On the night of the first of May in 1900 Mihály Munkácsy, the Hungarian painter, died in a private Sanatorium in Germany. He was buried in Budapest nine days later. His funeral - like that of Victor Hugo in Paris fifteen years before, on another day in May - "was not to be the obsequies of a dead man. It was to be the celebration of an immortal. The nineteenth Century was to enter into history with the man who had echoed its enthusiasms and its passions."

The catafalque rose on Heroes' Square in Budapest (Victor Hugo's body had lain in state under the Arc de Triomphe), before the six Corinthian columns and the neoclassical peristyle of the Hall of Arts. The sarcophagus of Munkácsy rested on top of a catafalque, forty-five feet high. The sarcophagus was designed, and completed in haste, by a well-known Hungarian sculptor, assisted by his students; the catafalque by a famous Hungarian architect, an apostle of Magyar modernism. This was odd because, except for a large bas-relief of a prancing stag in front, there was nothing either very Magyar or very modern in these designs. The sarcophagus was white, the catafalque velvet-black. Two enormous masts, draped with black flags, were crowned by white-painted laurel wreaths. There was a double row of topiary Standards, with their black-green leaves. Amid these cascades of blackness another large white bas-relief in the lower center of the bier stood out, with Munkácsy's profile in a gilded frame. Four bronze torches flamed and smoked around the catafalque. It was a cool, windy day in May.

There was one element of an asymmetrical and Hungarian panache above this monumental funereal mise-en-scene: a huge black veil, draped on one side from the attic peak of the Hall of Arts, sweeping down in a half-circle. It suggested something like a great national actress in the act of mourning.

There was the national government and the municipality of Budapest: ministers, the mayor, black-coated, top-hatted. There were bishops, hussars, four heralds in costumes copied from one of Dürer's funeral paintings, three riders holding tall silver staves with black lanterns amased to them. Incense and myrrh wafted away in the breeze. At half past three the funeral procession began to move: the hearse (decorated, too, in medieval style, by Hungarian painters) drawn by six black-blanketed, silver-caparisoned horses, and eight carriages packed high with wreaths.

The noise of the city died down. On the Pest side of the Danube the trolley cars had stopped. Black flags flew. The procession wended westward, on to the broad expanse of Andrassy Avenue. At that moment the sounds of the loud clip-clopping of the horses were softened, because Andrassy Avenue was paved with hardwood blocks. The Minister of Culture and Religion had ordered the schools closed for the day; the students were commanded to line the streets along the funeral route. The great procession flowed down that avenue, the pride of Pest, past the villas and the wrought-iron railings of the new rich, the consulates of the Great Powers, the May greenery and the young horse chestnuts.

At Octagon Square, a mile down Andrassy Avenue, a trumpeter halted the march, to direct the procession to turn leftward to the Ring. The bishops and the ministers stepped into their carriages. In front of the terraces of the coffeehouses gypsy bands played Munkácsy's favorite Hungarian songs. Stiff in black stood the Carpenters' and the Housepainters Guild, and the choral society of a factory sent the bass of their threnody up the afternoon sky. There was a moment of disturbance: the chorus of the School of Blind Children was told to Step forward to sing, but the mounted policeman in front had not been alerted, he rode into their frightened ranks to push them back. But there was no other commotion, save for the fear of some people that the narrow ornamental balconies of the newly built monumental apartment houses might crumble under the weight of the assembled spectators. On the second-story balcony of No. 44 Elizabeth Ring stood a small white-bearded figure, the grand old man of Hungarian literature, Mór Jókai. He lifted his hat as the procession passed under him. Women curtsied; there were women who knelt. A mile down the Ring, then another turn, on to Rákóczi Avenue, toward the city cemetery. By that time the crowd was dispersing in the violet twilight.

