Discursive Use of Power in Hungarian Cultural Policy during the Kádár Era

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In this article political culture in cultural relations will be examined through the concept of discursive exercise of power. More precisely, the subject of the study is the discursive use of power in the cultural policy of Kádár's Hungary. The cultural policy of Kádár's time was by no means uniform during the era, as there were changes that were connected to the general changes of society and its politics. What remained the same, however, was that the cultural policy was subjected to the general objectives of politics, and that its essential task was to legitimize the power of the state and the party. As culture, and especially literature, was seen to have a significant effect on the ideological atmosphere in society, it was given an almost exaggerated significance during the entire era. As a result, it was kept on a short political leash. The ideology defined the room for cultural and literary policy.[1]

The goal is to examine the conditions of the existence of discourse and connect it to the practical field it is produced and controlled in: the practice of politics. How, to what extent, and on which levels can discourses, in this case especially cultural and art-related discourses, be the objects of political actions, and what type of correlation can they have in relation to the actions?

Michel Foucault has studied the relation of politics to discourse. He is not interested in codes but incidents: why exactly these

events (discursive or others), and what their correlation is to the previous and simultaneous events. Thus, he is trying to find the set of norms defined by certain eras and certain societies.[2]

Discursive use of power is a key concept when one examines how cultural and intellectual policies, which in socialist Hungary were personified in the leading cultural politician György Aczél, were a part of political culture in general. In that case it can be asked how political the culture was, and in what way. Culture was openly part of foreign policy, as in all socialist countries, and, in practice, it was a matter of what was possible and allowed to be said, so that one was able to get for example one's texts published. I will examine the literary life of Kádár's Hungary mainly from this point of view, as it is the most important field of culture and, at the same time, the object of the strongest exercise of power.

All over Eastern Europe, as well as in Hungary, writers have always been assumed to represent the conscience of a nation. Writers, poets and other intellectuals have been expected to cultivate and maintain the national values even at the risk of losing their lives when tyrants have created an unsurmountable gap between rulers and subjects. National revolutions have often been regarded as direct results of the sacrifices made by the intellectuals. In brief, literature in particular has often served as a substitute for politics in this field, and writers and poets have often replaced politicians, who have sometimes been considered tyrannical and corrupted by foreign states. It can be argued that one of the Great Narratives of Hungarian literature has been the writers' mission to lead the people with their prophesies. Especially the so called folk writers (*népi írók*) have been placed into this *vátesz*-role. *Vátesz* means a prophet or an inspired writer, who has even clairvoyant powers. It has been one of the key concepts of the literary discussion in Hungary and an important part of the tradition. The writers themselves have accepted this mission as a given model of a good and useful writer. A writer of this kind has tasks also outside the actual literary world. *Vátesz* is also a politically active writer, who fights for the citizens. The tradition was started by Sándor Pe-

tőfi, who has been a model for later generations. The tradition has been carried on for example by János Arány, Endre Ady, Gyula Illyés and Sándor Csoóri.[3]

In Hungary the establishment created a special system with which it was able to control the discourse. Culture was an integral part of this system of control, and the discourse of culture itself was closely monitored mainly with the help of the 'system of the three T's'. The name comes from the Hungarian words meaning support, toleration and denial (*támogatás, tűrés, tiltás*). The principle was derived from Kádár's well-known slogan, "anyone who is not against us is with us" (1962) and it was officialized in the ninth party conference of MSZMP in 1966. The system was developed by Aczél, who exercised the strongest cultural power in Hungary, and it represents a revealing example of a system that includes discursive use of power. In this article the political culture of cultural policy is exemplified particularly through Aczél's role and the system of the three T's.

It is also a question of language, or rather of discourse, particularly of the ideologies and use of power which are concealed in a language. This discourse deals with the constituting of ideologies of languages. Discourse can be generally defined as an organised and recognisable way to transfer knowledge or information to someone else. It also includes the institutionalized conventions of conversing. In this sense discourse has two dimensions: firstly, what persons say from a certain position and, secondly, which kinds of regularities can be pointed out in their speech. The focus can, for instance, be on what kind of a role public discourse plays in constituting national political cultures.[4] Also questions about language use have often led to political actions; it is, for example, usual to speak about 'politically correct' language use. Does a change in language lead to a change, for example, in attitudes? What is between the language of control (the language the ruling class uses and that helps it to maintain its control of the citizens) and the vernacular? A language serves as the principal means of expression, manipulation and also transformation of power relations and political relations. Likewise, the used form of language itself

has an effect through defining and concretizing concepts that have not perhaps been thoroughly clarified and defined. Language can also be used as a means of supervision in the entire field of social relations.[5] Socialist rhetoric can also be defined as a way to shape the consciousness of the people.

Foucault's approach has come in for criticism, mainly because of a significant limitation: it seems to be more applicable for research on well-defined institutions (medicine, psychiatry) than to finding out how most discourses are limited or what the relations between institutions are.[6] Foucault uses the term 'discourse' to refer both to literal and social conventions without offering any clear indications about where the discourse ends and other social life begins.[7] On the other hand, Foucault does not define his work as a complete philosophical system or general theory, but, as he states:

> All my books... are little tool boxes... if people want to open them, to use this sentence or that idea as a screwdriver or spanner to short-circuit, discredit or smash systems of power, including eventually those from which my books have emerged... so much the better.[8]

