World* with the conclusion that the latter presented a perfection of, and a contrast to, the tendencies revealed in the earlier work. A book-length postgraduate dissertation depicted the advance of Szabó's

¹ An earlier version of the present study was published in Hungarian: "Egy költői beszédmód filozófiai átalakulása: Szabó Lőrinc és Max Stirner" [The Philosophical Transformation of a Poetic Discourse: Lőrinc Szabó and Max Stirner] in *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, 1995, 1--2, 133--152 and in Lóránt Kabdebó, *Vers és próza a modernség második hullámában* [Poetry and Prose in the Second Wave of Modernism], Argumentum, Budapest, 1997. 51--117.

N. B. Titles of works in Hungarian are quoted initially according to the original edition and referred to later in English translation.

² Gyula Illyés: „Szabó Lőrinc, vagy: boncoljuk-e magunkat elevenen” [“Lőrinc Szabó, Or Should We Vivisect Ourselves?”] in *Szabó Lőrinc Válogatott versei* [Selected Poems by Lőrinc Szabó], Magvető, Budapest, 1956), 5--48.

poetry up to 1932³ as a single phase. When György Rába, the author of the first monographic study of the whole *oeuvre* of Lőrinc Szabó⁴, presented an introductory talk on his work in progress, he chose 1932 for the closing date of the discussion of first period of the poet's career⁵. For my own part, I was planning to set the closure of the first stage of his poetic *oeuvre* at 1926, and later I extended it to 1928. To an inquiry by Aladár Komlós -- an intimate friend of Lőrinc Szabó during the first decade of his career, a respected scholar of literature, and my well-informed adviser in the preparations of a biography of Lőrinc Szabó -- I answered with a philological reference that already implied the possibility of a description of the poetic change. Poems written between 1926 and 1928 still resembled the pieces in *Satan's Masterpieces*, but in 1929 a year of silence followed. and then the poems in *You and the World* were of a completely new poetic universe, where even earlier poems were rewritten to fit the change of the conception. Eventually, Komlós accepted my argument, and all the more so because he was perhaps the first contemporary critic to describe the poetic change, which had occurred at the end of the twenties⁶.

In a monographic study in 1970⁷ I could name only Lőrinc Szabó, when I discussed the range and significance of the thematic and poetical restructuring in the two years, which followed the publication of *Satan's Masterpieces*. I also noted that in many of the poems I could already trace a prehistory of the tendencies summed up in *You and the World*. In a book I published in 1992 I discussed Lőrinc Szabó's poetic development⁸ but again I referred only to the beginning and end. When Lőrinc Szabó had completed *Satan's Masterpieces*, he felt that he had reached the end of something and found himself struck by embarrassment and despair. In light of this it seemed apparent that in the same period a new kind of poetic discourse, which I called the *dialogical poetic paradigm*, had been introduced.

³ Ágota Steinert, *Küzdelem a harmóniáért. Szabó Lőrinc költői világa* [Struggle for Harmony: The Poetic World of Lőrinc Szabó], PhD Dissertation, ELTE (Loránd Eötvös University), Budapest, 1971.

⁴ György Rába, *Szabó Lőrinc*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1972.

⁵ Cf. György Rába, "Szabó Lőrinc költői pályája 1932-ig" ["The Poetic Career of Lőrinc Szabó Before 1932"]. The paper was discussed at a meeting of the Department of Modern Hungarian Literature in the Institute of Literary Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on 8 April 1970.

⁶ Aladár Komlós: *Az új magyar líra* [The New Hungarian Lyrical Poetry.]. Pantheon Irodalmi Intézet Rt., Budapest, 1928.

⁷ Lóránt Kabdebó, *Szabó Lőrinc lázadó évtizede* [Lőrinc Szabó's Decade of Rebellion]. Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1970.

⁸ Lóránt Kabdebó, "A magyar költészet az én nyelvemen beszél" (*A kései Nyugat-líra öszegeződése Szabó Lőrinc költészetében*) [»Hungarian Poetry Speaks My Language«: The Epitome of Later Date *Nyugat* Lyrics in the Poetry of Lőrinc Szabó], Argumentum, Budapest, 1992.

Parallel with this I and a few colleagues began to study this poetic syndrome along with comparable phenomena in contemporary literature outside Hungary.

Dialogical Poetic Practice. In 1992, together with Ernő Kulcsár Szabó, then a colleague at the Faculty of Arts at the Janus Pannonius University of Pécs, we drew up a program for a conference on Hungarian poetry during the first half of the twentieth century. The program in fact constituted a manifesto calling for a reevaluation of recent historical trends and the new developments in Hungarian poetry:

"Since in recent international reference literature there have been many influential attempts at fresh approaches to conceptual contents detectable in the inner sphere of literature, i. e. in the field of literary devices, or in the change of literary paradigms and periods, the time is ripe to probe into the significant change that inaugurated a new poetical era in Hungary during the twenties and thirties. The closing phase of the historical avant-garde and the emergence of the trend described provisionally as »lyrical neo-classicism« were parallel processes and poets like Lajos Kassák, Attila József, Lőrinc Szabó, Sándor Weöres and Gyula Illyés took active parts in them. It follows from this that the purpose of our investigations is to uncover the poetical and philosophical components of the transition from one period into another and to define its ideological assets. This is underlined by the fact that, as has been illustrated by akin processes in world literature, those decades saw trends of classical modernity transformed into new lyrical formations, providing a basis for contemporary idioms such as hermetism, abstract objectivism, reflective poetry, new subjectivism. Furthermore, these also present themselves in neoavantgardist and poststructuralist poetics. Therefore a key issue is to give a formal poetical description of the change of periods, interpret from this point of view the *oeuvres* of major import, and develop a new literary and historical context for the paradigms thus uncovered. This may help us describe and evaluate the history of the poetry of the thirties in terms of its actual articulation in trends and tendencies and to free it from traditional formulae fixed by such misconceived terms as *neo-classicism* and *neo-realism*."

An important outcome of the conference at the Janus Pannonius University was an unprecedented recognition of the position of Lőrinc Szabó's poetical practice and its significance for literary history and literary scholarship⁹.

⁹ The conference was held at Pécs in southern Hungary on 11-14 April 1991, and the proceedings were edited by Lóránt Kabdebó and Ernő Kulcsár Szabó, „*de nem felelnek, úgy felelnek*” [“their silence is the answer”], Janus Pannonius University Press, Pécs 1992.

Parallel with the transformation of the poetry of Lőrinc Szabó, an important change, conceivable as a paradigmatic shift, took place in Hungarian poetry. In searching for an explanation, contemporary critics referred to thematic, formal, stylistic and generational factors. They were, however, aware of the change, and it has been kept in evidence ever since by literary criticism.¹⁰ My conviction is that it is only from then on that, beyond the shifts describable in the above terms, attention was paid to the metamorphosis of the very relationship between the poet and the poem, i. e. a change in the interpretation of the ontology of poetry, a change which took place in poetical practice. Instead of the theorists, the poets carried out this change in their own praxis, and at first the result was, even for them, surprising and frightening.

In my view the first Hungarian assessment of the dialogical poetical concept appeared in 1932 in Lőrinc Szabó's volume of poetry, *You and the World*. Measured by international standards, this achievement was considerable. To make understandable the process, which led up to it, I have to go back in time to an earlier phase.

The volume *You and the World* seemed to have emerged quite suddenly, almost as Pallas Athena had popped out from the head of Zeus. The poems were written in 1930--1932 and published first in the daily press. Minimal alterations were made by the poet when he collected them in a volume. The book also contains poems conceived earlier. Before 1930 the poet was silent for over a year, but part of the production of the 1927--1928 period, though thoroughly revised, found its way into the collection.

At this point philology gains a special momentum for literary history and the history of literary theory. A span of two years is to be considered. Through the reconstruction of the 1927--1928 production of Lőrinc Szabó I can identify the processes of the paradigmatic shift in Hungarian poetry. Why is it necessary to reconstruct the production of those two years? The reason is strange: in that period the poet himself began to be frightened by his new poems. His standards for his own work were set too high to let him accept stagnation. What he seemed to have created could not be traced back to any tradition, and had he tried to

¹⁰ Besides the book by Aladár Komlós cited above (cf. note nr. 6), several other works may be quoted: an essay by Gábor Halász, "A költészet halála" [The Death of Poetry] written in 1929, in Gábor Halász, *Tiltakozó nemzedék* [The Protesting Generation], Budapest, 1981, 957-966; an essay by Lőrinc Szabó, "Divatok az irodalom körül" [Fashions around Literature], announcing his drawing away from the avant-garde was published in *Az Est Hármaskönyve* [The Tripartitum of the newspaper *Est*] in 1929, republished in Lőrinc Szabó, *Könyvek és emberek az életemben* [Books and People in My Life], selected and edited by Ágota Steinert, Magvető, Budapest, 1984, 156-195; a novel by Gyula Illyés, *Hunok Párizsban* [Huns in Paris, Budapest, 1946], an ironic account of his encounter with surrealism based on the author's memories of Paris; an autobiographical novel by the poet István Vas about the beginning of his career and his relation to Kassák and the avant-garde: *Nehéz szerelem* [Difficult Love], Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1964.

consider the range of contemporary literature, he would not have found similar phenomena there either. After *Pandora*, a journal he launched in 1927 and of which only six issues were published, he might have found reassurance in reading and translating pieces from the anthology *Menschheitsdämmerung*.¹¹ What was new in his own poems resembled the novelties in texts by his German contemporaries, but he was unaware of the parallels. For Lőrinc Szabó the poetic practice of classical modernity, hallmarked by the names of Mihály Babits, Stefan George and Rainer Maria Rilke and the avant-garde movement, belonged to the past. As yet he was in no position to get acquainted with new developments comparable to his own, such as the change in the poetry of Gottfried Benn, the innovations of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, and the work of his younger contemporary Attila József. Thus, he lost confidence. At the end of 1928, although he had a chance to publish a new volume, he took no risks, rather he chose silence¹². Even later on, facing the problem of how to justify his work,

¹¹ Kurt Pinthus (ed.), *Menschheitsdämmerung. Symphonie jüngster Dichtung*. Ernst Rowohlt Verlag, Berlin, 1920.

