

The *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* (1877–1888) from the Perspective of its British Collaborators¹

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Abstract: Within a contemporary Hungarian literary discourse that emphasized national values, the first international journal of comparative literature, *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* (ACLU) proved quite incomprehensible. I therefore argue that ACLU's aims and constant struggles are better understood from the viewpoint of its authors originating from beyond Hungary, such as that held by the English collaborator, E. D. Butler. A librarian at the British Museum whose interest in antiquarianism and orientalism may have fueled his involvement in ACLU's translation projects, Butler can be considered one of the most important channels for propagating Hungarian literature in England. A comparison of Hungarian and English perspectives reveals how differently ACLU'S goals were interpreted, how comparative literature and Hungarian Studies/Hungarology were balanced according to the project proposed by the journal's editors, Meltzl and Brassai. This analysis further examines how this negotiation surrounding the journal's interpretation came to determine the early period of institutional comparative literature. Similarly, the Hungarian and English press's reactions to this project reveal the paradoxical position ACLU occupied; for Hungarians, ACLU was not "Hungarian" enough, while it was precisely this "Hungarianness" that attracted the English. My paper discusses the underlying reasons for this situation by examining how Hungarians, the English and ACLU addressed questions in folklore, Hungarian and comparative literature studies, thereby providing additional insight into the journal's concept of world literature and its anthropological approach.

¹ This essay is based on my undergraduate research completed between 2014–2015 and its rewritten version submitted to the *Erdélyi Tudományos Diákköri Konferencia* ['Transylvanian Student's Scientific Conference'] competition under the title *Hányféle világirodalom? Az első nemzetközi komparatistikai szaklap angolszász anyaga a magyar irodalom érdeke és az angliai perspektíva között* ['How Many World Literatures? The English Material of the First International Journal of Comparative Literature between the Interests of Hungarian Literature and the English Perspective'] in 2016, both coordinated by Dr. T. Szabó Levente PhD., Associate Professor at Babeş–Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, whom I wish to thank for his guidance and advice.



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The case of the first international journal of comparative literature can admittedly be viewed as an obscure curiosity within the field of Hungarian literary history. This circumstance comes as no surprise when it is considered that the concept of world literature proposed by *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok/Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* (ACLU in the following) was quite incomprehensible for the Hungarian literary discourse of the second half of the nineteenth-century. The predominant discourse of the time favored highlighting national values rather than emphasizing an international approach. ACLU, a multilingual literary journal, was published in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg between 1877–1888. Although distributed in a small number of copies, ACLU had amassed throughout the years a large network of collaborators mostly from Europe, but also from locations like Calcutta, Tokyo, Granada, Tunis, etc.

Another reason explaining the journal's difficulty in reaching a mainstream audience stems from misconceptions regarding the journal's vision. In many cases, the ideas held by various collaborators concerning their concept of world literature and its methodology differed from what the journal's editors, Hugo von Meltzl and Sámuel Brassai, actually proposed. Thanks to various negotiations in meaning and the balancing act conducted by Meltzl and Brassai, these misunderstandings are not explicitly apparent on the pages of the ACLU. Nevertheless, these discrepancies and their causes may be revealed through close analysis, leading to new conclusions regarding the position of early comparative literature.

One means of discovering the discrepancies that surrounded what the editors of ACLU envisioned and how the journal was interpreted by its contributors is to compare the general ideas ACLU was founded upon to various, other perspectives concerning the role of world literature and folklore texts. In other words, my aim is to focus on the particular corpus of ACLU while keeping in mind the overall view of how world literature was conceived. Thus, ACLU's attempts to generate a stratified intercultural dialogue as well as its constant struggles toward self-reflection and self-positioning might be better understood against the backgrounds and literary philosophies possessed by its English collaborators. Comparing the Hungarian and English perspectives forming the journal reveals how differently the two sides interpreted the goals of ACLU. As a result, an image emerges detailing the way in which Meltzl and Brassai's project demanded a sort of "balancing act" among the requirements posed by comparative literature, global literary processes and Hungarian Studies/Hungarology. Eventually, their negotiations surrounding meaning played a crucial role in the early life of institutional comparative literature (T. Szabó 2013a: 57).