I will use some of Foucault's concepts and thoughts in this spirit, as well as some of the useful questions he generated, in order to clarify the political culture of cultural policy in Kádár's Hungary. Discourse, for example, is not a group of signs and texts for Foucault, but "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak".[9] During his genealogical era Foucault was interested especially in what conditions, limits and institutionalizes discursive formations.[10] One example of this use of power linked to discourse is the concept of 'the policy of truth' that Foucault uses. It means the power of the prevailing knowledge, that is to say, the policy which is practised through and with the help of the concept of truth. The concept of truth means the discourses that prevail, for example, in the field of science.[11]

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Thus the truth cannot be found, but every society needs to produce truth and create its own interpretation of it.[12] As to the policy of truth, it is also a case of power status and ruling positions, as well as the practices that ensure the validity of each policy of truth. In the end, in practice, it is also a case of how to strive to raise subjects who agree with certain policies. The institutions and discourses specialized in producing truth and information are vital for the preservation of the power structures, as relying on the produced truth guarantees that the use of power continues. Information manifesting itself as the truth is the object of continuous political disputes and social struggle. Every society has its own truth regimes, its general policies of truth.[13] So, what are the grounds for language change and the models of using language in practice in a social organisation? What types of norms of speaking exist in certain social networks and communities? Which persons and institutions are the most influential when the structure of Foucault's factors is being defined? What are the effects of the structure and the ideologies supporting it?

In Kádár's Hungary the production of truth was mainly entrusted to the intellectuals, especially to the writers. The establishment regarded them as more suitable than the scientists to pass the truth to the people in a way that would produce the best subjects from the viewpoint of the preservation of power. On the other hand, the intellectuals themselves were the objects of the conditioning: consolidation applied to them the same way as to the 'ordinary' people, although at the same time they were the tools of consolidation. Another significant fact is that in Kádár's Hungary the intellectuals had a transmitting role: their task was to transform the values of the establishment to the people with the help of language and discourse.

1 György Aczél – 'Main Censor'
In the following I will discuss the general rules of the cultural system of Kádár's system, especially Aczél's way of using power inside the cultural system; in other words, I will ask the question Foucault generated: "how does power work?"[14] This

way it is possible to see concretely what sort of power produces what and how. One can also ask which individuals, groups or classes have access to a particular type of discourse. How have the relations between discourse, speakers and the audience been institutionalized? How is the battle for the control of discourse between classes, nations, linguistic, cultural and ethnic communities conducted?[15] Or who has the permission to define the limits of the desired discourse?

Cultural power belonged, without a doubt, to Aczél during the whole of the Kádár era. In practice, he was the second in charge in the administration although his official position varied. He, for example, never worked as the Minister of Culture, but as deputy minister. This exemplifies the opaque power contained in Kádár's system: the power and its topmost holders concealed themselves in a complex and ever-changing system, whose inner hierarchy and order relations were extremely difficult to outline. For artists and intellectuals the relationship with the regime practically equalled their (often personal) relationships with Aczél during the whole era. He was a member of the central committee from the beginning of the Kádár era to the end (1956–1989), a member of the Politburo 1970–88, assistant Minister of Culture 1957–67 and the cultural secretary of the Central Committee 1967–74 and 1981–85. After the Second World War Aczél got entangled into the show trial of László Rajk, and he was sentenced to imprisonment in 1949. He was released in 1954 owing to the amnesty following Stalin's death. At first he did not want to return to politics because in his opinion the country was inevitably being forced to choose between Stalinism and Fascism. In addition, the 1956 revolution nourished his nearly paranoid fear of Fascism (he was Jewish), so after the suppression of the revolution he joined Kádár's collaborationist administration supporting the communist dictatorship, which he saw as the only possibility for resisting the Fascist-type restoration.[16]

Kádár's administration immediately started to create a new cultural policy that was meant clearly to stand out from the previous cultural policy led by József Révai in Rákosi's time.

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The leading figure of the new cultural policy was, at first, István Szirmai, who was the chief of the Agitation and Propaganda Section of the Central Committee 1957–59. Over the years till the end of the 1960s the main threat to the ideology was the so called revisionist thinking, and the official approach to the problem was represented by Szirmai and the agit-prop section. Aczél, however, quickly took control of cultural life and soon gained the position of second-in-command in the country's administration. He was practically the absolute authority in cultural and art-related matters all through the era from the mid-sixties. Cultural policy was an extremely important field, because the intellectuals were quite a dangerous group in the sense that they had a key role in shaping public opinion. Aczél, in particular, was responsible for the way the Party treated the most important intellectuals who shaped opinions. The foundations of the new literary policy were laid between the years 1957–1962: it was the time of literary reform, and the boundaries of the later consensus were drawn. The main question of the reform was whether to eliminate the intellectuals who continued to rebel or whether to try to compromise with them. The writers were an especially important group in this matter. From the Foucaultian viewpoint, therefore, the problem was what type of power relation could be achieved between the writers and the regime, so that the consolidation would develop optimally. Aczél had a considerable influence on the main policies, which stated that there would be an attempt to calm down the intellectuals who had played a significant role in the revolution and to get them to accept a compromise instead of terrorizing and silencing them.[17]

The entire administration of cultural policy was personified in Aczél, and literary life, in particular, was under his personal control. Although his dominance was the same as Révai's in the 1950s, Aczél's approach was more pragmatic than dogmatic. He had close personal contact especially with the writers, which was sometimes considered by the party officials to be a dangerous practice. They were afraid that subjective relations would

interfere with the objective solving of aesthetic and ideological problems.[18]

2 The Discursive Use of Power Contained in the System of the Three T's

Aczél's cultural policy was based on various principles. First, he supported the heterogeneity of cultural life (although not pluralism), and secondly, his opinion was that disputes over style could not be solved from the viewpoint of power.[19] My other Foucaultian question handles the limits and forms of *the sayable* (that which is possible to say). What is possible to be talked about? What is the constituted domain of discourse? What type of discourse refers to this or that area of reality (in other words: what is regarded as an object of narrative processing, that is to say, an object of literal formulation)? What did Aczél's "heterogeneity", therefore, mean in terms of cultural activities?