¹² After his 1926 volume, *Satan's Masterpieces*, he did not collect the poems written in 1927-1928 in a new volume. This contradicted his established habit ("By this Christmas a good book of mine is due to be published by Athenaeum [...] I have not made up the collection but I have the material in newspaper clips, only a title is needed" – he wrote on the night of 13 October 1928 to his friend, Nándor Várkonyi, a scholar of literary history). After a year of silence he began writing poems again in 1930. He sent, together with his new poems, the old newspaper clippings to his friend László Németh, an essayist who was planning to write about his poetry: "meanwhile I read through the whole of my poetic material from 1926, I arranged about a hundred poems according to the dates of writing, and enclosed a long letter addressed to László Németh. In the section covering 1927 and 1928 several changes ought to be implemented, but hardly any in the rest of the collection. This morning I posted the heavy envelope by registered express mail. I wonder what impression L. N. will have of this material, [which is] enough for two volumes..." – the poet wrote to his wife on 3 August 1931. The first sign of reassurance came from László Németh, "Since 1926 Lőrinc Szabó has not published an original volume, the best of his poems are dispersed on the flow of the gutter-press. Whoever takes a look at the collection of these poems will be able to observe how in the strictly composed lines, as if in the composure of a face, the nervous grimace changes into a kind of defiant, manly earnestness. Words cast, which keep on moulding, wrote Ady of poems by Babits. Well, in this case the molten words are becoming cast, bitterness itself changing its physical condition. Iambics become gradually lost in a more rigid and arrogant metre, the stanzas are heaving up their chained drawbridge, the poem recitable at a breath breaks into sentences; the poet withdraws, buttons up and he, the translator of so many sonnets discovers the sonnet form for himself too. The Lőrinc Szabó-poem is no longer a recitable piece of writing whose flood carries off roof, corpse and hay waggon. All of a sudden composition becomes all important and drives away anything superfluous. [...] Lőrinc Szabó's poetry has become increasingly meditative. Not in a school-bookish sense, but in a very strict meaning of the word. It is not lyrical poetry expressing thought, but lyrical poetry of the pain of thinking. Consciousness is a wound in the poet's soul and he is reluctant to heal it with the herbs of quacks. If earlier he was agitated by the distress of poverty and unjust ostracism, now he is paralysed by a sense of death and of meaningless existence. His misery

he relied for reassurance not on poets but philosophers. And he did not turn to Heidegger, despite the fact that his poetry agreed with Heidegger's philosophy, but to Bertrand Russell, whose work – which was an accidental discovery for Szabó – nevertheless appealed to him greatly. Decades later he gave this explanation of Russell's influence (which, as I see it, cannot be overestimated): "I was struggling a great deal for balance in those lonely years, [...] and a fresh [...] major influence [...] reached me just at the time when I had to put into order what slowly became clear to me [...] It must have been essentially reassuring: as if all that I saw in Russell and Goethe had offered me primarily human encouragement, telling the soul emerging from chaos: You are fine, you are one of the *possible* worlds, young man!"¹³.

From the beginning Lőrinc Szabó combined traditions in a complex way. The modernism of the classicist structures in his first volume *Föld, Erdő, Isten* [Earth, Woods, God], published in 1922, is coloured by expressionism; the expressionism of *Fény, fény, fény* [Light, Light, Light], published at the end of 1925, and *Satan's Masterpieces* appeared in the form of classical prosody. (Lőrinc Szabó himself had directed the attention of László Németh to the affinity of *Satan's Masterpieces* with the choruses of Greek drama¹⁴.) The pragmatic pedagogical-psychological preference, whose *ars poetica* was suggested by the closing poem of the volume, "Legyen a költő hasznos akarát" [Let the poet be a useful will] was valid to the relation between poet and poem until 1926. This was alive in his awareness of the antagonism between poverty and wealth, his rebellion against all kinds of terror, and his hopes for social redemption organised by by an authority, not representing some political organisation (he never believed in these), but as an embodiment of the *Leader-principle*. Thus, the poem *Vezér* [Leader] (1928) presented an objective depiction of the age and carried *ad absurdum* Sándor Petőfi's claim in *A XIX. század költői* [The Poets of the 19th Century] (1847) on the social uses of

is no less painful, but he moved one step nearer to Nihil with the man's response of tragic autotelism, and the artist's, of relentless discipline." László Németh, "Új nemzedék, 1931: Szabó Lőrinc" [New Generation 1931: Lőrinc Szabó]. *Nyugat*, 1931, vol. 2, 236--240. Also in László Németh, *Két nemzedék* (Two Generations), Magvető and Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1970, 326-332.

¹³ Lőrinc Szabó: *Könyvek és emberek az életemben* [Books and People in My Life], 596--597. In 1933, through an exchange, Lőrinc Szabó obtained a copy of Bertrand Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy* published in England: "In World War I this book was taken from a table in the bedroom of Peter, the king of Serbia, and Kornél Tábori gave it to me. I swapped it for another book with my respected colleague Lőrinc Szabó" (A statement by Henrik Zsadányi, Budapest, 28 January, 1933). The event was witnessed by Simon Kemény, Imre Barcs, Ákos Bakos, Sándor Hajós and dr. Imre Kőszegi". (Mentioned also by György Rába, op. cit., 76.)

¹⁴ Cf. note no. 12. László Németh refers to this piece of information gained from the poet in his essay from 1931 cited above: "the poem of anarchic pace, called a modernised version of the Greek chorus by its author" (op. Cit., 330.).

poetry. This soliloquy unites the messianist presentiments suggested by the classically structured modernism and the avant-garde. One can also discern it in Max Kommerell's conclusions.¹⁵ Kommerell, associated with the school of Stefan George, referred to classical German poetry, which for him had ended with Hölderlin. But according to the concept of *Kürwille* [will to choose], as it was posited by Ferdinand Tönnies, the renowned German sociologist¹⁶ the ideas of *Führer* and *Dichter* were connected to a universal present. The importance of the poem lies in the fact that although it is a homogeneous lyrical monologue, it allows the *Führer* and *Dichter* principles develop into a substantial opposition in Lőrinc Szabó's poetry without which the dialogical poetical practice could not have come into being.

One of the big traps of twentieth century poetry is the slogan "Let the poet be a useful will", which is applicable to the description, evaluation and acceptance of the messianist concepts idealising all traditional left-wing as well as right-wing dictatorships. This historically determined volitional-psychological view is not connected with a definite trend of poetry, but after the First World War it compelled its expression in all the trends it could influence. Out of curiosity, obsession, commitment, gratitude, or even scepticism poets felt inclined to employ live traditional forms, and this inclination also lead to derivative poetical reorganisation (for instance socialist realism referred to as a rule as "soc-real" in a derogatory sense). It may be a problem of biography merely why a certain personality produced a certain kind of formation, but it is a fact of poetics that the traditionally given methods of creation could not resist and ignore the actual attraction of politics.

László Ferenczi has called my attention to a kind of solution or counter-example that also occurred in that period: "1924 was an important year in Ferrero's life [...] in 1924 he published in Paris his book *Discours aux sources*. [...] "Savons-nous ce que nous voulons? C'est la question capitale" -- it begins,

¹⁵ Max Kommerell: *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutscher Klassik* (Bondi, Berlin, 1928). The author who belonged to the George-dominated *Blätter für die Kunst* finds himself confronted by a similar contradiction surveying German classicism. Although he states that "Freilich bleibt nach wie vor das erste das Werk", in the work itself he still searches for the embodiment of the "useful will", and sets this as an ideal for the youth of the present. In his book he registers the intellectual moment in which *Dichter* and *Führer* coincide and also a sense of the chance (and, in his view, the danger) of their disunion, "Wenn der Verfasser sein Buch »Der Dichter als Führer« nennt, so ist er gewillt, die Dichter darin auftreten zu lassen als Vorbilder einer Gemeinschaft als wirkende Personen. Hat einerseits die Suche nach Lebensumständen dazu verleitet, die Dichtung selbst hintanzusetzen, so läuft man wiederum Gefahr, im Dichter nichts als den bloßen Poëten zu sehn." (*Vorbemerkung*).

¹⁶ Ferdinand Tönnies: *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1979 (first edn. 1887). Cf. especially the passages concerning the forms of human will in Book 2.

then Ferrero continues it with: "Ce désordre de la volonté est le mal dont notre époque meurt"¹⁷.

The riddle to be solved by the poet was to find out how far the development of a new practical paradigm would suppress not the presence but the dominance of any kind of purely psychologically inspired volitional aspects in the poem. The poem *Leader* caused general upheaval; its author was severely attacked and criticized. The problem has to be seen in a new light. The real issue being not that Lőrinc Szabó wrote it at all but how he progressed from the *Leader* (1928) to a final conclusion, excluding as well as refusing the Führer-principle in the poem titled *A párt válaszol* [The Party Responds] (1931). In *The Party Responds* the paternalist "useful will" expressed in traditional homogenous form and applicable to the legitimation of dictatorships turns into its opposite and leads to a poetic structure which annuls such legitimations. Instead of homogeneity, the toleration of *otherness* is ingrained in the poem: *Führer* and *Dichter* take opposite poles and the poem becomes merely the site of a dialogue. What is more, the dialogue is not conceivable in a traditional subject-object polarity, but it evolves a self-questioning poetical situation. As Tönnies puts it, the pure concept of the abstract person creates its own dialectic opposite from itself.¹⁸

The title *You and the World* and the vision of personality, which characterizes the collection, reveals a formally dramatized poetic world in which the voice of the *actor* includes that of the rebellious individual in traditional poetry (with a sociological view, pragmatism-pedagogical motivation and a psychologically based search for truth), and as its counterpoint, the *spectator* who, forming logical judgements, points at the unchangeable laws of the world. But, what qualifies this kind of poetry as significantly new is not the separation of *you* and the *world*, which makes aesthetic shaping possible, but the polyphonic utterance of *you* and the *world*, which both live within and separate from the *I* and become engaged in a dialogue.