Many contemporary studies have been engaged in reconstructing the concept of world literature that ACLU proposed. Generally speaking, this concept is seen as an adaptation of

Goethe's *Weltliteratur* (for example Gaal 1975, Fried 2007, Damrosch 2007) as well as an attempt to draw numerous peoples of the world closer to one another through mutual translations. An additional central idea proposed by ACLU concerned how folklore texts carry an inherent literariness that thereby renders them inherently suitable for comparative literary studies (Fried 2012: 66–69). According to Meltzl, from a methodological point of view, a comparative study can be conducted in two ways. First and foremost, a text can be directly analyzed in its original language, hence the principle of "polyglottism." If this is not possible, then an indirect comparison can be conducted via translations. In either case, the object of study was closed form poetry (Gaal 1975: 19–21). As David Damrosch expressed it: "Through his journal, Meltzl was working out a practical mode of comparison on a truly global scale, while at the same time he was creatively negotiating the cultural politics of relations between small and large literary powers." (Damrosch 2013: 18) Dialogue, mediation among critics, writers and readers from various language traditions, negotiation of meaning: these main aspects fueled the sort of comparative literature that can be inferred via the concept of ACLU.

At the same time, the fact must be taken into consideration that these factors were theoretical ideas held by the editors; in practice ACLU's collaborators may have interpreted these ideas differently and according to the intellectual frame provided by their own cultures. It may therefore be unfair for an ulterior analysis to demand the full realization of the principles announced by the journal, or to accuse ACLU of overlooking certain other dilemmas of the age, such as colonization, slavery, or imperialism (see for instance López 2009).

Caught between English and Hungarian Expectations

Throughout the journal's existence, a total of fourteen, British individuals published works in ACLU: James Baynes, Edward Dundas Butler, Nicolas Díaz de Benjumea, Arthur Diósi, Kate Freiligrath-Kroeker, John H. Ingram, Leopold Katscher, E. Les., Friedrich Marc, Theodor Marzials, Frederic Russell, S. Van Straalen, Ralph Whitehead and Helen Zimmern. While some were cosmopolitans, others were Orientalists. Some of these individuals either possessed a dual, cultural background, or were simply interested in translation. Despite their motivation, all present in Great Britain's literary and scientific scene. As such, they were familiar with European movements and transnational phenomena. In relation to ACLU, the most active contributor was E. D. Butler, a key personality who made significant contributions toward the mediation of Hungarian and British culture. In order to consider the intellectual background possessed by ACLU's British collaborators and thus better understand what may have driven individuals such as Butler to co-operate with Meltzl and Brassai's project, a look must first be taken at the position of British social sciences during the second half of the nineteenth century.

At this time, social sciences in Great Britain were defined by a strong anthropological approach that had emerged from the ethnological movements conducted in the first part of the century. By the 1850s, many scholars were keen to collect and record folk traditions and relics. This British folklore movement was actually rooted in an antiquarian tradition that can be traced as far back as the sixteenth century. Antiquarianists not only collected objects regarded as "popular antiquities," but also showed great interest in folk texts (Stocking 1987: 47–71). On the one hand, it can be stated that British anthropology thus emerged from scholars' interest in their own people's folklore. On the other hand, it was also informed by ethnologic concerns regarding the study of other cultures considered by British society as uncivilized or exotic, a perspective also originating from colonialist roots.

ACLU's views on folklore are quite similar to this British anthropological approach, a circumstance that may partially explain English readers' interest in the review. At the same time, it also offers a reason for why the review proved incomprehensible to Hungarian readers. For Hungarians, the study of folklore texts was mainly conducted with the aim of locating and recording proof of their own national values. In his 1881 proposal regarding the formation of a Hungarian folklore society,¹ Meltzl did not turn to any Hungarian source of inspiration, but rather pointed to the model provided by The Folklore Society established in 1878 in London. Meltzl argued for the need to preserve folk traditions while simultaneously announcing that his proposed society had previously existed under the name of "Összehasonlító Irodalmi Társulat" ['Society of Comparative Literature'].

The fact that it was the British model, rather than the example of the Hungarian Academy or the Kisfaludy Society that inspired Meltzl's ideas, is also apparent from a previous description given regarding the activity of The Folklore Society, which likewise focused on preserving "relics of our Popular Fictions and Traditions, Legendary Ballads, Local Proverbial Sayings, Superstitions and Old Customs" as its main aim.² It must be emphasized that this Society was not interested solely in English popular tradition, but believed that familiarizing one's self with the folklore of other peoples would lead to a deeper understanding of one's own culture. This attitude is further indicated by the name of The Folklore Society, which universalizes its geographical area of interest by neglecting to include a locating adjective in its title (Roper 2001: 10–12). Suffice it to say, the characteristics demonstrated by The Folklore Society resulted from anthropological interests common to nineteenth century British social sciences, the main aim of which was to gain knowledge of how colonized peoples thought.