In order to guarantee heterogeneity, Aczél created a categorizing system that enabled more specific defining of what was "non-hostile" and "clearly hostile" literature, and, in addition, possibly a kind of "concept of politically neutral literature". From the late 1950s onwards, Aczél drafted this regulation and censorship system, the so-called 'system of the three T's' that dominated the cultural and literary policy throughout the Kádár era.[20]

The first official comment on literature was Aczél's report "About the state of our literature" (*Az irodalmunk helyzetéről*). The date of publication of the report (6 August 1957) has been called the birthday of the system of the three T's. The report consisted solely of broad definitions of policy, as the country was still in a state of transition. It was announced that writers were expected to represent their political commitment only through their literary works. Otherwise, it was important that the writers clearly expressed their political views on important political matters, such as on the émigré Hungarian writers.[21] The most important section of the report, however, was the early formulation of the three T's:

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> In the first place, the Party and the government promotes socialist-realist art. However, it also supports other progressive, realist trends. Furthermore, publicity with due criticism, is granted to such non-realist trends too which are not in contradiction with the People's Democracy. Finally, we reject all attempts to undermine the social or public order of the People's Democracy.[22]*

In September of the same year the strategy of the central committee of MSZMP was published – so far literary life had been practically stagnant. At that time a proper strategy for literary policy did not yet exist, and this document reflects a type of transition period in the birth of Kádárian literary policy. Another early sign of a new approach was the Party pamphlet "Guidelines of cultural policy" (*Művelődéspolitikai irányelvei*), which was published in August 1958. It abandoned the old rhetoric of the arts having a spontaneous need for socialist unity and guiding of the Party by stating that when building a socialist cultural life, the Party did not only allow, but actively promoted, diversity. This decision emphasizes that 'realistic' cannot be a genre, as "it is not possible to solve questions of style by orders/by fiat" (*stílusvitákat nem lehet hatalmi szóval eldönteni*). Additionally, it was stated that the category of tolerated books included works that were not realistic, but that nonetheless were humanistic, which did not threat the social order and were not disruptive. According to the decision, the Party gave these books a chance of being published, but reserved itself a right to "discuss them". The books that were considered to be disruptive were not tolerated: in other words, they

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* "A párt és a kormány elsősorban a szocialista-realista alkotások létrejöttet támogatja, de segítséget ad minden más haladó, realista irányzatnak, s a bírálat jogát fenntartva nyilvánosságot biztosít olyan nem realista irányzatoknak is, amelyek nem állnak szemben ellenségesen a népi demokráciával. Ugyanakkor elutasít minden olyan törekvést, amely a népi demokrácia állami és társadalmi rendjét akarja aláásni."

were banned.[23] The principles of the system of the three T's were already outlined, although not yet perfected. The publishing of the system did not, in fact, take place until 1959.[24]

A view that was meant to be final was published in December 1958, even though a proper unanimity was not reached. The decision was meant to be a step towards literary consolidation and pacification of literary life. Literary policy was, however, still rather disorganised at the time, and the government made several decisions, which were often self-contradictory to some degree. Consolidation in the literary and cultural life meant essentially its de-politicization. The regime also wanted to emphasize that it had learned from the mistakes of the earlier cultural policy (led by Révai) and that the government did not favour any group in particular, but that the foundation of cultural life should be as broad as possible. This has been criticized by saying that whereas the cultural policy of Révai's time suffered from schematism*, Kádárian cultural life was grey, soporific and mediocre.[25] On the other hand, it was ideologically more colourful and politically and ideologically more free. In addition, the artistic production was of better quality than during Rákosi's time, because now, for example, strict adherence to the doctrine of Socialist Realism was not demanded.

The new viewpoint to literature and cultural life gained broader validity after the Party Congress in 1962. That congress is famous because of the slogan "anyone who is not against us, is with us". The outcome of the intensive debates over philosophy, literature, history, religion, etc. is crystallized in the declaration of the 9th Congress:

> We shall give our support to socialist and other humanistic creative works that speak to broad masses, we shall accommodate endeavours that are politically and ideologically inimical, but we

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* Schematism refers to a superficial, photographic realism in arts with stereotyped black and white characters soaked in shallow sentimentalism. It was a consequence of the slavish adaptation of the dogma of the socialist realism. See Lóránt Czigány, The Oxford History of Hungarian Literature. Oxford University Press 1984, 442. [Ed. note]

shall debar from our cultural life all manifestations that are politically inimical, antihumanistic or offend public morals. [26]*

This is the official formulation of the three T's and, at the same time, the culmination of the political neutralisation and consolidation of the intelligentsia, which got its doctrinal form through the system of the three T's. This system was thereby the way in which party policy was converted into practice.[27]

The system of the three T's was, above all, meant for categorizing rather carefully what was possible to say (*the sayable*) and what was not. The categories were not defined by any finalized rules or regulations: they were slackened and tightened depending on the prevailing political situation. Sándor Révész, who wrote the Aczél monograph, refers to this wavering of the rules when he states that the cultural policy of the three T's also contained an unsolved dilemma. It was a part of the basis of the system that the establishment did not by any means tolerate even the "tolerated" works without commenting on them. Instead, it pointed out their shortcomings, thereby attempting to prevent the hidden dangers (against the Socialist System) together with Marxist critique. In addition, as there were no exact, permanent and normative borderlines, the tolerated could change into the prohibited at any time (and *vice versa*). For example, one of the primary duties of an editor was to sense and conform to those changes. In case he did not pay enough attention, the "competent officials" of the Ministry of Culture or the Central Office of the Party, or at the highest level Aczél himself, could intervene.[28] It was not, therefore, possible to know in advance when tolerance would appear in the eyes of the Party leaders as an error in the publishing policy. Both the writers and the officials may have tried to test the boundaries, but the