In *Vers és valóság* [Poem and Reality] a unique collection of comments Lőrinc Szabó made at the end of his life on all of pieces of his poetic *oeuvre*, his comment on the poem, *A Költő és a Földiek* [The Poet and the Natives] runs as follows: "It is strange how the representation of interests by the masses and by messianists shocked me; my view was that the poet should speak with »no interest«, what is more, against his »own« interest"¹⁹. This attitude opens a gap

¹⁷ "Do we know what we want? This is a vital question [...] Our age suffers from the lack of knowing what we want." László Ferenczi, *"Ferrero és a Hatalom"* [Ferrero and Power], *Vigilia*, 1991. 4. 29.

¹⁸: „der reine Begriff der abstrakten Person treibt sein dialektisches Gegenstück aus sich selber hervor“ Ferdinand Tönnies op. cit., p. 112.

¹⁹ Lőrinc Szabó: *Vers és valóság 1--2* [Poem and Reality], ed. Lóránt Kabdebó, Magvető, Budapest., 1990. vol. 1., 295.

in the pragmatist pedagogical principle and makes one aware of the perversion by which any adherent of messianist movements led by the *Führer*-principle can be regarded a potential member of an actual corporate body. In a gradually evolving system a single contradiction involves the threat of immediate dissolution. "Useful" and "will" provide two distinct spheres of the poem and thus two constitutive elements of an *ars poetica* start a dialogue. Due to its own logic the homogenous pedagogical and psychological tuning of the poem is discontinued and although its constituent elements keep their place, their characters suffer a "sea-change" and become confronted.

The principle of "representation" is preserved and apparently with an increased emphasis, since the poem seems to evoke the immediate milieu and daily life of the narrator, but these in fact are transformed into a mere "objective correlative," into the form of an analytical representation, by the poet's awareness of the situation.

What remains is the pedagogical intention, the principle of usefulness. But it is no longer held up in the service of some group interest but for the self-defense of the individual. What is more, the poem's psychological tuning is also preserved, but it does not serve the mystical *Führer*-principle of the communal will any longer. Instead, the right of *personal egoism* is elevated in a decisive position, though as yet without an awareness of the intention to replace the former Nietzschean inspiration.

Thus, all the earlier definitive characteristics of Lőrinc Szabó's poetry remain intact, the only change is in what they mean for the poem. His poetic crisis in 1927--28 -- as he states in *Harc az ünnepért* [Struggle for the Festival], "I stepped into a wall" -- was a consequence of his need to merge all these elements into a resolute and homogenous discourse of a single poetical body. As he doubted that a majority of his poems would accommodate such a demand, at the end of 1928 he gave up the plan to collect them into one volume of poetry. It took him time to discover that *quasi torso* poems would offer a new chance (according to his own metaphors offering a "miracle", or "...the wall opened a door"). This meant total abandonment of the traditional ideal of the poem as homogeneous formation and a first performance of the dialogical poetical discourse.

The earliest poetical formation in his dialogical practice meant that in the poem the poet experiences a struggle for the self-definition of a man suffering by, and embarking on, action due to a sense of imprisonment in his milieu. Instead of history which forces people into corporate bodies, he is absorbed in an interest in individual stories in which the ego becomes aware of its relations and rises to self-perfection by total self-destruction. The story is an interval between two periods of non-existence, in which man brings to life "his child, death" (*Gyermekünk, a halál* [Our child, death], 1931). There is a correspondence between his findings in practical poetics and a contemporary

analysis in Heidegger's existential philosophy of *Sein und Zeit*. The poem aims at "[...] Durchsichtigmachen eines Seienden -- des fragenden -- in seinem Sein." "[Das Dasein hat vielmehr gemäß einer zu ihm gehörigen Seinsart die Tendenz,] das eigene Sein aus dem Seienden her zu verstehen, zu dem es sich wesenhaft ständig und zunächst verhält, aus der »Welt«. [...] in der Auseinandersetzung mit den Sachen selbst [...]"²⁰

That Lőrinc Szabó recognised this is revealed in a piece of criticism he wrote of Lajos Zilahy's play *A Fehér Szarvas* [The White Stag] in April 1927. When he put it on paper, Szabó was still under the persuasion of a homogenous utilitarian principle, and it was a slip of the tongue that discussing the play (written in a most traditional manner), that he declared that "the writer[...] lives several lives side by side and at the same time, and is not determined by any one principle"²¹.

Summing up: in the second half of the twenties and the early thirties there was no generational or thematic change of styles (though such partial and correlative changes were also involved), but the change was paradigmatic. There was no substantial paradigmatic change in thematics. The real difference came with the change of discourse inspired by attitude: the homogeneous view of poetry was replaced by a dialogical attitude. The principle "history is the realization of One Truth" is replaced by "the Truth of the One". Aesthetic shaping both endures and evokes the simultaneous presence and correlative influence of differences in tone, the complementary organizational role of psychological and logical aspects, the logical argumentation of one's presence in everyday life, and the psychological evaluation evoked by experiencing the relations of this actuality.

The poet, with sensory data, memory and information harboring in his consciousness, "reconstructs creation." In *Rádiózene a szobában* [Radio Music in the Room] the poetic personality is defined in the process of creation as the work of art comes into being. The homogeneity of the poem was sustained by an idealized central principle in modernist poems of classical structure and in the poetry of the avant-garde by a purposeful continuity of substance preserved despite an apparent breach with conventional forms. The substantial mode of the dialogical practice in poetics is the breach with homogeneity. Self-definition is but a merger of *othernesses*. Thus the variously tuned elements reach a poetical accordance, and the emphasis on structure grows. (This development, in certain views, appears on the surface as a new kind of classicization and objectivization). On the other hand the inherent dialogical quality of the text gains special emphasis and it interferes as an organizing force with the rhetorical structure.

²⁰ Martin Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit*. Max Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1993. 7, 15, 27.

²¹ Lőrinc Szabó: "Magyar sors és Fehér szarvas" [Hungarian Fate and White Stag]. *Pandora*, 1927. 3. (21 April), 132.

After 1926 and simultaneous with the appearance of its symptoms in Lőrinc Szabó's work poetry underwent a similar paradigmatic change in other regions of the world.²² The modality of the change was similar all along. In Hungarian lyrical poetry two markedly different modes of poetic creation became distinct and emphatic as determinants of the new scale of poetic values. The poetics associated with Gyula Illyés is narrative, realistic and representational. It is informed by didacticism and a mild mixture of populism and nationalism; while the philosophically inspired and dialogically structured poetical attitudes of Lőrinc Szabó and Attila József question the individual's existential position.

The critical description and interpretation of the change began when the phenomena in poetry were still in *statu nascendi* and continued to the present. I have attempted to verify by means of a close philological reconstruction that the change was not in 1930–32, when it was manifest in a new series of poems by Lőrinc Szabó and in his volume *You and the World*, but it dates back to 1927--28. The changes which occurred later than that date in the poetry of Lőrinc Szabó cannot be traced back to antecedents or to contemporary examples. This is what he became aware of – referring rather to philosophers than to poets – at the time of the publication of the volume *You and the World*.

The intuitive and poetic paradox of a decade (1920--1930). -- The title of the first volume of my monographic study of the poet's work is (as cited above) *Szabó Lőrinc lázadó évtizede* [Lőrinc Szabó's Decade of Rebellion]. I used the term "rebellion" with certain reservations. For the period 1945 to 1956 I felt compelled to follow the interpretation used by Gyula Illyés.²³ Nevertheless, I have constantly questioned this usage. One reason for my doubts is that during this decade his poetry, while it still preserved, in varying proportions, the hues of expressionism and classicism and blended them with a special kind of simultaneity, was rebellious *thematically*. It responded with permanent dissatisfaction to challenges from the outside world, but it also contained full

²² I referred earlier to this comparison in an essay *On the Borderline of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Poetic Discourses: The Appearance of the Dialogical Poetic Paradigm. Neohelicon*, 1994. vol. 1, 61--83.

²³ In 1945 Lőrinc Szabó was summoned by the authorities for a political screening, and a criminal procedure was started against him for his prewar journalistic activities as a member of the press staff accompanying governor Miklós Horthy in 1938 and prime minister Pál Teleki in 1939 on their visits with Hitler. The political argument of Gyula Illyés in defence of Lőrinc Szabó and the poet's pleading emphasised the social aspects of his poetry. Cf. a collection of Lőrinc Szabó's writings under the title *Bírákhoz és barátokhoz (Napló és védőbeszéd 1945-ből)* [To Judges and Friends: Diary and Pleadings from 1945], prepared for publication and notes by Lóránt Kabdebó (Magvető, Budapest, 1990).

recognition of the *futility* of all kinds of rebellion. Szabó's rebellion was qualified by a type of political exaltation in the style of Stefan George, a kind of Protestant Christian desire of purification, as well as by an idea of progress informed by Marxist terminology. Meanwhile all these motives tended to turn into their opposites, making the poem grotesque quite independent of the intentions of the poet. Inspiration by Stefan George helped him dispense with the prophetic duty of the poet to call for national renaissance and replace it by a mystical worship of nature ("Mother Earth"²⁴). The Protestant heritage involved a mood of mourning for heretics, while spreading a forgetful veil on the memory of flagrant cases of injustice against any Christian denomination by revolutionary terrorism. The Christian wish of redemption envisaged an armed anti-humanistic rebellion; and the social harangues of the plebeian tribune were bound to be misadvised by the historical inertia of the age.

Thus rebellion, as a means of changing the order, found expression in violence and anti-humanism, beginning with his early poems in free verse of avant-garde coloring. This included *Áradás, áradás!* [Flood, Flood!] written on 4 May 1920, which appealed to -- and also appalled -- Mihály Babits, the mentor during the first period of his career.²⁵

The rebel whose voice resounds in the poems written from 1920 to 1928 promises no victory or any kind of achievement, but rather an awareness of the humiliation and violence inherent in any breach of order. With Lőrinc Szabó a new kind of poetical consciousness found its expression, that of response in terror to any piece of news of "historical significance." This kind of consciousness rejects participation in the making of history, and instead it acts constantly as an analyst of the frightening effect of historical situations. It thematizes the shock caused by events witnessed in the outsider's position. In the poem entitled *XXXI*²⁶ closing the volume *Earth, Forest, God*, the experience

²⁴ The motif survived in a curious function in an early version of *Ars poetica* by Attila József as an intertextual formula originating from Lőrinc Szabó inspired by Stefan George, "there is also a mother earth, where tanks / strengthen its rhymes!..." (see in the critical edition of the poetry of Attila József by Béla Stoll, *József Attila összes versei 1-2*. [Collected Poems of Attila József] Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1984 vol. 2, 346, variant k2; the original in Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum (Petőfi Literary Museum), Budapest, Nr. JA469).