The lights were coming on along the boulevards of Budapest. In their shadows the vinous nocturnal energy of the city sprang to life, with its raucous, vinegary sounds filling the gaps of the night air. There was the sense of an odd holiday just past, of a mourning after. Again there was a curious parallel with that day in Paris fifteen years before, when the British Ambassador wrote to Queen Victoria that "there was nothing striking, splendid or appropriate either in the monstrous catafalque erected under the Arc de Triomphe, or in the trappings of the funeral. There was nothing mournful or solemn in the demeanour of the people..."
This was the second time in six years that such a giant funeral took place in Budapest. In March 1894 the body of the great exile, the national leader Lajos Kossuth, had been brought home. Kossuth and Munkácsy had been the two most famous Hungarians known abroad. Hungarians knew that. It was one of the reasons, perhaps the main reason, for Munkácsy's apotheosis: the honor Hungary gained through his reputation in the world.

His path was the path of a comet. He was born in 1844, of German-Hungarian parents, in a dusty, backward town in north-eastern Hungary: Munkács. Like many other people in his time, he would Magyarize his name - in his case, with an aristocratic flourish, appending the nobilitarian at the end - from Lieb to Munkácsy. His early life was sad. His parents died. The orphan became a carpenter's apprentice in the home of a relative. He was a poor, thin wisp of a boy, racked by illnesses. During his adolescence he showed a talent for drawing. A sympathetic painter took him as a companion to the provincial town of Arad. From there he went up to Pest, and then to Vienna (where he failed to enroll in the Academy of Fine Arts - whether because of lack of tuition money or want of accomplishment we do not know) and back to Pest and then to Munich and Düsseldorf, where he made some kind of living from sketching but failed to make an impression either on his Hungarian painter companions or on his occasional German teachers. Then came the turning point. In 1868 he painted a large canvas, Stíratomház ("The Last Night of a Condemned Prisoner"). It is a dark and exotic painting, exotic in its theme rather than in its execution: a Hungarian brigand, in peasant dress, sits and leans against a table, surrounded by shadowy figures in anxious grief. The background is dark, the brushstrokes strong, naturalistic, showing considerable talent in composition and in the art of contrast; the style is reminiscent of Courbet. It was an instant success. One of the earliest American private collectors, the Philadelphia merchant William P. Wilstach, bought it for 2,000 gold thalers. Munkácsy was not yet twenty-six years old.

In 1870 this painting was shown in the Paris Salon. It earned the Gold Medal and celebrity for its painter. Munkácsy moved to Paris. He married the widow of a baron, Mme. Munkácsy had social ambitions. They had a palace built on the Avenue Villiers. Cabinet ministers, artists, ambassadors, Russian dukes and the King of Sweden attended their dinners. Munkácsy was handsome. He had dark eyes, a beautifully kept beard, there was a suggestion of an elegant bohemian in the lavaliere cravat that he habitually wore. "Dieu, qu'est beau," a Parisian woman said. He chose a mistress, the wife of a Parisian painter. A powerful art dealer from Munich, Sedlmayer, became his agent - more, his factotum. He kept telling Munkácsy what to paint. Munkácsy's paintings were sold for very large sums, more than sixty of them to rich Americans who had begun to collect art. They included Cornelius and William Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, William Astor, August Belmont, the financial genius Edward T. Stotesbury of Philadelphia, General Russell Alger the Governor of Michigan, Joseph Pulitzer the newspaper magnate (who was born in Hungary), Delmonico the New York restaurateur. His most successful enterprise was the large painting "Christ Before Pilate," a subject that Sedlmayer had suggested. It was bought by the "Merchant Prince," the rising department store magnate John Wanamaker from Philadelphia, for $150,000, the equivalent of nearly $2 million one hundred years later. It is still exhibited every Easter in Wanamaker's department store.1 Before it was shipped to Philadelphia Sedlmayer showed "Christ Before Pilate" on a European tour, for three years. At the time (1881-84) there were people, including critics, who wrote that Munkácsy was the greatest living artist, the creator of the greatest modern work of art in the world, the peer of Michelangelo and Rembrandt. We know this from a folio volume that Sedlmayer had printed and that included reviews of Munkácsy, who had become so famous that a letter by an American admirer, addressed to "Munkácsy, Europe," was delivered to him in Paris. In 1886 Sedlmayer arranged for a triumphal tour in the United States. More of Munkácsy's paintings were sold (including a sequel to "Christ Before Pilate" to Wanamaker). President Cleveland received Munkácsy in the White House, the Secretary of the Navy gave a dinner in Washington and Delmonico a festive banquet in New York. A "Hungarian" gypsy band played a "Munkácsy March" on the New York pier when he boarded the liner La Champagne for France.