Similar to The Folklore Society, ACLU had as its goal not only the collection of Hungarian popular texts, but was also able to avoid falling into the snare of ethnocentrism. ACLU was thus capable of presenting a twofold perspective achieved through exposing its own people's values while simultaneously showing an anthropological interest in the *other*. However, Meltzl's plans in this area went unacknowledged: when the *Magyar Néprajzi Társaság* ['Hungarian Folklore Society'] was later established in 1889 in Budapest, this society ignored all texts gathered, translations and other results achieved in the field of folklore studies through the work of ACLU. Needless to say, Meltzl did not become a member of the society.³

This turn of events is even more surprising if compared to ACLU's plans regarding the creation of an *Encyclopaedia of the Poetry of the World*, a volume meant to contain folk songs from various cultures (primarily European, but also Asian, American, African and Australian) as well as their translations into some European languages.⁴ Even though this volume was never

¹ *Javaslat egy magyar folklore társulat alapítása ügyében* ['Proposal for the Establishment of a Hungarian Folklore Society'], ACLU 1881, no. XCVII–C, pp. 112–115.

² *The Folk-Lore Society for Collecting and Printing Relics of Popular Antiquities*, London, ACLU 1881, no. LXXXVII & LXXXVIII, pp. 126–128.

³ Nevertheless, the Magyar Néprajzi Társaság ['Hungarian Folklore Society'] acknowledges Meltzl today as the first to propose such an institution in Hungary. <http://www.neprajzitorsasag.hu/?q=bemutatkozas>.

⁴ ACLU 1879, no. LIX, 143–4, and with additions again: 1879, no. LX, pp. 177.

published, a large corpus of texts was gathered in the pages of the journal (*Symmikta* heading). If this corpus had ever been taken into account, it would have formed a great basis for further study. Thus the exclusion of Meltzl and the ACLU from the Hungarian Folklore Society might signal that Meltzl's ideas of folklore were seen to belong to a totally different paradigm, one alien to the sphere of *national* folklore studies. This difference in intent and aim, however, can only become explicit through an ulterior perspective.

In addition to its different approach to studying folklore and interpretation concerning the aims of folklore studies, other activities conducted by ACLU proved just as incomprehensible within the context of mainstream Hungarian discourse. This circumstance implies that Hungarians possessed a sort of concept or expectation regarding the study of world literature. Hungarian press initially welcomed ACLU, showering it with high praise while expressing the hope that the journal would encourage international discourse about Hungarian literature (T. Szabó 2013a: 52). Hungarian readers therefore expected the same spirit of self-vindication and ethical approach taken by the *Litterarische Berichte aus Ungarn* (1877–1880), edited by Pál Hunfalvy, and its successor, the *Ungarische Revue* (1881–1885). More importantly, both journals naturally enjoyed the support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (T. Szabó 2013a: 52–53). Another example of a review supported by central, Hungarian institutions can be found in the *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny* (1877) ['Universal Philology Gazette'], edited by Gusztáv Heinrich. (Fried 2012: 65–68) As it gradually became obvious that ACLU's editors possessed a broader and more inclusive vision regarding the interests of Hungarian literature, increasingly unfavorable voices emerged in the journal's reception. While ACLU's more comparative approach earned the disapproval of supporters for the first two journals, in comparison to Heinrich's strictly erudite and philological review ACLU appeared as something more spontaneous and concept-driven. These journals all represented different interpretations of erudition; for ACLU's contemporaries, only one version seemed to have been deemed acceptable.

ACLU based its concept on a flexible, in-between position balancing Hungarology with global literary processes, an approach that led to some conflicts. The editors were constantly forced to confront stereotypes projected upon the review by both the Hungarian and the international press, stereotypes that resulted from different expectations concerning the journal or simplified interpretations of its aims and principles. While this type of misunderstanding was especially characteristic of the first two years in the journal's existence, the manner in which ACLU self-positioned itself in its new, 1879 volume also proved problematic. Short citations and editorial commentaries that reflect on the reactions made by the Hungarian and the English press can be found in the ACLU (*Szemle* ['Review'], *Bibliography* and *Correspondence* headings), and represent important gestures of self-reflection. These texts can be seen as a sort of self-legitimation embedded in a complicated process of negotiation over the journal's meaning and are therefore essential for gaining an insight into the concepts surrounding ACLU. At the same time, these citations and commentaries also mark the key points where the expectations held by the journal's Hungarian and English recipients collided.