²⁵ "In the afternoon I took it to Babits. He read it through lying on a couch in his library; he started trembling afterwards and said, »no greater poem has been written ever since Vörösmarty« [...]. It is obvious that Babits gave voice to his own fears in those words of praise." From the recollections of Lőrinc Szabó of the conception of the poem on 18 April 1954. In: *Érlelő diákévek* [Maturing Student Years], collected and prepared for publication by Lóránt Kabdebó, Literary Museum Series, a joint publication of PIM and the Popular Education Propaganda Office (Budapest 1979) 301.

²⁶ He rewrote it under the title *Apparitions* for his *Collected Poems*. According to the recollections in *Poems and Reality* "it refers to the events of the 1919 commune and the terror they roused, though essentially it is a piece of phantasm." (Lőrinc Szabó: *Vers és valóság*, vol. 1, 43.). The translator of verse quotations, unless otherwise stated, is Mária Kurdi.

is stylised into a timeless reaction emerging from classicistic and expressionistic mosaics.

In the temples the torches went out sputtering
and the statue of the goddess collapsed of itself;
when we stepped out on the resounding, frightened streets,
blood-colored sails were sleighing in the sky.

In the barracks the trumpets were shrieking;
the fishmongers were stowing things in their open stalls in fear;
the Tower of Silence collapsed on the forum with a horrifying noise
and by the arrival of night the water in the wells was boiling.

It happened during this night that under the rattling legions bridge
over the Arno broke off;
the circus lions were roaring in their cages,
while in the distance the Erynnes and Iron Serpents were raving on
the resounding ridges
and hot winds were wrestling over the recoiling fields.

All of a sudden the Fire flashed up to the clouds and in the
staggering redness
a rain of stones rammed down the echoing forests;
the black streams were running around puzzled,
and the mirrors of the lakes cracked in fear.

This poetry, in a period of rapid historical changes, initiates a dialogue with history, simultaneously giving voice to and refusing its promise of solutions. The rhetoric of rebellion makes the unbearable situation of the people, including that of the poet, and the counterpoint of hopes and fears equally expressible. Here the rhetoric rather than the fully developed poetics of utterance is employed.

Poetically, arguments and descriptions that could be generalized found articulation in a personal utterance; and at a later, date when he revised some early poems, he tended to emphasize these aspects. Notwithstanding, the dominant rhetoric of the poems lets a coarse and outspoken *selfish* passion prevail, even when Szabó speaks *also* in the name of his nation, his generation, his fellow contemporary writers, his heresy, his Christianity and his "proletarianism." When a poem raises a problem in the name of a distinct group of people, it assumes their way of speech only to unmask the speakers, so that the articulation of the program presents a simultaneous exposure of the shortcomings inherent in its implementation. *Flood, Flood!* the poem mentioned

above, sounds like an avant-garde chorus, and introducing a terrorizing political commando (of any denomination), it claims both its acceptance as a historical necessity and its condemnation by a shuddering audience. *Caliban*²⁷, regarded by literary historians the representative poem of the "rebellious period", introduces the self-destructive rhetoric of this kind of audience as the suicidal perversion of the creature prepared to destroy itself. The monologue entitled *Leader (Vezér)*²⁸, conceived at the close of the period, includes in it the rhetoric of the selfishness inherent in personal daydreaming and the incarnation as "persona" of a power alien to the individual. In this decade of messianist dreams Lőrinc Szabó was perhaps the only poet who, although aware of political aspirations, was capable of rendering a wholesale presentation of the seamy side of their realization.

That Lőrinc Szabó lost his bearings in politics due to lack of experience has been a commonplace in the historiography of recent Hungarian literature. Familiarity with the poetry of the first decade of his career suggests that he had an uncommonly profound insight of the mechanics of political processes. When other people still cherished hopes, he had no illusions. When the expectations and fears came true and in the actual process of realization the events cast off the idealizing mask formed in the earlier era of theorizing and daydreaming, Lőrinc Szabó in the interest of survival was one of the first people who for survival's sake was ready to assume mimicry as private individuals. He "stole" the previous experiences of his poetic-self to be able to conform with the needs of the situation. Yet, the target of suspicion was the poet's self, because his common everyday self used for mimicry exactly those earlier poems in which he had conclusively dealt with the inevitable rules of necessary conformism. But there was no notice taken of the fact that in the years preceding this situation Lőrinc Szabó, as a poet, never appealed to rhetoric dictated by inhuman trends. He and his friends were obliged to apologize repeatedly²⁹. His great poetry was created amidst the storms of extreme political situations (between 1930 and 1943, hallmarked by *You and the World* and *Collected Poems*); and he followed this path till the end of his life, even under the conditions of the radical political change after world war II. And he did so frequently, and sometimes for long periods, with the exclusion of the public, as in the poems of *Tücsökmusika* [Cricket Music], *A huszonhatodik év* [The Twenty-sixth year] and *Valami szép* [Something Beautiful] written in 1945-1957.

This meant distance and independence from politics and political ideas; he lost interest in those topics because whatever they might have once meant for

²⁷ The first appearance of the poem in the liberal daily *Az Est* 11 November 1923.

²⁸ The first appearance of the poem in the liberal daily *Pesti Napló* 16 September 1928.

²⁹ See the poet's *Journal* from 1945 and the pleadings. In: Lőrinc Szabó, *Bírákhoz és barátokhoz* (cf. note no. 23)

him had been exploited earlier in his poetry ³⁰. He could walk in *Más világok* [Other Worlds]³¹ as a private person together with other contemporary poets. Here he was under the compulsion of history driven to stumble for decades in the field of politics. He was defending himself and tried to conform.

Egoism and Messianism. . The change in the poetry of Lőrinc Szabó at the end of the twenties was due to the fact that in his "rebellious" decade he could not create a poetical harmony of the antagonistic ideas of egoism and messianism. As early as 1924--1925 he had defined the ego in the title of a poem in his volume of poetry, *Fény, fény, fény* [Light, Light, Light], *Nézek s ezer arcom viszanéz* [I watch and my thousand faces watch back]³². "This is the world and I within it"; "Where not? What can there be, / that lives without me?"; "I am all, I am nothing, / and change -- --"; "whoever fights against me, whoever fights against me, / I shall crush like a moth";

-- today still -- -- as the mirror is turning and
this Many still interests me,
I watch and my thousand faces watch back
And turn when I turn,

But tomorrow -- -- from the mirror -- perhaps --
I step out -- the sky cracks -- --
And with a ringing scream the big
Bubble breaks.

And at the close of the period the same ideas are repeated in *Leader*:

I said farewell to myself. I only guess
What will be. My Body expanded into
A giant frame. Greatest humility,
you, greatest faith, help me! Help me
you luck too! All is ready. I am present

³⁰ This fact frustrated critics who searched for a kind of poetic self-examination in his work after 1945 and also the critics of the autobiographically conceived philosophical cycle of poems *Tücsökzene* [Cricket Music] (1947). He had already done all that *before*. He emphasised this in his 1945 *Journal* and pleadings as well (see Lőrinc Szabó: *Bírákhoz és barátokhoz*). His earlier account freed his poetry from fascist and marxist ties alike.

³¹ The title of a poem published in 1938, the year when the volume *Harc az Ünnepeért* [Struggle for the Festival] came out with the new version of *Leader* in it. Later it was published in his volume of poetry in 1943 under the title *Akkor és most* [Then and Now].

³² Published in *Pesti Napló* 22 June 1924.

in seventy towns of the country,
I point toward the capital with
Five hundred thousand bayonets, in an hour
The sign goes off on my monitor:
I stop and the stream of my heart
Will start the machines of the new order.³³

For the *ego* history does not exist any more. All depends on the *self*, whose end also means an end to the world. Meanwhile the selfish will of this ego brings the world back, and with it also politics and history, and even a kind of -- no matter what kind of -- "progress": "I am the goal, myself the goal".

This "rebellious" interpretation -- with its simultaneous technique -- both excludes from and includes history in the poem: though the ego cannot be the bearer of history, its articulation is possible only in, by, and even in opposition to history. Therefore there must be a logical contradiction between the ego-existence and the *Führer*-existence ("I Said Farewell to Myself").

The necessity of a poetical transformation was announced in the 1928 version of *Leader* and the character of the transformation was explained in the 1938 version³⁴. The dualism, i. e. the personality of the ego and its historical existence, are thematically merged in the 1928 version, and, consequently it is simulating the rhetorical unity of its discourse with poetical authenticity. In the 1938 version this dualism provides a mere thematic unity; and this fusion on the poetical level refers to some kind of absurdity. This version clarifies poetically a

³³ The quotation is taken from the 1938 volume *Struggle for the Festival*. The same passage in the 16 September 1928 issue of *Pesti Napló*:

Now I say good-bye to myself. No-one
Knows what will be. I guess. What
I started that is the only
chance, the only right path.
Let me have strength, self-control
And I will be victorious: I am present
In two hundred towns of the country, I
Start toward the capital
In half a million bayonets, in an hour
On my monitor the cannon goes off:
I cease to be and in the building of my body
The machinery of a world stirs.

³⁴ He comments on such revisions in an afterword addressed *To the Reader* in his *Collected Poems* of 1943: "I have not falsified my past, but I have given a true account of it now. [...] The character and structure of the poems in each case showed, prompted and demanded the final form, the only right and solely possible solution." *Szabó Lőrinc Összes versei* (Singer and Wolfner Budapest 1943) 679, 678

dilemma of either-or from the past of the poem itself, overhearing the dialogue between the historical persona's rhetoric of power and the all-consuming ambitions of the selfish ego, which reconstructs the universe after its own image. In the soliloquy a dialogue appears: the one and the same text with its firm grammatical structure evokes two intellectual constructions.