His success reverberated in his native country, to which he remained loyal throughout his life. He funded a modest purse for young Hungarian painters for their study in Paris. When "Christ Before Pilate" was shown in Pest there were 80,000 paying visitors; the chairman of the committee was Bishop Arnold Ipoli, the most learned Hungarian prince of the church at the time. Around 1890 the Hungarian government commissioned Munkácsy to paint a monumental canvas for the new Parliament building, Honfoglalás ("The Conquest of Hungary"). Arpád, the founder, prime prince of the Hungarian tribes, sits erect on his white stallion, receiving the homage of the inhabitants of the Hungarian hills and plain. It is well beneath the

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1 No longer. It was sold for $60,000 in 1988, after Wanamaker's had been bought by a conglomerate.
Standards of Munkácsy's best work. But he was already a sick man. A disease, latent from his youth, probably Syphilis, had affected his body and his brain. Few people in Hungary knew that. He was a national hero; a national treasure; the most famous son of Hungary in the world.

A comet: or, rather, a meteor. People speak of a meteoric rise when, in reality, a meteor is marked by its fall. That was the case with poor Munkácsy. He was a self-made painter, an artist of remarkable gifts, with a considerable talent for depth and contrast; but perhaps his best paintings are those surviving ones that are the least known - a few summer landscapes and a few portraits. There was a duality in his talent and, perhaps, in his entire personality. He could be profound, yet he was habitually superficial. He was obsessed with technique, yet he worked very fast. His masters, besides Rembrandt, were the late-Renaissance painters; yet he seldom visited Italy, and never traveled beyond Florence. He was a Francophile who never learned to speak or write French well. We may now see that his canvases - their subjects as well as their execution - are period pieces. At his best he could approximate the Standards of Courbet, perhaps of Millet. But the Munkácsy meteor lit up the Parisian sky only briefly, and at the very time - in the 1870s - when the new generation of the Impressionists left the Salon well behind. Munkácsy execrated them. Before his death he wrote his wife that what he would really like was to start an academy "to do away with the exaggerations of the Impressionists." Long before that the French critics turned away from Munkácsy. Dumas fils, who liked him personally, said to his Hungarian friend Zsigmond Justh: "Munkácsy is an inflated reputation who has both profited from his wife and been damaged by her."2 Huysmans looked at "Christ Before Pilate" and wrote that Munkácsy had a taste for nothing but decor: "le rustiqueur de la peinture," a dubious adventurer. Others called his house a "palais de poncif," a palace of a hack. Two years before Munkácsy's death the contents of the house on the Avenue Villiers were auctioned off: the gobelins, china, Persian rugs, antique guns, and some of his paintings went for almost nothing. A later generation was to find that the very material of his paintings was deteriorating. Munkácsy habitually used a black bitumen ground for his large canvases. This tended to fade his colors with the passing of time. The pomp and the circumstance of Munkácsy's state funeral obscured all of this;3 and in the grandiloquence of the Budapest newspapers in May 1900 there was no trace of reflective tone. But it must not be thought that the recognition of Munkácsy's limitations was the particular reaction of Parisian critics, of a culture five hundred miles to the west and many years ahead of Budapest. As so often in the history of Magyar intellect and art, worldwide fame was one thing, true merit another; and the two would rarely correspond. At the very time, 1873, when the Munkácsy comet reached its apogee in the salons of Paris, a Magyar painter, Pal Szinyei-Merse, painted a canvas, "May Picnic" (Majófés), that eventually came to be regarded as the finest Hungarian painting of the nineteenth Century. I write "eventually," because its initial reception in Budapest was so inadequate that Szinyei-Merse turned away from painting for many years to come. Yet it is significant that both the composition and execution of "May Picnic" correspond exactly with the time and the emergence of the vision of the great French Impressionists, the early Monet or Renoir. In Paris Munkácsy had a young Hungarian friend, Laszló Paál, who died tragically young, but whose canvases, as we now know, represent superb individual variants of the Barbizon school. (Millet regarded him as the most promising of the younger painters.) In the Budapest of 1900, of every thousand people to whom Munkácsy's name was a household word, perhaps one knew the name of Paál. Yet years before Munkácsy passed away painters in Hungary had already rejected the pictorial tradition that he represented. That tradition - despite Munkácsy's Francophilia and his Paris residence and his Paris success - was essentially a German, a Munich one; but by the 1890s the best Hungarian painters had broken away from that. They withdrew, not into bohemian conventicles, but to serious workshops in the country, in Nagybánya, Gödöllö, Szolnok, to open their windows, to go ahead with a Hungarian school of plein-air painting, built up with colors that would not fade. The first exhibition of the Nagybánya painters took place in 1897; and by 1900 modern painting in Hungary had not only begun, it was in full development.