ACLU had to struggle against the dissatisfaction expressed by a large portion of the Hungarian press. For this majority, the principle of "polyglottism" was incomprehensible and resulted in the criticism that the journal lacked enough texts in Hungarian. Meanwhile, the journal's attempted aim was to offer an alternative in comparative literature, one which would harmonize the interests and values of a national culture with a world literary perspective. As such, it would thus provide

attempts for a new understanding of the national and the international, a new understanding that does not wish to conceal the nation or the national, but acknowledges that embedding the national into transnational processes while comparing different national literatures within their original linguistic context may lead to new opportunities for easing those political and social tensions...which have burdened, disturbed, or annoyed the editors of the journal, too.⁵ (T. Szabó 2014: 551–552)

[*a nemzet és a nemzetközi olyan újraértései kísérleteit, amely nem kívánja eltüntetni a nemzetet vagy a nemzetit, de tudatosítja azt, hogy a nemzetinek a transznacionális folyamatokba való beágyazása és a különféle nemzeti irodalmi jellegnek az eredeti nyelvi környezetet tekintetbe vevő összehasonlítása új esélyt adhat azoknak a politikai és társadalmi feszültségeknek...az oldására is, amelyek annyira nyomasztották, zavarták vagy bosszantották a lap szerkesztőit is.*]

For the editors, their approach—which also happened to destabilize the nationalist interpretation of literature—evolved organically from the specific linguistic and cultural context that for them constituted a daily experience (see further T. Szabó 2015). This innovation seemed too stratified or complicated not only for the Hungarian press, but for the British press as well, since every short commentary to which the editors reacted discussed ACLU from a simplified standpoint. From the Hungarian vantage point, ACLU was seen as a failure to integrate within the national discourse, a view that provided a strong source of frustration for Meltzl and Brassai. From England, on the other hand, critical remarks were appreciative, such as the following one published in *The Academy*. According to this journal, ACLU's existence fulfilled some needs in the field of literary studies, an opinion that was eagerly quoted in ACLU:

With the last number the *Összehasonlító irodalomtörténelmi Lapok* closes its first series. A want of some vehicle for comparative literature has been long felt, and this enterprising periodical has now rallied a large force of contributors in most of the European languages, and their subdialects. The last numbers have greatly increased in bulk, and have contained many interesting comparisons of folk-lore (ACLU 1877: 295-296)

Another example of how the ACLU was greeted and interpreted in Great Britain can be found in *The Atheneum*'s announcement of the new enterprise:

‘Összehasonlító irodalomtörténelmi’ (sic!) ‘lapok is the title of a periodical for the comparative study of the literatures of different nations, edited by Profs. Brassai and Meltzl, in Clausenburg, Transylvania. It is to be in Hungarian, but will also

⁵ All translations are by the author.

contain contributions in any of the European Cultursprachen. One of the principal aims of the new paper is to convey information on the current literature of Hungary to foreigners, and, vice versa, of foreign works, chiefly of those that bear in some way or other on Hungarian subjects, to native readers (ACLU 1877: 128).

With its emphasis on the Hungarian topics contained in ACLU, the passage above perceives the journal as something primarily "Hungarian," and thereby possessing aims that would correspond to fields such as Hungarian Studies. The paradox that arises from this dual interpretation is that for Hungarians the review was not "Hungarian" enough, as may be inferred from ACLU's resentful reply to another Hungarian journal, the *Fővárosi Lapok* ['Metropolitan Papers']:

In one of their June issues, the esteemed editor (Mr. Vadnai) of the *Fővárosi Lapok* ['Capital Papers'] deems there to be nothing else mentionable about our review other than the laconic statistics, according to which our first volume contains: 14 Hungarian, 40 German, 2 French, 8 English, 6 Italian, 2 Spanish articles. It should be noticed by the esteemed editorial staff so eager to measure science by quantity that they are mistaken and that there are more than 40 German articles; among these roughly 30 discuss topics in Hungarian literature!