-- I am
the people, the country: all my cells
and all my moments and thoughts
I have given away and all they became
soldiers, lives: the twin others of my will in flesh and blood:

The key word is *will*. Will in 1928 was still a link between two brutalities: the *ego* and history; these two factors which were seen in opposition in the poetry of Lőrinc Szabó during its renaissance after 1930. A similar grammatical function of the word "will" in 1938 explains that one and the same "will" may merge with two things of different order and thereby make them opposites. The *Dichter*-principle and the *Führer*-principle may express their will only at the expense of each other. From one kind of reading we may shift to another or, rather, we should read a dialogue of the two.

"Let the poet be a useful will." -- thus ran the *ars poetica* of rebellion rhetorized in the closing poem of *Satan's Masterpieces*³⁵. Could it happen, in the last analysis, that just this particular poem would become the stumbling point of this poetry? A poem which, judged by its contents, was apparently a socialist program piece through which Szabó declared his resolution to dispense with the opposites of the egoist's and the popular tribune's attitudes polarized in the period of *Satan's Masterpieces*; and in which he returned, as if to a part of his program, to traditional rhetoric? Was it not the poem entitled *Leader* that was labeled for decades not only as a political but also as a kind of poetical defeat in radically different political canons? In the program piece mentioned above the *Dichter*-Messiah formula is defined, prior to the soliloquy of the *Leader*, already with the perceptualization of its inherent contradiction and a detachment from the identification. Furthermore, the poet assumes the position of a contemplative outsider.³⁶

³⁵ The poem was published in the liberal daily *Magyarország* on 1 May 1926, under the title *A költő éljen a földön* [The Poet Should Live on the Earth]. He did not include it in *Selected Poems* in 1934, only revised it for the *Collected Poems* under the title *A költő és a Földiek* [The Poet and the Natives].

³⁶ It is another example of how biography is related to text in the work of Lőrinc Szabó: the individual anxious about his career wishes to make use of the two cited poems as political alibi in different historical situations. The publication of *Leader* in the 1938 volume may have meant a kind of reference to the poetic anticipation of victorious leaders for the period. In his

The fact that he put this piece to paper reveals the entanglement of his poetry in thematic contradictions irresolvable in traditional discourse. Traditional discourse would imply a decline, both poetical and philosophical, and project forward the death of poetry. This was the case in 1929, when he could not produce a single book of poetry and remained silent as a poet. Or the solution was a reconsideration of the poetic production of the years 1927--1928 (when *Leader* was conceived) and gave free rein to his poetical pre-sentiments. He followed this line from 1930. If for a full decade earlier he was unaware of the simultaneous realization in his poetical practice of the principles of didactic and self-contained art -- historically distinctive terms in Crocean aesthetics --, now he was fully aware that he arrived at a point where all that remained was the articulation of the paradox. Earlier all this appeared only as an uncertainty of poetics in the scintillation of classicization and the selective application of avant-garde motifs, and in a grotesquely dual polarity to evade a non ambiguous attitude.

And if the poet wanted to be "useful will", he should take up arms with a true hope of a change. But in practice it was his helpless situation with which he had to come to terms. A liberal newspaper, *Pesti Napló* published *Tízezer magyar gyermek* [Ten Thousand Hungarian Children] on 17 April 1927, a poem with the well defined message of a political columnist. The poetical experience is risky as the poem employs the structure, poetical syntax, and argumentative rhetoric of *Satan's Masterpieces* but with the versifier's ordinary embellishments. This would guide the poet, following the traditional road, to poetizing achievements instead of true poetry. At the same time, the poem is headed, outside the body-text of the poem, by a tense epigraph, an anticipation of the position characteristic of the poet's future poetical discourse, at once rebellious and impotent. Here it implies a counterpoint to the poem as a whole characterized by the quasi-Marxist terminology of the poetical diction of contemporary leftist expressionism:

A: horrible. Yet do not bother, it cannot be helped.

B: Cannot be helped? But it is even more horrible!

persecution which followed he thought it advisable to include the poem *The Poet and the Natives* in his *Collected Poems* (1934) and after the war in the volume *Cricket Music* (1947), his biographical meditations, because the use of social-historical themes in poetry was a political requirement of the age. Yet in both cases the *poet* deteriorated the conditions of defence or self-positioning. In the case of *Leader* the revision made the contradictions of the old version more emphatic by the new poetical formation; the other poem is, as No. 264 in *Cricket Music* with the title *The Poet and the Natives*, put it in inverted commas, thus stating that 'I am out'. This he admitted later in *Poem and Reality*. "The whole poem is put in inverted commas to signal my distance from the "I" of 1926, the speaker in the poem, belonging to the period of *Satan's Masterpieces*. [...] The poem follows the intellectual line of the *ars poetica* in *Satan's Masterpieces*". (*Vers és valóság*, vol. 2, 441--442).

The poetical contradiction of the two utterances betrays not only the impossibility of the situation of the office-holding youthful male protagonist but also the poet's, i. e. the narrator's helplessness. Two kinds of despair are opposed: one derived from the irresolvable social conditions in the story and the other from the poetical trap of the poet. Yet despair, as such, turns into the constitutive theme of the poem, implying how impossible it would be to elaborate the story and reach conclusive aesthetic perfection. This leads to a closing image alien to Lőrinc Szabó's style but familiar in the poetry of Attila József, who in the last phase of his life was exposed to the imminent threat of mental disorder. His poem, *Nagyon fáj* [Aching Acutely] presents a similar confrontation with the universe of the irresolvable. In the poem by Lőrinc Szabó the dead end is signaled by a scream:

Like a dumb madman locked up,
Who only rages and finds no door:
A new, savage, beastly scream
Running and barking in his chest.

Glancing back from 1938, at the time of writing a new version of the poem *Leader*, the poet seemed to be aware that he had already found his own genuine way of creation, different from the solution of accumulating contradictions simply by the principle of "usefulness", i. e. acting merely as a politician in poetry. Instead of humility this recognition required a kind of *luck* or a kind of unpredictability, "Help me you luck too!" ["Segíts te is, szerencse!"]. Yet it is fortune, or luck, the force that he appeals to for help, which is referred to simply in the sense of *credo quia absurdum* in the 1928 version of *Leader*. He was aware of the tension and instinctively felt he had to break out of its capture to make his poetry new.

I will try to separate the claim of the ego from the dictator-like persona and search for the textual articulation of the hero of *the struggle for the renewal of the poetics*:

The goal is me, the goal is myself
And something that even I do not understand,
Since it uses me like
I use the others, yet as long as my instinct
And luck do not deceive me, this goal I
Possess in advance.

The poet knows that his poetry anticipates an action, the goal of which is already integrated in the poem ("this goal I possess in advance").

The span grew great but he was able to grasp it only in the final version of 1938. There a call for help is heard from the poem, something alien from the lyrical work of Lőrinc Szabó. Now he is enabled to name it, since he has excluded it from his poem as an alien element; it was potentially present in the original too and he used it in a predated way (emphasizing the date of 1928 even in 1938). "Greatest humility, you, greatest faith, help me!" This fixes an earlier state whose poetical-philosophical certainty, looked at from the horizon of his new knowledge, can give an explanation for the rhetorical-poetical situation that both prepared and incited the change.

By 1938 the poet had learnt that the changed form, latent in the old one, can be carved out of it. But at the time of writing the 1938 version he was already aware that in 1928 he did not have the "luck" of discovery. I would add that it was perhaps the uncertainty factor which compelled him to take the risk and licit out for *himself* the creation of truly great poetry, dispensing with the certainty of 19th century traditions. (The physical-mathematical law was a fresh discovery: Heisenberg's defence of his thesis coincided with the writing of the poem *Leader*.)

Was it by luck? Or was it by chance? It was a philosopher who taught Lőrinc Szabó in 1928--1938 to reject the rhetorical structures of the previous decade. Looking back from the 1938 horizon of his poetry he was conscious of the fact that the simple continuation of that kind of poetics led to a loss of poetic value. His poetry developed toward an opposition to its earlier elements by setting up a dialogue between them. And this change is more than a condition for the evolution of one kind of poetic achievement. It means a philosophically supported and reinforced, and poetically exposable change, a paradigmatic change rendering special historical significance to Lőrinc Szabó's achievement in the history of poetry.

Poetical ideas for the resolution of the paradox. A change came about which, one way or another, characterized the whole lyrical production of the period. Each poet is of course idiosyncratic and cannot be described simply by the determinant features of an age. Nevertheless, beyond the biographical, stylistic and poetical elements considered so far, I had to find the specificity responsible for the reason and the timing of the change. For a long time I was unable to detect what made him conscious of it and why exactly in that period.

Right at that time Gyula Juhász, a fellow poet, senior to Lőrinc Szabó, happened to exert on him a brief but intensive influence. The immediate source was not he as a poet, but as a human being suffering from a serious case of

neurosis. The malady was treated in several very different sanatoria, including the expensive Siesta and the more economic Schwartzer. The Siesta was in the vicinity of the new home of Lőrinc Szabó and his family on Németvölgyi Road in Budapest. Lőrinc Szabó visited Juhász in the Siesta perhaps because he knew the place well -- his wife had been a convalescent there after an attempted suicide. The two poets walked to a nearby churchyard to visit the grave of their friend, the poet Árpád Tóth. In his essay on Gyula Juhász, Lőrinc Szabó recalled the following image of him, "On my first visit I had a major conflict with his obstinacy. After a quarter of an hour of embarrassment and shock I felt the pressure of responsibility and shame [...] Cannot I help then? [...] His darkness affected me like a fast spreading epidemic. His pain aroused all my decadent inclinations. At once I was filled with hatred for the whole universe, the mysterious governors of life who crammed so much suffering, darkness and despair into this small unit of the infinite substance so much like me. I rebelled against sky and earth, the horror and hopelessness of the moment must have given convincing words into my mouth, and the assumed pain lent a convincing ring to my voice. Quietly and darkly, in a tormented and incoherent manner I started to condemn and abuse life. I identified myself with the patient, declared his gloom justified, so as if to irritate him. Take revenge on our tormentor by ignoring it! Begin to watch the worms of horror and tell them what I usually say to suffering, if unavoidable. sSay to it »you do not hurt but interest me«! I used the principle of non-resistance, making his vantage point my own. Half an hour passed, then one whole hour. I outlined a psychic technique, improvised a method, enlarged my similar pains and glorified my favorite spiritual exercise, the Buddhist self-redemption: the acceptance and annihilation of pain. I invented frightening things about myself to exemplify the cruelty and vileness of life, part of which did not even had to be invented. I entrusted him with great secrets, I dared to do this »since he is mad«. I have no idea where the boundary between reality and hypnotising inspiration lay. I painted a blacker night on the blackness of his night, and I completely unmasked« all delusions. I felt that all along I was, in essence, telling him the truth"³⁷.

