

Urban Culture and the Modern City. Hungarian Case Studies. Hrsg. von Ágnes Györke und Tamás Juhász. Leuven University Press. Leuven 2024. 333 S. ISBN 978-9-462-70394-0. (€ 59,50.)

The study of urban culture as reflected in the arts is a relatively recent field of inquiry, and it has brought the interplay between the real and the imaginary across spatial, psychological, and social dimensions of artistic works into clearer focus. While recent scholarship has explored European urban culture, Hungary has received comparatively little attention despite its complex historical and political position. Given this lacuna, Ágnes Györke's and Tamás Juhász's collection of eleven micro-history essays therefore offers a timely and significant contribution to European urban, cultural, and spatial studies. The volume provides a comprehensive introduction to Hungary's cultural and political history over the past 150 years, paying particular attention to Budapest's emergence as a modern metropolis. The editors also situate the individual essays within broader debates on European urban culture.

Hungary's cultural and urban life has been profoundly shaped by major historical transformations: the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the loss of two-thirds of its territory following the First World War, the Communist era, the regime change in 1989, and accession to the European Union in 2004. These events form the backdrop for the individual essays, which not only embed the works under discussion in their political and historical contexts but also offer international readers a nuanced, often self-critical, Hungarian perspective.

The volume is organized into three sections that follow a broadly chronological timeline from the early twentieth century to the present. While six essays focus on literature, others broaden the scope to look at painting, music, political graffiti, and film. Collectively, they address themes such as centrality and peripherality, urban–rural relations, art and ideology, women in modern society, and questions of inclusion and exclusion. A key conceptual thread is “translocality,” which is defined as the dynamic interaction of spaces and places in shaping Hungarian life and thought within and beyond national borders at both the micro and macro levels.

Juhász's “City in the Land: Nationalism, Technology and Celebrity Culture in Gyula Krúdy's *Primadonna*” takes up this framework and traces shifts in Hungarian identity as they appear in Krúdy's portrayal of the life and career of the famous actress Ilka Pálmay in the 1920s. Pálmay's career exemplifies how cosmopolitan Europeanism gave way to patriotism, and later nationalism, in the aftermath of the national trauma brought about by the Treaty of Trianon (1920). Similarly, Györke's “Budapest in Noémi Szécsi's *The Finno-Ugrian Vampire: The Grand and the Peripheral*” analyzes the decline of Budapest's cultural centrality between the Habsburg era and the post-1989 period. Awarded the European Union Prize for Literature in 2009, Szécsi employs supernatural protagonists—a young vampire girl and her 235-year-old grandmother—to juxtapose nostalgic recollections of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with a critical portrayal of post-socialist Budapest. Györke's essay also exemplifies the “third way” approach that was sketched out in the introduction by adopting a perspective that seeks to move beyond polarized ideological debates of left versus right or progressive versus conservative. In the same vein, Ferenc Hörcher's “Small-Town Civility and the Concept of Liberty in Géza Ottlik's *Opus Magnum*” also embraces this method by analyzing *Iskola a határon* [School at the Frontier] (1959). Although Ottlik professed an apolitical stance, Hörcher argues, he became an emblem of intellectual resistance in the latter half of the twentieth century. Ottlik's *Bildungsroman*, set in a military boarding school on the border between Austria and Hungary, dramatizes tensions between civility and ideology. The border location, the boys' liminal position between childhood and adulthood, and the transition from civilian to military life all exemplify the principle of translocality.

A particularly innovative contribution is László Munteán's “Surface Matters: An Archaeology of the Arrow Cross in Budapest's Façades,” which showcases the idiosyn-

cratic method of “plaster archaeology” that was developed by the author. In the first part of his essay, Munteán critiques *Budapest hegei* [The Scars of Budapest], which interprets bullet holes and shrapnel marks on Budapest façades as enduring traces of Hungary’s historical traumas, evoking a sense of “heroic melancholia,” a term coined by Márton Békés, one of the book’s authors. Munteán challenges Békés’ approach, arguing that it evades Hungary’s own historical responsibility. By contrast, Munteán’s essay examines Arrow Cross graffiti from the 1930s and 1940s, providing a detailed account of the Arrow Cross Party—a far-right political formation that grew out of the “racial defence” movement of the 1920s. Thereby, Munteán confronts Hungary’s far-right past and its enduring visibility in the urban fabric.

What renders this volume particularly valuable to historians is its interdisciplinary orientation that expands the study of history through the inclusion of artistic media. Representations of urban spaces in the arts, though often fictionalized, reflect not only the internal dynamics of artistic works but also the wider socio-political realities of the periods in which they are set. While some essays succeed more convincingly than others—Éva Federmayer’s comparative study of two prominent twentieth century female novelists, Margit Kaffka and Magda Szabó, for example, remains largely case-driven, and Árpád Bak’s discussion of memorial sites of the Romani musician János Bihari occasionally overstates political implications—the volume as a whole offers substantial contributions to the cultural history of East Central Europe.

The collection’s value lies in its methodological breadth, showing how artistic representations of urban space can reflect broader socio-political realities. Taken together, the eleven essays convincingly demonstrate that European urban culture cannot be fully understood without engaging with the Hungarian experience—an experience deeply interwoven with that of Western Europe, yet also quite distinct.

Vác

Katalin Palkóné Tabi

A New Organon. Science Studies in Interwar Poland. Hrsg. von Friedrich Cain und Bernhard Kleeberg. (Historische Wissensforschung, Bd. 18.) Verlag Mohr Siebeck. Tübingen 2024. VI, 395 S. ISBN 978-3-16-154315-9. (€ 69,—)

Science Studies im Polen der Zwischenkriegszeit sind ein weitestgehendes Desiderat im Schaffen westlich orientierter Wissen(schaft)shistoriker:innen, die – so spekulieren mehrere Autor:innen des von Friedrich Cain und Bernhard Kleeberg hrsg. Sammelbands – wenn überhaupt, dabei vermutlich vor allem an Ludwik Flecks Werke denken. Allerdings war dieses Feld viel breiter aufgestellt und Fleck weniger zentral als heute antizipiert. Die Hrsg. verfolgen das Ziel, die Soziologie des Wissens der Zwischenkriegszeit zu rekonstruieren. Dabei gehen sie besonders auf die auf dem Buchdeckel als „vergessen“ beschriebene Geschichte des in Warschau ansässigen Koło Naukoznawcze [Wissenschaftskundlicher Arbeitskreis] ein.

Angelegt als Ergänzung bisheriger Studien zur historischen Epistemologie der Wissenschaftsforschung (S. 2) veröffentlichen sie in dem Band erstmals eine Vielzahl der Texte des Koło Naukoznawcze in englischer Übersetzung, um sie einer breiteren Leserschaft zugänglich zu machen. Damit möchten die Hrsg. die Rezeption des Kreises, die sich bislang auf Maria Ossowskas und Stanislaw Ossowskis 1935 veröffentlichten programmatischen Text „The Science of Science“ verengt habe, erweitern. Den Titel „A New Organon“ beziehen die Hrsg. auf die ab 1936 in Warschau erschienene Zeitschrift *Organon*. Die im Auftrag der Wissenschaftsstiftung Kasa Mianowskiego erschienene und an ein internationales Publikum gerichtete Zeitschrift, verstanden ihre Hrsg. als Diskursbeitrag einer „profound renewal of science, its tools, and its utilitarian objective“ (S. 7). In *Organon* wurden zudem polnischsprachige Texte, die bereits ab 1923 in der Schwesterzeitschrift *Nauka Polska* erschienen, erneut auf Englisch oder Französisch veröffentlicht. Knapp 90 Jahre später