As a matter of fact, we feel we are still working in the best interests of Hungarian literature even though limiting ourselves to the active side, we chiefly focus on academic import. Thus, at least in one direction we attempt to gain an increasingly larger circle of readers, since our intentions in the other, (Hungarian) direction have not garnered the desired response here, at home. However, placing a more intensive emphasis on this one direction could quite easily totally alienate our review from the other reviews of our homeland, which we would regret, but a fate such as this is something from which only our colleagues can save us. We have therefore not only requested, but also demanded a higher degree of fairness concerning this noble aim. (ACLU 1877: 279–280)

[A Fővárosi Lapok t. szerkesztősége (Vadnai ur) júniusi egyik száma újdonságai közt lapunkról nem tart semmi egyebet felemlítésre méltónak, mint csak azt a lakonikus statistikát, hogy 1. kötetünk: 14 magyar, 40 német, 2 franczia, 8 angol, 6 olasz, 2 spanyol cikket tartalmaz. Jegyezze meg magának a tudományt rőffel mérő t. szerkesztőség, hogy rosszul számított és hogy több van 40 német cikknél; csakhogy ezek közt körülbelől harmincz tisztán magyar irod. tárgyú!]

Voltaképpen ugyis csak a magyar irodalom legnagyobb érdekében véliünk működni, hogyha inkább csak az activ oldalra szoritkozva (l. „Előszó” 3. l.) a tudományos importra fektetünk fősúlyt. Így legalább az egyik irányban törekszünk mind nagyobb kört foglalni el, miután a másik (közvetlenül magyar) irányban való intenióink kellő viszhangra nem találtak itthon. Csak hogy ennek az iránynak még intensivebb mivelése könnyen egészen elidegenithetné lapunkat hazánk lapjaitól, a mit mi leginkább sajnálnánk, de a mitől csakis laptársaink óvhatnak meg. Így

tehát nem csak kértünk a lapoktól, hanem követelünk is több igazságot a nemes ügy érdekében.]

The editorial letter included above was not only a symptom of ACLU'S gradual isolation from its Hungarian, intellectual environment, but also announced that the emphasis would shift to more international aspects rather than Hungarian Studies/Hungarology. Originally, ACLU defined itself as part of Hungarian literature while additionally expressing a deep commitment toward transmitting Hungarian literature abroad. However, ACLU never wished to be a simple propagandistic tool: its aim was to serve the purposes of Hungarian literature while attempting to integrate these intentions into the study of comparative literature. Maybe this ideal proved too complicated of a concept; in any event, the gap between the Hungarian institutions and ACLU grew (T. Szabó 2013a: 57). One further step was the changing of the main title from the Hungarian *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok* to the Latin *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* in 1879. In 1880 this step was followed by the symbolic gesture of including "London" as the journal's place of publishing next to "Kolozsvár," an indication of ACLU'S new-sprung partnership with the London-based publisher, Nicholas Trübner, founder of *Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record* (1865–1891). In spite of their practical nature, these gestures signaled an attempt to place ACLU on a more international footing (T. Szabó 2013a: 57–58).

Entering Trübner's extensive network was a matter of prestige as well as a step toward cementing ACLU's position in the world literary sphere. Of German origin, Nicholas Trübner (1817–1884) specialized in importing books from the United States; as of the 1850s his interests grew to include Eastern literatures, philology and philosophy. Trübner can therefore be said to have played a mediating role between "Europe" and "the East" (Howsam 2004). Although Trübner's Orientalist interests—with particular attention to India and other areas in Asia—can be interpreted as following Great Britain's imperial role, the subheading of *Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record* suggests how wide a range was actually covered: "A Register of the most important works published in North and South America, India, China, and the British Colonies; with occasional notes on German, Dutch, Danish, French, Italian, Spanish, Portugese, and Russian Literature."

At the same time, ACLU had not altogether given up on Hungarian literature and remained dedicated to presenting Hungarian themes, translation of Hungarian poems and folk songs and transmitting works by the Hungarian poet, Sándor Petőfi, to the world literary canon. Even when announcing its partnership with *Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record* (1865–1891), ACLU's editors emphasized their aim of achieving recognition for Hungarians abroad while simultaneously offering their aid in mediating between Hungarian Orientalists, philologists and Trübner.⁶ It can therefore be surmised that Trübner and ACLU based their collaboration on different aims: for Trübner, ACLU most likely comprised an interesting, Eastern European project. For ACLU, the chance to cooperate with a London-based publisher

⁶ *Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record és a magyar irodalom* ["Trübner's American and Oriental Literary Record and the Hungarian Literature"], ACLU 1880, no. LXVI, pp. 88.

meant not only increased international recognition, but also the universalization of their own interpretation concerning the role of comparative literature.