These painters were criticized, indeed, excoriated by some of the conservatives whose bastion was that Hall of Arts from where Munkácsy's body was sent forth on

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2 Sedlmayer may have damaged his reputation worse. Not only malicious critics but all kinds of people found it distasteful when Sedlmayer showed "The Dying Mozart" against a musical accompaniment, or when he sold tickets for the showings of the "Christ Before Pilate" tour, a new practice at the Urne.

3 Perneczky, p. 5 i: "This funeral was the last Munkácsy super-production, with all of the grotesque exaggerations of eclecticism, produced for a public avid for entertainment, festivities and impressive theatrics. . . . An honest and detached study should show us Munkácsy's great pictorial talents - and also that his faults and mistaken directions corresponded with the errors and mistaken ways of his nation."
his last journey, but no matter: these painters knew not only what they were doing but also where they stood - and sat. In 1900 in Budapest the painters, sculptors' and architects' habitual coffeehouse was the Japan on Andrássy Avenue, with its tables that sometimes bore their penciled drawings on their raspberry-color marble surfaces (on one occasion a respectful art collector cajoled the owner of the coffeehouse into selling him one of these tables, which he then had carted home). The Japan was not only a few steps away from the grandiose apartment houses of the Ring. That Elizabeth Ring - not only its buildings but its atmosphere, colors, sounds, and the language along its pavements - was typical of Budapest in 1900; but so, too, were the minds and the talk of the people in the Japan.

"This city," wrote Gyula Krúdy about Budapest, "smells of violets in the spring, as do mesdames along the promenade above the river on the Pest side. In the fall, it is Buda that suggests the tone: the odd thud of chestnuts dropping on the Castle walk; fragments of the music of the military band from the kiosk on the other side wafting over in the forlorn silence. Autumn and Buda were born of the same mother." In Budapest the contrast of the seasons, and of their colors, is sharper than in Vienna. It was surely sharper in 1900, before the age of the omnipresent automobile exhausts and diesel fumes. Violet in Budapest was, as Krúdy wrote, a spring color; it was the custom to present tiny bouquets of the first violets to women as early as March. They came from the market gardens south and west of the city, sold along the Corso and in the streets by peasant women. In March, too, came the sound and the smell of the rising river. The Danube runs swifter and higher in Budapest than in Vienna. It would often flood the lower quays, and the sound and sight of that swirling mass of water would be awesome. By the end of April a pearly haze would bathe the bend of the river and the bridges and quays, rising to Castle Hill. That light would endure through the long summer mornings, lasting until the mature clarities of late September.