This therapy coincided with the poetic method applied in *You and the World*. The "collaboration" with the mad poet helped Lőrinc Szabó develop a method to organize the earlier rebellious protestations into a unified whole. The struggle between actor and spectator is equivalent to Lőrinc Szabó's dramatic play for the soul of Gyula Juhász. The therapy played out a kind of drama that evoked its "dramatic mirror image" or a "mise en abyme" in the poetry of Lőrinc Szabó.

The philanthropic activity enriched the experimental arsenal of the poet and helped him solve problems that intrigued him. What constituted only a few painfully clear moments for one of them on a road to darkness saved the other

³⁷ Lőrinc Szabó, *Könyvek és emberek az életemben*, 382--383.

from the silence of death and the silence of his poetry. And this intellectual construction implied the rearrangement of the yield of the poet's decade of rebellion, that of the self-created tradition leading up to that point. Poems from *Caliban!* to *Satan's Masterpieces*, plus the poems of the 1927--1928 period, created a poetic world intent to explode the world, while testifying to the impossibility of the task. Dostoyevsky's novel, *The Youngster*, which attracted attention only long after its publication, may be mentioned as an example of this kind of rebellion. Lőrinc Szabó wrote about it appreciatively in 1921 when it was published in the translation of Zoltán Trócsányi.

"The three volume novel, a major work by Dostoyevsky frames by a complex almost inextricable plot the single fanatically cultivated idea of a youngster immensely aware of the power of money. The youngster wishes to become as rich as Rotschild. His whole life is a struggle against being looked down for the illegitimacy of his birth, and he knows that once he is the possessor of money, he will be treated with reverence by everyone. The source of this idea is not selfishness: the youngster is an embodiment of unselfishness, for him money is a means and not a goal. Indeed, what he needs is not money and power but what is obtainable by them: the solitary and quiet awareness of strength. The ultimate goal is independence; and once he had reached it he may as well distribute his wealth among the people and choose to wear an old coat, carry a tattered umbrella and accept the last place in the line behind other people. [...] Though his behavior is awkward, the youngster's mind and his sense of reality are sounder than Raskolnykov's, the anarchist distorted by his own idea. The youngster is an inexperienced greenhorn whose plan is bound to fail: he remains a wretched fellow throughout, and at the end of the novel he disappears so that the reader should never learn what has become of him".

This review by Lőrinc Szabó (in *Pesti Napló* 6 November 1921) could stand for the structure of any of his poems from *Earth, Forest, God* to *Satan's Masterpieces*. His closing remark anticipates the paradox of the dialogical discourse: "Reading this novel is an experience of magnificent suffering". From this trap-like situation a straight road runs back to the source of the inspiration of the novel, to *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* by Max Stirner.

The resolution of the paradox: Stirner enters the discourse. It was by accident that the poet learnt that the problems he wrestled with for a whole decade had received formulation in nineteenth-century philosophy. The idea he perceptualized as a need to separate ego and history, a contradiction underlying

the poem *Leader*³⁸, he found in the preface to Stirner's³⁹ work *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*⁴⁰:

"Aber seht doch jenen Sultan an, der für »die Seinen« so liebevoll sorgt. Ist er nicht die pure Uneigennützigkeit selber und opfert er sich nicht stündlich für die Seinen? Ja wohl, für »die Seinen«. Versuch' es einmal und zeige Dich nicht als der Seine, sondern als der Deine: Du wirst dafür, daß Du seinem Egoismus dich entzogst, in den Kerker wandern. Der Sultan hat seine Sache auf Nichts, als auf sich gestellt: er ist alles in allem, ist sich der Einzige und duldet keinen, der es wagte, nicht einer der »Seinen« zu sein."⁴¹

And the same idea is articulated in Stirner's text through the personification of God, motherland, freedom, love, law and liberalism -- he turns against all that would relate his individuality to something communal or make him part of a corporate system. Lőrinc Szabó's way of putting the question is such that the answer is bound to sound like this, "If I'm the understanding one, / where does that leave me, pray? (*Dream of the One*)⁴²

As a philosopher Stirner may be considered to be an eccentric, episodic figure, and as a deviser of political programs he is thought to justify extreme tyranny like that of Nero or Caligula. *Poetically*, however, in this particular case

³⁸ The fact that in 1928 he was not yet familiar with Stirner's style of discourse could be demonstrated by two phrases quoted in the rewritten version of *Leader*, the presence of which refers back to the *past* of Lőrinc Szabó's poetry. "Humility" and "faith" have become negative key words in the kind of discourse which can be associated with Stirner, they are connected with history ("future") in *Dreams of the One*, but refused as meaningless: "What am I waiting for so humbly here, to glimpse what future times will do?" By 1938 these concepts became dialogical with a distancing effect (the kind of discourse associated with Stirner), but they constituted a kind of poetic "celebration", suggesting the classicization of the dialogical paradigm of poetics. They could not be present in the first 1928 version of the poem because at that time the two phrases had no philosophical or poetic meaning for the poet yet.

³⁹ Beginning with the monographic study of György Rába (1972) literary historians interpret Lőrinc Szabó's poetic turn in terms of Bertrand Russell's philosophical ideas. These interpretations are based on a late retrospective piece of writing by Lőrinc Szabó in which he claimed that in his recent poetical transformation real *reassurance* came for him from Russell's philosophy ("You are all right, you are *one possible world*, young man.", in Béla Köhalmi, *Az új könyvek könyve* [The Book of New Books] (Gergely R. Publ., Budapest 1937) 305. But there the poet justifies something retrospectively. He kept silent about Stirner throughout his life, deliberately or simply as a case of amnesia. The philosopher is mentioned first in the posthumous *Poem and Reality*, in relation to the poem *Dream of the One* (*Vers és valóság*. vol. 1, 339). The first emphatic reference to the influence of Stirner I heard from László Baránszky-Jób.

⁴⁰ The edition I use is Max Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, Reclam, Leipzig [1892], 13--14. I quote the German text from this edition. English translation: Max Stirner, *The Ego and his Own*, edited and introduced by John Carroll, Harper and Row, New York, 1971.

⁴¹ Max Stirner: *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, 13--14.

⁴² Published in *Pesti Napló* 15 March, 1931. Translated by Zsuzsanna Ozsváth and Frederick Truner. In: *The Hungarian Quarterly* Vol. 41, Autumn 2000. 35.

he exerted a liberating influence on Lőrinc Szabó. His influence would qualify also as a kind of intertextuality. It provided the poet with a model he hallmarked later with Russell's name. The individual considered as "a possible world," instead of being forced to follow one route as a single possibility, be persuaded of its inevitable necessity, and be supported in the establishment of this one possible world by thoughts, words and deeds. It meant wholesale intellectual inspiration; it orchestrated the poet's mode of speech; it became textualized in the process of creation and in its rhetoric, and eventually it evoked poems (some of his best indeed, e. g. *Everything for Nothing* or *Dream of the One*).

As to thematics, Stirner convinced the poet that atheism presents no alternative to Christianity or to faith in general, liberalism to conservatism, anarchy to the state, revolution to exploitation, freedom to subjection, independence to national subjugation, law to dispossession and cosmopolitanism to patriotism. All types of rebellion or commitment involve only another new bondage. The very bourgeois virtues entail dependence.

Lajos Fülep, a friend of György Lukács, an aesthetician himself in early twentieth century and co-editor of the journal *Szellem* [Spirit] drew this conclusion,⁴³

"Stirner's egoism equals the discovery of the self, the total liberation of the self from all fixed ideas; now it is time for the individual to consider one's needs. Stirner's egoism -- with a certain degree of conformism -- means that everything is consciously related to the self and not to God, humanity, faith, justice, society etc. The self is certainly not related to these ideas because it is their creator and is, accordingly, free to deal with them while they cannot do anything to him. He intends to do away once and for all with the fatigue with which we replace old pieties, ideas, truths with new ones that have the same relative value as their elders, just in order to provide new idols to be served. He made up his mind to put a full stop at the end of the infinitely extensible sentence composed of mere ideas. The full stop is -- I, myself. [...] With Stirner there is an end to the struggle for ourselves against all possible phantoms: the ego has found itself through the succession of millennia, it does not want to possess anything but itself, i. e. what belongs to it. Stirner's ethical scepticism and subjective idealism are equally hostile to all kinds of morals, state, society, socialism and liberalism. The object of this philosophy is the limitless freedom of the individual to will and act in the face of all doctrines, binding forms, oppression [...] Real human beings do not live in future, as an object of one's desire, but here and now [...] According to Stirner one is perfect in every minute, and there is no way to increase this perfection. In every minute I am what I can be and it is unnecessary to be more than that. [...] Man is born into a certain

⁴³ Lajos Fülep: *Stirner*, in the journal *Szerda*. Republished in Lajos Fülep, *Egybegyűjtött írások* [Collected Writings], vol. 1. MTA, Publications of the Art History Research Group, Budapest 1988. 312--323.

system of bonds detrimental to his unlimited freedom and egoism; nevertheless, the »Unique« destroys the bonds, nightmares, self-created prisons, whatever their names are: society, nation, state, family, marriage, anything. Take what you need -- this implies the struggle of all against all. Stirner's »Krieg aller gegen alle« should not be identified with Nietzsche's »Wille zur Macht«. The fight in Stirner is for “*my self*” and all that is mine, and I can assimilate this in what I fight for among humans; the end is in myself, it is myself, the creator of »Macht«. [...] This »I«, the creative I, is also, at the same time, a possessor of the spiritual and visible world, nature and history. Everything is the creation of the »I« who, as perfection itself, is the measure of all. [...] Freedom is complete if it has Power; the individual ceases to be a free person becoming a »Possessor«. [...] Fichte traces all this back to the infinite I, the »pure I«, the Ichheit; Stirner builds on the limited I with which all comes to its end.”⁴⁴

This is you, this body which
Like a saintly fencing
Is guarding you forever;
And remember: only once!
Only now! Only here! and
Nowhere ever again!