Interestingly enough, this strategic partnership between ACLU and Trübner did not lend new impetus to ACLU. Instead, the journal became less active beginning in the middle of the 1880s, a circumstance indicating the inefficiency of symbolically relocating the journal to London. In addition, Nicholas Trübner's death in 1884 may have also weakened ACLU's ties to London. All in all, the reasons for ACLU's "decline" starting in the middle of the 1880s (a state indicated by issues published either rarely or in merged form, more and more contributors abandoning the journal, fewer texts) are not completely clear. The reason for why ACLU's "move" to London did not bring positive results may lie in the fact that existing on a geographical and cultural periphery—such as where ACLU was originally situated—must not necessarily be viewed as a curse, but rather as a rich source containing truly fruitful and successful circumstances for any multi-lingual project desiring to equate "world power" literatures with "small" literatures (T. Szabó 2013b: 458).

Mediating Hungarian Literature: E. D. Butler

In order to balance between and negotiate the different approaches held by Hungarians and the English, ACLU heavily relied on the presence of cultural mediators. The role these individuals played within the review resulted from a collaboration that was successful precisely because the editors appeared to find in them the implementers of their own concept of world literature. Out of ACLU's fourteen, British collaborators, the most active and significant individual was Edward Dundas Butler (1842–1919), a librarian at the British Museum who joined ACLU through his translations. It is important to note that Butler inherited his interest in Hungarian literature from his predecessor at the British Museum, Thomas Watts, (1811–1869), thereby creating a continuity in the transmission of Hungarian literature to British audiences (Garnett 2004; Czigány 1976: 186). As an article in *The Academy* stresses, Butler's role was seen as "Suggesting a hope that the Museum still continues to Hungarian literature the enlightened patronage which distinguished it in the time of the late Mr. Thomas Watts" (ACLU 1877: 253). Similarly, this cultural mediation was a type of work-place requirement for the librarians of the British Museum, where the exploration and advocacy of so-called "small cultures" presented a sort of ambition similar to the cultural protectionism exhibited by nineteenth-century Antiquarianists and Orientalists.

In the modern sense of the word, Butler can be conceived as one of the first experts on Eastern Europe. His protectionist view was, on the one hand, a workplace requirement fulfilled as a matter of prestige. On the other hand, it was also his personal interest. Although Butler was likewise very interested in Romanian, Finnish and Greek, he became increasingly specialized in Hungarian literature, a process in which the relations between the English and Hungarian Unitarian Church bore an important role (Kovács 2011: 131). Besides his work at the Museum, translations and volumes, Butler wrote the entry on *Hungary* found in the Ninth Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1875–1889), a summary presenting information on the country's geography, history, language and literature (Czigány 1961: 372). According to Lóránt Czigány (1961: 372), Butler's views on Hungarian literature might have been influenced by Ferenc Toldy, one of the leading literary critics in nineteenth-century Hungary. Short biographies of important Hungarian literary figures, such as János Batsányi, József Bajza, Mihály Csokonai Vitéz, Gábor Döbrentei, József Eötvös, János Erdélyi, András Fáy, János Garay, István Gyöngyösi, Miklós Jósika, Ferenc Kazinczy, Károly Kisfaludy, Sándor Kisfaludy, Ferenc

Kölcsey and Mihály Tompa, have also been attributed to Butler (Czigány 1961: 373), thereby proving his familiarity with the Hungarian literary scene. His activity was greeted with enthusiasm by the official organs of the Hungarian scientific scene such as The Hungarian Academy and the Kisfaludy Society as well as the Hungarian press and ACLU.

While Butler's interest in Hungarian culture was certainly perceived as a matter of prestige by ACLU, it was even more important for them that their relationship with the British Museum's librarian represented their vision of Hungarology. This is due to the fact that Butler always took the Hungarians' feedback regarding his works into consideration and followed the instructions of representatives in Hungarian literature when preparing his translations (Czigány 1976: 188). Eager to make this relationship as transparent as possible, Butler always acknowledged those whose expertise and advice he was following. For instance, in the preface of his book, he mentioned the special role ACLU played in his creative process. In the preface to his book, *Hungarian Poems and Fables for English Readers*, Butler announced that a majority of its content had already appeared in ACLU; at the same time, in this text Butler's relations to other Hungarian journals bears equal importance, thereby suggesting that, he did not want to be connected only to ACLU. Butler attempted to strike a balance between the different Hungarian interests and visions:

Encouraged by the favourable notice taken of a former attempt to introduce Hungarian Fables and Poetry to English Readers, the translator ventures to send forth this little volume, containing a few metrical English renderings of Poems by some of the best modern Hungarian poets, as well as several Fables by Fáy and other. Most of the Poems have been already published in the 'Comparative Literary Journal,' (Összehasonlító irodalomtörténelmi Lapok,) edited by Drs. S. Brassai and H. Meltzl, at Klausenburg in Transylvania.