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* "Támogatásban részesítjük a nagy tömegekhez szóló szocialista és egyéb humanista alkotásokat, helyt adunk a politikailag, eszmeileg nem ellenséges törekvéseknek, viszont kirekesztjük kulturális életünkből a politikailag ellenséges, antihumanista vagy közerkölcsöt sértő megnyilatkozásokat."A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt IX. kongresszusa. Budapest, Kossuth Könyvkiadó 1966, 128.

only one who really knew what was allowed at a certain time was Aczél. In practice, Aczél often decided personally which literary works were to be published and how. The works could also be distributed only in certain circles, semi-officially, without allowing them to be published in the usual manner.[29] Defining *the sayable* was thus an ongoing process, and over the years the line between the first two T's became more and more indistinct and even the third category gradually decreased in significance. What remained constant, however, was a kind of contract between the writers and the government: the writers were not allowed to question the ideological basis of the system (in other words, the one-party system and Hungary's relations with the Soviet Union), but as compensation, they were able to freely express their personal discontent or problems.[30]

In order to be ranked in the category of the "second T" (tolerated), the book had to meet some certain requirements. First of all, the work was not allowed to contain any, even implicit, political critique of the regime. Secondly, in order to ensure political neutrality, it was important that the book did not create any kind of feeling of a "negative atmosphere" in society, not to contain any mention of decadence gnawing at the social fabric. Even the section of society that did not politically support the regime was expected to feel reasonably comfortable under the given circumstances. The goal was that the feeling of comfort would in the end culminate in a "general feeling of well-being". Aczél felt that while trying to estimate the impact of a non-conformist book or poem on its potential intellectual audience, he was assumed to be on safe ground as long as he remained in the field of "realistic" literature. According to Aczél, realistic literature was written in a transparent way and it described social situations that conformed to the prevailing political interpretation (social class differences, poverty, etc.). Thus, the world of modern art was not familiar to him. When he had to act within that world, Aczél tried attentively to estimate how the so-called "negative atmosphere" present in avant-garde works or the artistic representation directed against the feeling of comfort and security would affect the general atmosphere.

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He tended to ban the works on the grounds that they were "alienated" and that "their attitude towards life was not positive". An example of a problematic writer was Miklós Mészöly, who broke the traditions of Hungarian literature consistently enough to arouse suspicion in the party critics right from the start, not only on ideological but also on formal grounds – particularly on the latter. Additionally, Mészöly was an ambiguous writer. All this was problematic from the Marxist viewpoint, and it shut Mészöly out of the prevailing Hungarian literary discourse for a long time, although he was allowed to publish.[31]

As examples of the variable rules one could mention the (temporary) cooling of the atmosphere and the changing categorizations of the writer Tibor Déry. In the beginning of the 1970s the opposition stood up against a "new economic mechanism" that had been launched in the field of economic policy. Cultural policy was also harnessed to suppress the opposition, and a sort of leftist counterattack against the "forces of the petit bourgeois" was agreed upon. Ideological control tightened not only in domestic policy but also in cultural and literary policy. At the same time also the set of rules concerning light reading, detective and adventure stories was tightened, as the leaders of the field of cultural policy thought it was too slack.[32]

The writer Tibor Déry, on the other hand, is a good example not only of the indistinct boundaries of the three T's, but also how essential the naming of '1956' was. Déry was released from prison in 1960, and for several years he was not allowed to publish at all. In 1963 he was issued a passport. At the time he barely fitted the category of tolerated writers, and although during the same year he published his first book since 1945, his request to be permitted to travel to Sweden was refused. However, Déry was allowed to travel to Austria later that year. There he behaved so "gracefully" in a press conference that Aczél himself often referred to it afterwards. The next year, however, Déry's 70th birthday was celebrated only by a few official bulletins, and the magazine *Kortárs* was not allowed to publish an article which was intended to praise the writer. In any event, already in 1971 Déry was among the most sponsored writers.

Among other things, he had a villa in the hills of Buda and a western car – an example of Aczél's benefit system. In the end of the 1970s Déry held a press conference about the film *Szerelem* in the Cannes Film Festival. This film, based on Déry's script, was a big international success. In the press conference Déry stated that what had happened in Hungary in 1956 was a suppressed revolution. This caused problems not only to himself but also to Aczél, who had strongly supported the film. However, even after this Déry was able to publish his books on a regular basis.[33]

The actual naming of the events of 1956 was a significant milestone between the *sayable* and *non-sayable*. It was important to call the year 1956 a counter-revolution, not a revolution, even though it was not until 1972 that Kádár officially stated that "a national tragedy has occurred, which is scientifically defined as a counter-revolution".[34] Also, Heino Nyyssönen mentions "the most significant official authorities on '1956' in Kádár's Hungary, who guarded the 'right' interpretation".[35] Therefore, it can be said that by that time Hungary already had the persons or circles who had the authority to define the meanings to the Hungarian people and at the same time to interpret their history. This matter contains other questions such as the boundaries and forms of the memory and in what way the events of the year 1956 were allowed to be remembered.[*] Nyyssönen writes about the politics of memory during the Kádárian regime. He states that the year 1956 was a taboo in Socialist Hungary. One of the strategies of remembering was the anniversaries. For example, the officials tried to confuse people's memories concerning October 23 to 30. Instead of people remembering the events of the year 1956, the officials put emphasize on November 7th, the day of the Russian Revolution. The aim was to get the public to forget '1956' through prohibition and censorship.[36] In addition, Nyyssönen claims that the revival of the year 1956 was an essential part of the change in the political system at the end