Never! -- mark this.
Only now! -- do not listen to
The words of madmen.
No matter how wretched
You are, only you are
Master of your life.

Your fight
Is horribly lonely
Among strangers;
Live, if that is good,
Die, should that be better:
You have nothing to do with anyone.

Never! -- You are an exile,
But master, do not forget!
There is nothing outside yourself:
You are the only one

⁴⁴ Lajos Fülep, *Stirner*, op. cit. 314-315, 313, 316, 316, 316-317, 319, 319, 319.

Only once
And lonely like God.

*(You Are the Only One)*⁴⁵

Is it not in us that the world aches,
If it has wounds?

Not myself? Yes! Myself!
All themselves!
Not for myself, for all
Am I mourning over loneliness.
You are yourself, Man, your army,
And the fight is terrible;
Feel repugnant and die, pure heart,
But defend yourself as long as you can!

*(Not Myself?)*⁴⁶

According to Stirner the *I* is nothing and everything:

"Gott und die Menschheit haben ihre Sache auf Nichts gestellt, auf nichts als auf sich. Stelle Ich denn meine Sache gleichfalls auf *Mich*, der Ich so gut wie Gott das Nichts von allem andern, der Ich mein alles, der Ich der Einzige bin. Hat Gott, hat die Menschheit, wie ihr versichert, Gehalt genug in sich, um sich alles in allem zu sein: so spüre Ich, daß es *Mir* noch weit weniger daran fehlen wird, und daß Ich über meine »Leerheit« keine Klage zu führen haben werde. Ich bin nicht Nichts im Sinne der Leerheit, sondern das schöpferische Nichts, das Nichts, aus welchem Ich selbst als Schöpfer alles schaffe."⁴⁷

The poetical consequence was an end to the unresolved duality of classicization and avant-garde, with their inorganic character a disturbance to the discourse of the poem, which due to the contradiction between the poem's rhetoric and poetics resulted in quasi-grotesque thematics. The train of thought gained logic in its utterance and in a few cases of didacticism reads like the text of the philosopher. A fact which separates the poet from being compelled to follow the ethically based "usefulness" principle of manifestation, a burden of

⁴⁵ *Egyetlenegy vagy. Pesti Napló* 28 September 1930.

⁴⁶ *Ne magamat? Pesti Napló* 25 January 1931.

⁴⁷ Max Stirner: *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, op. cit.,14.

the past ever since the Age of Enlightenment. The poem titled *Inscription*⁴⁸ might be an epigraph for Stirner's book, it runs as its concise summary:

Save, save, save!
Appeal to god who
Is tired of his eternal throne, to wobbly
Angels not to tumble,

Nail back the falling star,
Wash the cloud, not let it be dirty,
See evil: nothing is secure:
And yet wish for the ideal:

Oh my soul, how hard! And like an accusation it frightens
That this would be the suitable cross
And epitaph:

"Laugh at this unfortunate, who
even faithless tried to sustain
a divine and dreamed world,
in which all were craving for destruction."

This poetry does not refute humanism, religious faith, patriotism, desire for freedom or love, but protests against the dependence they involve. The poet simply inspires the reader to change his or her attitude, which demands a different kind of discourse. Following Stirner he transforms the co-ordinates of discourse:

"Läßt Du Dir von einem Andern Recht geben, so muß Du nicht minder Dir von ihm Unrecht geben lassen; kommt Dir von ihm die Rechtfertigung und Belohnung, so erwarte auch seine Anklage und Strafe. Dem Rechte geht das Unrecht, der Gesetzlichkeit das *Verbrechen* zur Seite. Was bist Du? -- Du bist ein - *Verbrecher!* [...] Berechtigter oder Unberechtigter -- darauf kommt Mir's nicht an; bin Ich nur *mächtig*, so bin Ich schon von selbst *ermächtigt* und bedarf keiner anderen Ermächtigung oder Berechtigung. Recht -- ist ein Sparren, erteilt von einem Spuk; Macht -- das bin Ich selbst, Ich bin der Mächtige und Eigner der Macht. Recht ist über Mir, ist absolut, und existiert in einem Höheren, als dessen Gnade Mir's zufließt: Recht ist eine Gnadengabe des Richters; Macht und Gewalt existiert nur in Mir, dem Mächtigen und Gewaltigen."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *Felirat. Pesti Napló* 2 March 1930.

⁴⁹ Max Stirner: *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, op. cit., 233, 245.

Lőrinc Szabó:

Court of law? I am one too!
Though all dispute my right,
If here and now and I watch it:
Stars are turning like this!

People, do you dare to judge?
You may know (do you believe so?)
Why all that happened and what could have been
Done or never done by others?

*(Among Stars)*⁵⁰

Where are you, heavenly will?
Nothing is a sin and no-one is a sinner.
My egoism? That is me too!

I crowned myself:
I am king! And a dog! Like you
Who have just heard me.

*(Like You)*⁵¹

*Everything for Nothing*⁵², a most characteristic poem of Lőrinc Szabó, also fits into the horizon opened by Stirner. Fülep's 1906 interpretation of Stirner seems to confirm this assumption. The motifs of the poem are all there, the demand that the lover should be reducible to a component part, or the notion of "denying all the world, to be devoted to my happiness alone". And the source of the basic statement of the poem is also retraceable in Stirner's ideas:

He rules within
Who serves without, whose pleasures crave
Only their own law and origin.⁵³

The article by Fülep explains that "all kinds of love that bind involve dependence. Whoever feels indebted to the object of his love, cherishes a

⁵⁰ *Csillagok közt. Pesti Napló* 6 January 1932.

⁵¹ *Mint ti. Pesti Napló* 25 October 1931.

⁵² *Semmiért egészen. Pesti Napló* 24 May 1931.

⁵³ Translated by Zsuzsanna Ozsváth and Frederick Truner. In *The Hungarian Quarterly* vol. 41. Autumn 2000. 33.

romantic or religious feeling. Love is feeling itself and whoever or whatever I love is my possession; I do not owe anything to my possession, I am under no obligations regarding it as I have no obligations to my eyes; when I protect them I do so in my own interest [...] You are a human being, not different from the food I eat, just as you eat me and use me. We depend on each other, the original state of man is not isolation but life in community. But we should not create society for ourselves so that it should devour us; let us find in each other some substance that we use as our possession. My power is my possession; I can have access to my possession through my power; I *am* my power and thus my own possession. [...] Every truth is dear to me which is *under* me; I do not recognize anything *above* me that I should adjust myself to."⁵⁴

The conclusion of the poem, which almost reverses the whole train of thought, harmonizes with the above interpretation:

And on myself I will prevail
That you forgive my tyranny.⁵⁵

This was written by the poet. And this is how the Hungarian philosopher interpreted Stirner's thought, "I like people with the self-consciousness of egoism; I love them because love makes *me* happy. I love because loving is part of my nature and makes me feel good. [...] When I see someone whom I love suffering, I kiss the furrow of grief off his forehead because it hurts me to see it; I kiss it off for myself; it is my own grief I want to evade"⁵⁶.

The "truth" defining and controlling the individual, -- may it be God, state, motherland, movement, freedom or political party -- is exposed to an unusual light by the passionate argument of the philosopher. He does not deny their existence but revalues them from the horizon of *another viewpoint*. In his passionate argumentation Stirner considered *ghostly* all relational (perhaps also contestable) values that modern man has come to know as a framework of his information.⁵⁷ And the word "ghost" may turn out to be another key metaphor -- from the *Geist* of the Hegelians to Stirner's *Gespenst* that opposes it, and to Marx, who reverses Stirner's metaphor ironically. "Mit den Gespenstern gelangen Wir ins Geisterreich, ins Reich der *Wesen*" -- Stirner begins the chapter *Der Spuk* and returns to the same thought toward the end, "Aber nicht bloß der Mensch, sondern alles spukt. Das höhere Wesen, der Geist, der in allem umgeht, ist zugleich an nichts gebunden, und - »erscheint« nur darin. Gespenst in allen Winkeln!" In contrast with this he is eager to present his own horizon:

⁵⁴ Lajos Fülep, *Stirner*, op. cit. 320--321.

⁵⁵ Loc. cit., 34.

⁵⁶ Lajos Fülep: *Stirner*, op. cit. 320.

⁵⁷ Fülep's expression is "listing arguments [...] is the main strength of Stirner". op. cit. 314. On my part I would term it as his *rhetoric*.

"Wenn Ich Dich hege und pflege, weil Ich Dich lieb habe, weil Mein Herz an Dir Nahrung, Mein Bedürfnis Befriedigung findet, so geschieht es nicht um eines höheren Wesens willen, dessen geheiligter Leib Du bist, nicht darum, weil Ich ein Gespenst, d. h. einen erscheinenden Geist in Dir erblicke, sondern aus egoistischer Lust: Du selbst mit *Deinem* Wesen bist Mir wert, denn Dein Wesen ist kein höheres, ist nicht höher und allgemeiner als Du, ist einzig wie Du selber, weil Du es bist."⁵⁸

Did Marx, the excellent debater, refer perhaps to this by the well-known vision in the *Manifesto*: "A ghost is haunting Europe"?⁵⁹ This would mean that he changed the mode of thought and discourse back to the communal way of thinking and to the external determinants based on the history of the class struggles; from the *ego* back to history. And expressionism, with the absorption of Marxian discourse, employed it as the traditional pedagogical and didactic utterance of poetry.

Lőrinc Szabó did not need Stirner's influence to place the *ego* in the center of his poetry, nor did he need his philosophy to help him perceive to what extent do the bonds of sanctified traditions and pieties disturb the sanctified realization of the *ego* in the discourse of his poetry. He, however, welcomed the philosopher's liberating argumentation and its characteristic rhetorical imperative, "Meine Freiheit wird erst vollkommen, wenn sie meine -- Gewalt ist;"⁶⁰. The poet developed a discourse of his own to match that -- this was the great poetic novelty of the volume *You and the World*. In his poems he always searched out points of intersection at which desire, will, and power worked in accord: and the dreams of the one came true despite the external system of the world.