The translator desires to express his grateful acknowledgements to the writer of the literary columns in the Hungarian 'Sunday Newspaper' ['Vasárnapi Ujság'] for several valued suggestions. He has also to thank the editor of the 'Pest-Ofen Review,' ['Budapesti Szemle'] for his encouraging notice. (Butler 1877: iii–iv)

Butler's mention and acknowledgement of ACLU as well as other Hungarian periodicals becomes particularly interesting in reference to the circumstance that Butler's figure and activity came to link the separate visions held by different Hungarian journals concerning how Hungarian literature should be transmitted abroad. In his later, 1881 volume containing translations of the sixth song from *Buda halála* (*The Death of King Buda*) by János Arany as well as other texts, Butler referred to ACLU again while mentioning the project aiming to translate Sándor Petőfi's poem *Reszket a bokor, mert...* [*The Quivering Bush*] into as many languages as possible.

Based on the prefaces to his volumes, it is not far-fetched to conclude that a key aspect of Butler's protectionism (other than the reciprocal respect between translator and the translated culture) was an attempt to end the hierarchical relationship of patron vs. protégée. Butler's statements instead show that he viewed himself as a humble "speaking-tube," working under the advice of the protected culture's experts and thus the most transparent mediator possible. Moreover, this mediation did not only happen between Hungarian and British culture (and more global spheres, by extension), but to a certain degree also occurred among different Hungarian literary institutions as well. While Butler was one of the most highly regarded contributors of

ACLU beginning in 1877, as of 1879 he was also a corresponding member of the Kisfaludy Society and later became an external member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1881 (Czigány 2004).

An additional aspect of Butler's cultural protectionism lies in his "conservation" of texts via translation. In the aforementioned *Preface* to his *Hungarian Poems and Fables for English Readers*, Butler specified that the translations were made of works by some of the best *modern* poets. When using the adjective "modern," he was actually extending a notion propagated by ACLU, a term that generally appeared with rather negative undertones in the Hungarian literary world of the 1870s and 1880s. ACLU, on the other hand, had already employed this term with the positive meaning of "up-to-date" in its first issue, when defining comparative literature as a "modern science" in its preface.⁷ Needless to say, this was the sense in which Butler used it, too. This attempt is obvious when considering the translations published in the ACLU.⁸ In the period when Gábor Döbrentei was the main transmitter of Hungarian literature to English readers, foreigners only had access to the early history of Hungarian literature; it was only after the 1848 Hungarian Revolution that nineteenth-century works became available (Czigány 1976: 109). Butler's endeavors once more prove that the British audience was more interested in contemporary Hungarian literature (Czigány 1976: 109). Thus, Butler's activity occurred in response to the needs of both the British and Hungarian audience, a circumstance that explains why the praise his work received did not necessarily discuss the quality of these translations. There were, of course, longer critiques which considered both Butler's high philological precision and his lack of poetic vein (Czigány 1976: 187–188). ACLU, however, diligently cited the (positive) reactions of both the Hungarian and the English press regarding Butler's works (*The Academy*, *Budapesti Szemle*, *Vasárnapi Újság*, *Közvélemény* etc.), yet another indication of Butler's important role as go-between when it came to ACLU and other Hungarian periodicals. Butler, after all, was one of the few points whose significance they could all agree upon.

For ACLU Butler was important not only due to his activity in the interests of Hungarian literature, but also as a source legitimizing their concept of Hungarology's role within comparative literature. Moreover, Butler was compatible with more of ACLU's principles, such as "polyglottism" (ACLU greeted Butler's 1875, trilingual book, *The Cheap Dinner*, with enthusiasm), intercultural dialogue via translation, or the ideas regarding folklore. In the case of literary works, Butler translated based on the advice of several Hungarian literary authorities; when it came to folklore texts, it seems he collaborated with ACLU alone, for the folklore chapter of his volume *The Legend of the Wondrous Hunt* (1881) consists of, with one exception, folk songs that appeared in the ACLU between 1877–1879.⁹

⁷ ACLU 1877, no. I, pp. 1–4.