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[*] See also Nyyssönen's article in this volume. [Ed. note]

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of the 1980s. He refers to the epoch-making event in 1989 when Imre Pozsgay commented on the naming of 1956 as a counter-revolution: "It could be considered that it is not true."[37]

3 Silence as a Weapon
If we follow Foucault's line of thoughts on how the conditions for the existence of discourse can be examined, it is interesting to focus on those writers who chose to be silent. Foucault says:

> Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allow-ances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it re-inforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.[38]

Foucault understands power as a relationship. According to an analysis by Martin Kusch he sees that our identities as indi-viduals cannot be separated from the power relations, in which we live and function and that people become subjects through these power relations.[39] What is essential in Foucault's concep-tion of power is that he sees power as an internal relationship, in which relationships shape the participants. He also empha-sizes that the possibility of resistance is always included in power. He presents this idea in a pointed way by claiming that there are no power relations if there is no possibility of resis-tance. Even though the relations can be unequal, power can only be exercised up to the point when those lacking power have the chance to, for instance, commit suicide, flee or kill the former.[40] According to Foucault there are resistance points eve-rywhere in the power network and, moreover, quantitatively, they can only exist in this strategic field of power relations. Thus, each form of resistance is a unique case. There are various forms of resistance such as possible, necessary and unlikely resistance, or spontaneous, wild, guided or violent resistance,

etc. Also the possibilities for resistance vary from the wider to the extremely limited.[41]

In the case of Hungary the writers have exercised several forms of resistance. In 1956 they fought at the barricades in its concrete sense and lost the battle. After that there was a change in the power relations which resulted in a change in the forms of resistance, too. After the events of 1956 there were writers in Hungary who had no other option but silence: they were either imprisoned or silenced in other ways. Nearly every productive writer was an active member in political resistance. They were amongst the finest and most widely read writers, such as Tibor Déry, Gyula Illyés, Gyula Háy, László Németh, Péter Veres, István Örkény, Zoltán Zelk. Only few of the completely non-political writers such as Sándor Weöres, Géza Ottilik, János Pilinszky or Miklós Szentkuthy did not participate. In 1957 writers were even on strike: on 3rd December 1957 the Writers' Union decided that "the Hungarian writers will in all circumstances serve the Hungarian people, and we will not allow our works to be abused by any government or party."[42] Many of those writers who had a choice boycotted the government's new publishing activities by simply refusing to publish. These silent writers could not be persuaded to publish even politically completely neutral poetry. Of those mentioned above, Déry, Háy, and Zalk were silent, for they were imprisoned. Aczél was given the executive power to decide the attitude towards the political resistance. For example, whether the previous active literary elite is to be replaced by Party followers and fiction-producing Party propagandists.[43]

What took Aczél to the highest stage of decision making was the courageous choice he made concerning the matter. He decided to reintegrate the rebelling writers in the official literary life of the regime, at any price. To replace the intellectuals who were either rebelling or regarded as unreliable with more flexible ones was not an unusual solution. One can refer to the elimination of the blossoming and internationally acknowledged art avant-garde of the Soviet Union in the 1920s, or the activities of the Husák regime in Czechoslovakia after 1968. In

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Hungary, however, it was thought that if the rebelling intellectuals were replaced by Party followers, the regime might easily turn the majority of the intelligentsia against them for a long period of time, thus jeopardizing the consolidation. After the uprising the essential problem for the Party was how to break the silence of the writers and in this way get them in an implicit way to acknowledge legitimacy of the regime. This was attempted by no longer emphasizing the dogma of socialist realism as the criterion for publishing.[44]

The form of resistance chosen by some of the writers could be called the "policy of silence". László Németh wrote in his diary: "If there are words or a word, the writing of which is prohibited, let's not write them. The act of not writing can speak for itself, a white blank or a column in the censored newspapers of the First World War. There is no need to write things, but we must write in such a way that the white blanks are there."[45] The rules on what could be said (*the sayable*) already existed even though the system of the three T's was not yet officially formulated. However, as it is essential to differentiate between the verbs "reminding" and "making to forget"[46] it is also essential to distinguish "forcing" from "restricting". On one hand the writers were not allowed to say what they wanted, on the other hand they had to say something: to be more specific, to say such things the regime had defined as *sayable*. By refusing to speak the writers were to some extent able to change the relationship between the power and opposing strategies. With strategies Foucault refers to the means of using power effectively or preserving it.[47]

Because the writers chose the policy of silence as their strategy, Aczél needed to find a strategy with which to break this silence in order to preserve the power with his own system. Aczél performed the task in an exemplary manner: he did not use coercion, but chose seduction which in practice manifested itself as personal relationships and was in fact a kind of dinner table exercise of power. For Aczél had a number of tricks and manipulative devices which he used when trying to bring the key intellectuals closer to the regime. Aczél's method can be

summarized in two terms: the policy of favours and informalization, the latter meaning personal contacts.[48]

It needs to be noticed that power includes the possibility of consent, which can be assessed to be particularly essential in the case of seductive power, even though Foucault places it, as with violence, in principle outside power, but still as one of the possible features of a power relationship. Aczél focused namely on certain key figures in the literary life, whom he assessed to have the power to influence others' opinions as widely as possible. This way he strove to gain a kind of network of trustees among intellectuals, especially the writers. So, Aczél's exercise of power is exactly what Foucault talks about when he states that the mechanisms of power are, in fact, points in which power reaches individuals: power is exercised rather within a social community than from outside one.[49]