It's time for me
To liberate myself from all of you,
To loose the bonds, go free.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Max Stirner: *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, op. cit., 51, 54, 54.

⁵⁹ The first line of *The Communist Manifesto* is not only a threat but can be taken as the introduction to an ironic debate of philosophical concepts: Marx returns to the expression *Gespenst* ironically, perhaps in reply to the fact that Stirner refused all social commitment as "Gespenst" and "Spuk": "Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa -- das Gespenst des Kommunismus."

⁶⁰ Max Stirner: *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, op. cit. 196.

⁶¹ Translated by Zsuzsanna Ozsváth and Frederick Truner. In *The Hungarian Quarterly* vol. 41. Autumn 2000. 34.

But where? "Die Eigenheit aber ruft Euch zu Euch selbst zurück, sie spricht: »Komm zu Dir!« [...] Die »Eigenheit« ist eine Wirklichkeit, die *von selbst* gerade so viel Unfreiheit beseitigt, als Euch hinderlich den eigenen Weg versperrt". "»Freiheit lebt nur in dem Reich der Träume!« Dagegen Eigenheit, das ist mein ganzes Wesen und Dasein, das bin Ich selbst. Frei bin Ich von Dem, was Ich *los* bin, Eigner von dem, was Ich in meiner Macht habe oder dessen Ich *mächtig* bin. *Mein Eigen* bin Ich jederzeit und unter allen Umständen, wenn Ich Mich zu haben verstehe und nicht an Andere wegwerfe.[...] *Mein Eigen* aber bleibe Ich."⁶²

In Lőrinc Szabó:

In us, inside, there is no detail and border,
 Nothing is forbidden;
 We are just ourselves, separate solitudes,
 Neither good, nor bad.
 Hide deep, in yourself! There
 Some forlorn, great and free dream
 Is still making itself felt - - - -

 To sea, inside us, back! Only
 There can we be free!

And when? "Warum nun, wenn die Freiheit doch dem Ich zu Liebe erstrebt wird, warum nun nicht das Ich selber zu Anfang, Mitte und Ende wählen? Bin Ich nicht mehr wert als die Freiheit? Bin Ich es nicht, der Ich Mich frei mache, bin Ich nicht das Erste? Auch unfrei, auch in tausend Fesseln geschlagen, bin Ich doch, und Ich bin nicht etwa erst zukünftig und auf Hoffnung vorhanden, wie die Freiheit, sondern Ich bin auch als Verworfenster der Sklaven -- gegenwärtig."⁶³

Lőrinc Szabó:

⁶² Max Stirner: *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, op. cit. 193, 193, 185, 186. István Fried has warned me that a variant of a line by Schiller is latent in the quotation (left unreferred to in the annotated English translation from which the quotation comes). *Dream of the One*, the poem by Lőrinc Szabó, refers back to Schiller's poetic model through Stirner: in the poem titled *Der Antritt des neuen Jahrhunderts* Schiller mentions that inner freedom is opposed to the troubled historical movements of the outer world, "In des Herzens heilig stille Räume/ Mußt du fliehen aus des Lebens Drang:/ Freiheit ist nur in dem Reich der Träume,/ Und das Schöne blüht nur im Gesang." The rhetorically shaped, spatially and morally defined sites of Schiller are transformed into a tragic alternative in Stirner; with Lőrinc Szabó all this takes the shape of a dialogue the parts of which simultaneously presuppose and exclude each other within the personality, setting a spatially and morally defined tragic alternative in the rhetorical articulation.

⁶³ Max Stirner: *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, op. cit., 192.

:

The malevolent magician destroyed
all that was and will be.
I know what is what, and that the great secret
Remains one forever.
New desire, new faith, a banner of new colors?
Plaything, superfluous.

Knowledge is boredom: the new
Is found new only at first,
For a time;
The sun rises in everyone,
And only the twilight
Shows a little of all.

To continue? Work, women? -- So what?
Is it not more than our life
Offers in exchange?
The saving blunder
Is ashamed and does not remain
With us any more!

(Helplessly⁶⁴)

Or, again, in the text of the program poem, *Dreams of the One*:

What am I waiting for so humbly here,
To glimpse what future times will do?
Time's running, and all life is dear,
All that's alive is true.

He who could stand it long since got away⁶⁵

The friend and 'disciple' of Lőrinc Szabó, Attila József is perhaps having a debate with the 'master' when he writes in the poem *Consciousness*:

⁶⁴ *Tehetetlenül*. Published under the title *Meztelen* [Naked] in the journal *Nyugat*, November 16 1930, vol. 2., 675.

⁶⁵ Translated by Zsuzsanna Ozsváth and Frederick Truner. In *The Hungarian Quarterly* vol. 41. Autumn 2000. 34-35.

Only what is not can become a tree,
Only what's yet to come can be a flower.
The things that exist fall into pieces.⁶⁶

He developed this poetic metaphor with a historical awareness, inventing historical perspective for an *objet trouvé*, but in one of his last poems he seems to echo the truth of his master:

Come, my friend, come and look around.
You are working in this world
And compassion is working in you.
You are lying in vain.
Abandon that now, Abandon that now.
Look how the light is waning
With the evening...

The stubble is steeped in blood
And as far as the slope stretches,
It melts into blue. The short grass
Is crying and flagging.
On the happy hillocks
Livid spots are showing softly.
Night is falling.

("Our Poet and His Age")

Perhaps this was the step taken by Attila to reach the state that follows the "redemptive blunder", the present, Gegenwart, which appears in "*Költőnk és kora*" ["Our Poet and His Age"]. This may be the spot where the two poets of the "Age" bend towards each other. Either of them might have written the line, "Time has cured me to be ill". This time Lőrinc Szabó wrote it.

The next phase is a declaration of war on history. The volume *Különbéke* [Separate Peace] was published after *You and the World*. In the poem *Sivatag*⁶⁷ [Desert] the notions of "your joy is a moment" and "your life is a moment" are opposed to the "eternal world" and "all the suffering of the Earth". The expression of comparison echoes Stirner's eternal comparison: "it is worth more". This is not the expression and resolution of philosophical tensions, but

⁶⁶ *Eszmélet*. Translated by John Bátki. In *The Lost Rider: A Bilingual Anthology*. Corvina, Budapest 1997, 299.

⁶⁷ Lőrinc Szabó develops the poem from memories of a journey in Egypt in 1931 for the volume *You and the World*; it was published first in *Pesti Napló* 23 April 1933.

the further program of a poetry just reborn. "Perhaps the poem appears to be a manifestation of egoism at its greatest, but it is the expression of the greatest despair."⁶⁸

By then the poet had assimilated not only Stirner's mode of discourse but also his mode of thought. It was no longer Stirner who made the speeches but the man whose lover is away and his longing for her is a source of inspiration. A man who is no longer aware from what source comes that other voice which pervades the poem. "I do not know, even now, the true meaning and emotional sense of the two lines. Whether it was mocking, bitter, cynical, conformist, encouraging, cruel, frivolous or desperate or what? What could this soul, this experience be like that whispered these lines in reply to my question. A despised, contemptible Sphinx? Or, on the contrary, did it consider me worthy of being told about the most intimate and innermost core of her formidable knowledge? Or perhaps did she lie? And if she lied, did she do so to tease me, or out of wickedness? Or the other way around: out of love, out of pity?"⁶⁹ The text may suggest inspiration by Seneca and Schopenhauer.⁷⁰ Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó finds in it the trace of a poem by Baudelaire⁷¹, and, after all the poem may be a summary of Stirner's influence, as all these concrete influences were extinguished in the poet's consciousness. He is faced with the poem uncomprehending, he dwells merely on the eventuality of the biographical aspects. Then, in harmony with the moment of inspiration, the text appears only as his own. The *poem* is his own indeed. After all, Stirner's attitude, grammar, and text were needed only to shape the existing inner tensions into a poetic system.

From this time on Lőrinc Szabó's poetry, perhaps under Stirner's influence, consciously examines "what there is," the present. Is it *merely* falling apart? Or is there a chance to build something on this presence -- in spite of the fact that it is falling apart? Do the dreams of the one, the preference for the *ego* make available a poetic order that although it accepts decay, is still able to articulate, if only for a contrast, an authentic present? According to Fülep,

⁶⁸ Lőrinc Szabó, *Vers és valóság* [Verse and Reality], vol. 1, 504.

⁶⁹ Lőrinc Szabó, *Egy marék Líbia* [A Handful of Lybia], *Új Idők* July 25 1942. Republished in Lőrinc Szabó *Könyvek és emberek az életben*, 561.

⁷⁰ The text recalls Seneca's gnome cited by Schopenhauer, "...*singulas dies singulas vitas puta* [Sieh jeden einzelnen Tag als ein eigenes Leben an] (*Sen.[eca, epist. 101, 10]*) und diese allein reale Zeit sich so angenehm wie möglich machen." Arthur Schopenhauer *Paränesen und Maximen. A. S. Parerga und Paralipomena: kleine philosophische Schriften*. Erster Band. Zweiter Teilband: »*Aphorismen zur Lebensweisheit*«. Arthur Schopenhauer *Züricher Ausgabe. Werke in zehn Bänden*. Band VIII. detebe-Klassiker. Diogenes Taschenbuch 20428. Diogenes Zürich 1977, 453.

⁷¹ Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó, *Spleen és ideál* [Spleen and Ideal] in *A fordítás és intertextualitás alakzatai* [The figures of translation and intertextuality], edited by Lóránt Kabdebó, Ernő Kulcsár Szabó, Zoltán Kulcsár-Szabó, Anna Menyhért. Anonymus, Budapest 1998, 162--175.

Goethe's line is the choice of Stirner for a motto opening and closing his book is: "Ich hab' Mein' Sach' auf Nichts gestellt." ["I built everything on nothing"]. Or perhaps having gone through hell to purgatory guided by Stirner, Lőrinc Szabó translates it into his own language, building it into one of his program poems⁷²: "that's why I made a separate peace / with nothingness."

⁷² *Különbéke* [Separate Truce] in the Easter issue of *Pesti Napló* in 1933. Two translator poets, István Vas and Dezső Tandori, with whom I checked my observation, found it acceptable.