⁸ Hungarian poems translated by Butler, published in the ACLU: Vörösmarty: *Homeless (Hontalan)*, *The Forsaken Mother (Az elhagyott anya)*, *The Appeal (Szózat)*, *Beautiful Ilonka (Szép Ilonka)*; Arany János: *The Deserted Dwelling (Az elhagyott lak)*; Kölcsey Ferenc: *Hope and Memory (Remény, emlékezet)*; Gyulai Pál: *Weary (Fáradt vagyok)*; Petőfi Sándor: *The Autumn (Az ősz)*, *Quivering Leaves (Reszket a bokor, mert...)*; Vajda János: *Balmy Sleep (Édes álom)*; Szász Károly: *How Fair (Be szép)*; Vajda János: *Sírárok XI-ike (Mikor a nap süt az égen...)*.

⁹ Hungarian folk songs translated by Butler that were also published in the ACLU: *Golden May-chaffer, I ask not of thee (Cserebogár, sárga cserebogár)*; *He that yearns for her he loveth (Kinek nincsen szeretője)*; *For Csurgó*

As to why Butler offered his translations of folk songs to ACLU and not to the Academy or other Hungarian literary journals, we may hypothesize that: 1. following the great rush to collect folklore texts during the 1850s and 1860s, literary journals also published folk songs. As of the 1870s, these kinds of texts mostly appeared in specialized publications. Butler therefore translated them for ACLU because there was not a great interest towards them anywhere else; 2. Butler might have been influenced by British anthropology, a trend that greatly influenced views on human sciences; since ACLU displayed a high-level, anthropological perspective in its multilingual endeavors to transmit its own values and consider those of other cultures, Butler might have viewed this collaboration as a good opportunity to extend his activity (T. Szabó 2015).

Conclusions

When beginning to transmit Hungarian literature to a British audience, Butler initially found himself caught in the tense relationship between ACLU and parts of the Hungarian press. It can also be surmised that Butler also recognized how ACLU's views on the relationship between Hungarology and comparative literature, the open and dialogic structure of erudition and the anthropological nature and aims of the proposed mode of folklore studies differed from those projects supported by the Academy and other national institutions that were more concerned with transmitting their own national values (*Litterarische Berichte aus Ungarn*, *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny*). While ACLU's failure to integrate into the vision propagated by mainstream Hungarian institutions eventually doomed the success of the journal's projects, from the foreign point of view ACLU's different approach may have made the journal more accessible to Western contributors. Other than the journal's appeal as an example of "Hungarianness" for those keen on Eastern Europe or the East, the way in which ACLU's concepts were capable of attracting British intellectuals is evinced through the example of Butler. As a result, E.D. Butler was ultimately able to manage and mediate the different expectations exacted by the opposing forces of ACLU, mainstream Hungarian institutions and his British readership. ACLU could similarly emphasize Butler's contribution as a special channel on the Hungarian–English, Hungarian–world literature axis whose work could be embedded into the journal's methodological aims regarding multilingualism and translation.

When examined through the lens of its Hungarian–British relations, the kind of misunderstandings that made it impossible for ACLU to become an integral part of Hungarian literary history can be better understood as the journal's gradual shift from a pronounced agenda of Hungarology/Hungarian Studies to an increased international perspective is traced. At the same time, this study has highlighted how the early institutions that influenced the formation of comparative literature existed at the intersection of various cultures, thereby necessitating both

would I die (Meghalok Csurgóért...); Gay the life which glads me now (Vörös bársony süvegem); Starry, starry shine yon heavens blue (Csillagos az ég, csillagos); Dreaming, dreaming, sweet is dreaming (Álom, álom, édes álom); E'en the trees are wailing (A merre én járok); As a star that brightly gleameth (Olyan a szemed járása); A little dog, a grea tone, too (Kis kutya, nagy kutya); The duck her young midst rushes rears (Káka tövin költ a rucza); Thee no love maternal (Nem anyától lettél); As a rose to wither (Ha én rózsa volnék); When a little wayward boy (Mikor én kis gyermek voltam); See, the risen morning (Feljött már a hajnal); As the rose must wither (Hervad az a rózsa).

inter- and intra-cultural negotiations of meaning, the possibility of cultural dialogues as well as underscoring the essential role played by cultural mediators.

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