4 The Economy of the Culture as a Control System
On a more concrete level controlling the discourse and activities of the intelligentsia were essentially about controlling and manoeuvring the publishing business, where both the number of titles and editions were increasing. Between 1960 and 1985 the volume of printed books and the titles of pamphlets more or less doubled reaching the total of 10,000, while the total volume increased from 53 books per thousand citizens both in 1955 and in 1960 to 98 books per thousand citizens by the year 1984. The result was that in 1970 Hungary rose to the same level as France, Belgium and Bulgaria. Ten years later Hungary was the only socialist country to reach the top third level of book publishing, together with West Germany, Finland and the Netherlands. Even more significant than the quantitative measures was the diminishing role of propaganda, while the work of earlier unknown and banned foreign writers were now more available and at reasonable prices.[50]

However, censorship remained an essential part of the editorial work in the publishing business. There was no office of censor, but the guiding principles were commonly known and the publishers fulfilled an agreement of a kind of self-censorship. In

exchange, the Hungarian Government offered financial security to these "cultural workers". This benefit system was organised in state supported and controlled organisations, such as the Writers' Union, or foundations, such as the Literature Fund, and offered security to the writers who followed the Party policy. The punitive measures consisted of loss of benefits for a certain period of time.[51]

In addition, a characteristic feature in the literary life in Kádár's era was the rehabilitation of popular genres and writers lacking any theoretical or political meaning. One of the writers was György Moldova, who at first gained an enormous readership by daring to choose to write about themes such as Judaism and Communism, which were earlier regarded as taboos. Later Moldova confused his admirers by choosing to write sensational disclosures on various social problems. Also the French Foreign Legion adventure stories by Jenő Rejtő, which were written before the war under the pseudonym P. Howard, were again allowed in book stores in the early sixties.[52]

Rejtő can be regarded as a good example of the actual system of censorship, which had a strong effect on which works were published and which were not. In 1954 the *Kiadói Főigazgatóság* (KF), was founded in order to centralise the administration of publishers. The main agenda was to ascertain that the cultural-political goals remained intact. In reality, it was KF, which executed Aczél's literary policies. The system of the three T's manifested itself in a so-called *ív-ár* -method, according to which a price was set for books on the basis of the number of pages they consisted of. However, the value of a page was tied to its content. This price was based on certain price sheets: the cheapest (0.70 Ft/page) pages were the "Who is who" literature of Hungarian, Soviet and other contemporary People's Democracies. Next on the list came classical works from the countries already mentioned. Even more valuable was the so-called foreign contemporary literature, and the most expensive literature was foreign classical and older literature in general, as well as such literature which was regarded as "light", such as entertainment, detective and crime stories, etc. This system functioned

throughout Kádár's era. Thus, it was far from easy to get Rejtő's detective stories published, or at least it required a large amount of money. On the other hand, socialist Hungary was suffering from shortage of paper, and money could be earned with the help of the popular detective stories. Overall, this is a good example of the complex censorship system functioning in Hungary, even though it was never said out loud that such a system existed.[53]

5 The Failure of Aczél's Power Strategy
Aczél's calming, neutralizing and integrating role lasted until 1968, when along with the Czechoslovakian crisis a new and self-confident generation of writers appeared. Their strategy was to found their own organisations as an opposing forum for the official, politically controlled structures of literary life and beyond. At the same time, they took the first step towards political pluralism by polarizing the field, which so far had been under bureaucratic control. Aczél had no means of coping with the situation, and no routine solutions were available. Thus, his methods did not succeed when he tried to apply them to this new generation of writers.[54]

In his article Subject and Power (1982) Foucault defines power as a ratio of two operators, that is of a to b. This ratio can also be applied to Aczél and the writers. After 1956 there was, on the basis of a compromise, a balance of some kind in the relationship. Both parties had accepted the same rules for their actions. The question was clearly about the relationship, for Aczél could not operate only through the orders given from above, but he needed the writers' approval. In this way power became productive, in a concrete sense, which Foucault, too, stresses in his analyses of power.

At the end of the 1960s there was a change in the relationship between the writers and the regime, and Aczél's seductive power no longer attracted the young writers. On the other hand, it can be mentioned that once more they chose a more active form of resistance by forming nests in the field of power. In addition, they had none of the deep-seated fear of their liter-

ary creativity being jeopardized. Rather than unofficial and personal, they wanted their contacts with the regime to be objective and institutional. The new generation of artists wanted to rank the artists with a hierarchy based purely on artistic merits. They did not want official acknowledgement as the price of having to serve the regime's purposes. They had no intention of legitimizing the power by socializing with Aczél at his 'dinner table' and thereby consolidating the regime. In a Foucaultian sense the resistance of the young writers was opposition to those effects of power which were connected with knowledge, competence and qualification, a battle against the privileges of knowledge. Furthermore, it was opposition to the secrecy and mystification. Foucault also states that it is the forms of resistance which function as some kind of catalysts, which bring the power relations to light, point out their positions and applicability and the methods used.[55] This change that occurred in the power relations resulted in Aczél no longer being regarded as a successful stabilizer in the 1970s. At the end of the 1970s writers were in a growing number turning their backs on the compromise that had been in operation since the end of the 1950s. The writers wanted to treat themes and points of view that had been banned. This led to a new era when, in the beginning of the 1980s, the officials felt obliged to take action against someone or something almost every year, even though the boundaries defining what could be discussed in public were fading and the taboo concepts were shrinking.[56]

At the turn of the decade political opposition emerged again and the means by which the political neutralization had been exercised turned out to be ineffective. The chances of Kádár holding on to his power were at the same time being questioned. Intellectuals' movement, similar to the ones in Czechoslovakia and Poland, collected names for various petitions, published *samizdat* magazines, founded underground publishing houses, organised "counter" universities in private homes and started the national movements. Soon it grew to a general political opposition, the objectives of which were to improve civil rights, to create an economic policy based on a market economy

and political pluralism. The aspirations of the Democratic Opposition were making progress at a similar pace with the movement of the young writers and the two became more and more intertwined. These movements were the vanguard of the alternative movement, and eventually that of the emerging political parties.[57]

In the 1980s Aczél realized that the only way that Kádárism could resist the pressures for normalization was for it to become less oppressive. Neutralization was no longer sufficient, nor were Aczél's methods calming the rebellious intelligentsia. Their isolation, the last effort to keep them under control, was less and less successful. The Kádárian system went through a crisis during the 1980s, with the result that the policy for handling the intelligentsia lost its meaning and function. In addition, Aczél lost his position formally, and he was replaced in the middle of the 1980s. Thus, the situation changed during the 1980s and it can be argued that it was a form of post-modern change, which resulted in a culture and society which was more pluralistic and more difficult, if not impossible, to control totally.[58] However, the question was mostly about changes in the power relations. Foucault says that the idea is not to get rid of the power but to cause shifts within it.[59] Tuija Pulkkinen, for her part, points out that Foucaultian thinking does not attempt to suppress power but to cause transitions in what is caused by the power.[60] The intelligentsia did not submit to Aczél's power, which resulted in a conflict between the regime and the intelligentsia. There were other conditions at this time, too, which made it impossible to use violence.

1980s was the time of transition in Hungary. Bill Lomax (1998) claims that the Hungarian intellectuals during the 1980s were reminiscent of the intellectuals of Victorian England in the sense that they were both elitist. Even though the Hungarian intellectuals had not been that elitist as their Victorian predecessors they were still aware of their superiority. John Stuart Mill, regarded his fellow lights as "persons qualified to govern men's minds". According to Mill, society would develop towards perfection in the event that "the most virtuous and best

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instructed of the nation would acquire ascendancy over the opinions and feelings of the rest". This illustrates the traditional role of the writer as a prophet. On the other hand, Hungarian dissident intellectuals combined in a similar manner a bohemian lifestyle, freethinking and scorn for authorities with self-assured feelings of intellectual superiority, chauvinistic attitudes towards women and patronizing attitudes towards the poor and the less educated. Rather like Mill, the Hungarian intellectual dissidents believed that it were the task of the educated class to civilize a nation. However, they did not have a genuine interest in the other classes' problems, such as those of the workers and peasants. This attitude derived from their own history, the Revolution of 1956 in particular. When naming the year 1956 as a revolution, instead of a counter-revolution, the dissident intellectuals supported the reformist communists more than the workers or street fighters.[61]

Only few of the members of the opposition were brave enough to challenge the dominant position of the elitist cultural ideology, and although a radical plebeian group did exist, it remained small, isolated and marginal. Eventually, the moderate main body of the opposition realized the significance of workers' councils in the events of 1956 and even regretted not taking more interest in them. After 1989 the interpretation of the year 1956 resurfaced to polarize the people with the intellectuals, on the one hand, who mainly identified with the martyr-reformist communists and their programme, and with former proletarian leaders and street fighters, on the other hand, who favoured mostly populist and right-wing radicalism. The situation remained stable even after the change of regime in the sense that the intellectuals remained above the people.[62] This also explains the fact why it was so important for the regime to gain the support of the intellectuals. Perhaps this partly explains why Aczél lost his grip on the intellectuals in the 1980s. Both of the generations of intellectuals, the one after 1956 and the one following that, were, nevertheless, able to cause changes in the power and the power relations in Hungarian society in their own ways.

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6 Conclusion

The political culture of Kádárian – or Aczélian - cultural policy consisted of a strong exercise of power. However, the way in which the power was executed differed from the earlier Rákósian cultural policy. In a Foucaultian sense it was tempting, even seductive. Foucault writes about power relations, in which both the possibility of violence and acceptance is included. In addition, he mentions the chance of violence as a power mechanism of a kind, but he does not see the exercise of power itself as being either violence or acceptance. The question is about the total structure of the functions directed at the possible activities.

Nevertheless, as we discuss the exercise of power it is not either one of the above, but rather for the nature of power to be encouraging, alluring, seductive and complicating as well as facilitating. In its extreme form power prohibits. However, Foucault always sees power as productive: it constitutes new knowledge and new areas of human existence. Violence, in contrast, forces, bends, crushes, destroys and closes doors for possibilities. According to Foucault, when faced with a policy of violence the only possible form of resistance is passivity, which the ruling power can only try to minimize.[63]

Thus, the antithesis of violence can only be passivity. It was also chosen by the Hungarian writers after the suppression of the rebellion in 1956 but soon broken by Aczél with his seductive dinner table method. Aczél counted on these individually tailored privileges as being sufficient to retain the intelligentsia's support for the consolidation of the regime. In a wider sense this practice refers to the technique which helped the Kádárian regime to stay in power. The consolidation of Kádár's power and its consequences have often been called a compromise. A compromise can be defined as a contract between two active parties, even though the power relations were unequal and benefits were only offered to one of the parties. However, in this case only one of the participants, the Party, was active. It offered the writers, the passive participants, the benefits which only the party could impose. The benefits did not result from

the prevailing conditions but they were granted because the Party had the power to grant them. In the literary sphere Aczél attempted to charm most of the important figures and made it seem as if the privileges were granted as a result of the writers' high literary merits. Nevertheless, he also implied that in addition to these merits the writers had to express their loyalty towards the regime in an explicit way to gain any privileges.[64]

As was already mentioned, this method was successful only with the generation active during 1956 and immediately afterwards. The following generation was immune to Aczél's seductive machinery and even to power itself. For instance, Péter Esterházy has declined the role of a literary prophet, or *vátesz*. He says that politics belongs to politicians, not writers. This way, by not accepting power, he at the same time gains a wider sense of freedom of speech. On the other hand, a proportion of the writers still take the prophesy of political influencing as their responsibility. Most visible also in today's political field have been Sándor Csoóri and György Konrád and one should not forget that the first president of the Republic of Hungary was in fact a writer and translator, Árpád Göncz.[65]

In the atmosphere of the three T's the traditional role of Hungarian literature as public resistance, an awareness of the nation and as a substitute for parliament receded. As a general rule it can be said, however, that literary works were not forced into a position of illegal publishing and so the possibility to publish books legally caused some demoralizing self-censorship amongst Hungarian writers. The aim was to get the writers and other artists to say only such things that supported the regime, its values and objectives. This way the cultural policy was to support the Party policies. Culture was a means of propaganda and literature, in particular, manifested the propagandist and instrumental idea of it held by the new political elite. Thus, Hungarian literary discourse was a subject to a substantial execution of power.

At the core of the power relations there is "the stubbornness of will" and "unconditionality of freedom" constantly nourishing them.[66] And however unequal the power relation, there is

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always a chance for resistance, Foucault claims.[67] When examining the relationship between the cultural regime, particularly Aczél, and the intellectuals in a Foucaultian manner in Hungary during the Kádár era, it is easy to say that it is fruitful to regard power as a relationship. It can also be perceived that both the parties of the relationship had an effect on how that relationship functioned: in a Foucaultian sense intellectuals, too, had freedom to influence their own positions and the field of discourse in which they functioned. Exercise of power was clearly discursive, for the limitations and the attempts of restriction were focused namely on what was allowed to be said. Thus, the question was about discursive relationships which always create boundaries for discourse.[68]

NOTES

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[4] See Schieffelin, Bambi B. – Woolard, Kathryn A. – Kroskrity, Paul V. (eds.), Language and Ideologies. Practice and Theory. New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press 1998, 212–213; Dreyfus, Hubert L. & Rabinow, Paul, Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Brighton, The Harvester Press 1982, XX and 48–49; Foucault, Michel (1982a), The Archeology of Knowledge. Transl. by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London, Tavistock 1982, 116–117.

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[10] Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982, 104.

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York, Pantheon 1980; Foucault, Michel (1977), "Truth and Power". In Gordon (ed.), 1980; Kusch, Martin, Foucault. Tiedon kentät ja kerrostumat. Suom. Heini Hakosuo. Oulu, Kustannus Pohjoinen 1994.

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[13] Foucault 1977, 131–133.

[14] Foucault, Michel (1982b), "The Subject and Power". *Critical Inquiry* 8, Summer 1982, 788.

[15] Foucault 1991, 60.

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[22] Editor's translation. Vass – Ságvári 1973, 142.

[23] Ibid., 268.

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[27] Cseh – Kalmár – Pór 1999, 85–86.

[28] Romsics 1999, 393.

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[32] Az MSZMP Központi Bizottságának irányelvei a párt XI. congresszusára. Budapest 1972, 31, quoted in Bart István (2001c), "Világirodalom és könyvkiadás a Kádár-korszakban III". *Kritika* 3/2001.

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[49] Ibid., 75–81, 114; Foucault 1980, 39.

[50] See document "A könyvkiadás, könyvtárügy és könyvterjesztés néhány adata". In Tóth, Gyula (szerk.), Irányított irodalom. A Kiadói Főigazgatóság irataiból 1961–1970. Dokumentumválogatás. Budapest: Alfa Kiadó és Nyomdaüzeme 1992, 107–110; Romsics 1999, 398.

[51] See the case of Tibor Déry described above. See Bácskai, Tamás: The Economics of Culture and the Culture of Economics. *The Hungarian Quarterly* vol. XL, no. 155. Autumn 1999.

[52] Romsics 1999, 392.

[53] Bart 2001a, 6–8; Bart (2001b), "Világirodalom és könyvkiadás a Kádár-korszakban II". *Kritika* 2/2001., 4–6; a document from 1968: 'Tervezet a Kiadói Főigazgatóság vezetőjének rendelkezése a kulturális alappal kapcsolatos egyes kérdésekről', where is the seven point list of the principles on ground of which the KF supports the literal works. In Tóth 1992, 393–396.

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[55] Foucault 1982b, 780–781.

[56] Révész 1997, 163; Romsics 1999, 393.

[57] Révész 1997, 277–279

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[64] Révész 1997, 146-154

[65] See e.g. Mátraházi, Zsuzsa, "A politika olyan, mint a társadalom". Találkozó Eszterházy Péterrel. *Könyvhét*. Kulturális kéthetilap. Február/2001, 5; Blomstedt, Jan, "Unkarilainen 'mutta'. Kirjailijat harrastavat politiikkaa ja pohtivat kansallista identiteettiä". *Helsingin Sanomat* 7.5.1989; Petäjä, Jukka, "Mukkulaan matkaava Péter Eszterházy: poliittinen tilanne on vähentänyt kirjallisuuden merkitystä Unkarissa". *Helsingin Sanomat* 16.6.1991.

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[67] Foucault 1987, 122–123.

[68] Foucault 1982a, 45–46.