At night the shadows retreated, and a new, dark-green atmosphere grew over the city like a canopy of promise. This was not the acid green springtime of Western Europe: May and June in Hungary, even in Budapest, have something near-Mediterranean about them. The smoke from the myriad chimneys retreated with the shadows (except, of course, the highblown smoke of the mills and factories in the outer districts). The chairs and tables were put out before the cafes and in the open-air restaurants. It was then that the nocturnal life of Budapest blossomed, a life with singular habits and flavors that began early in the evening and lasted into the dawn, in which so many people partook. There were avenues in Budapest which were more crowded at ten at night than at ten in the morning, but not because they were concentrations of nightlife, such as Montmartre or Piccadilly. The freshness of the dustless air, especially after the May showers, brought the presence of the Hungarian countryside to the city. Somewhat like parts of London in the eighteenth Century (or Philadelphia in the nineteenth), this smoky, swollen, crowded and metropolitan Budapest was still a city with a country heart, with a sense that a provincial Arcadia was but an arm's length away. By May the violets were gone but there was a mixture of acacias and lilacs and of the apricots, the best ones of which in Hungary were grown within the municipal confines of Budapest. There was the sense of erotic promises, earthy and tangible as well as transcendent. It penetrated the hearts of the people, and not only of the young; and it was not only a matter of spying the sinuous movements of women, movements more visible now under their Hght summery frocks. It was a matter of aspirations.

Summer was hot, hotter than in Vienna, sultry at times, broken by tremendous thunderstorms, but almost never damp. When the dark thunderheads convened high over the dry, dusty streets, they carried the promise of relief and the return of the long pleasant summer evenings, for the evenings were almost always cool. There is not much difference between a May and an August night in Budapest, except of course in the Vegetation. Even on the hottest of days the trees were green, never sere. Summer was the recurrent feeling, the promise of pleasure in le lei, le frais, le vivace aujourd'hui; and a Budapest bourgeoise or a young gentry wife threw open the double-leaved Windows and leaned over her geraniums with the same movement - and perhaps, too, with the same movement of the heart - as a Frenchwoman on the Côte d'Azur at summertime circa 1900, all'tileoutof season but frafrbe, belle, vivace, nonetheless. Surrounded by the yellow, powdery Hungarian countryside, Budapest then spread along the banks of the Danube like a green bower; or, perhaps (for those who prefer vegetables to flowers), rather like a super-large green cabbage whose outer leaves were edged, here and there, with the black rime of smoke from the factory chimneys. The crowded town, packed with people and rows of apartment houses, gave the impression - and the feeling - of a summer resort, perhaps even that of a spa. Few people complained of the summer in Budapest, except for those who employed it as the pretext to proclaim their departure to vacation places well-known. A profusion of fruit, greenery and fish spilled out from the markets to the sidewalks. Young people stayed up late, into the dawn. Older people, daydreaming on hot afternoons, turned their thoughts to the winter season to come, thinking of new circumstances, new quarrels, new flirtations.

Autumn can be a short season in Budapest; in any event, its beauties are unpredictable, like those of rapidly maturing women - or, perhaps, unpredictable like the melancholy of Hungarian men. It is not only that the owl of Minerva flies at dusk; it is also that the best writers of Hungary, living in Budapest around 1900, had
autumn in their hearts. The instruments of their internal music were not springtime violins, or the summery bravura of the gypsy bands whose music in the summer mixed with the crunch of the gravel and with the clanging of the dishes in the open-air taverns and restaurants. The deepest, the truest sound of Magyar prose is not that of a canting and chattering violin; it is that of a cello.

March, not April, is the cruelest month in Budapest; and November the saddest. A Century ago it was the only month when that great bell of clear air over the Hungarian plains became straitened with damp fog. That fog swirled around the broad pillars of the Danube bridges, it rose to cloud the high hills of Buda. On All Souls' Day thousands of people streamed toward the cemeteries of Budapest, with flowers in their hands, on that holy day which is perhaps taken more seriously in Hungary than elsewhere because of the national temperament. "Termeszt a természet" - a terse Magyar phrase whose translation requires as many as ten English words to give its proper (and even then, not wholly exact) sense: "How to bury people - that is one thing we know." The greatest tragedies in the history of modern Hungary - the execution of thirteen martyred Hungarian generals after the collapse of the War of Independence in 1849, the collapse of the ancient monarchy in the defeat of the First World War in 1918, the collapse of the deeply torn and divided effort to free Hungary from its deadly alliance with Hitler's Reich in 1944, the collapse of the great national rising in 1956, centered in Budapest - all happened in October or early November. For Budapest in 1900 the last three of these great tragedies were still unknown.

And then, one morning - it would come as early as in the third week of November, and surely before the middle of December - one of two new things was happening. A clear sky had risen over Budapest again, with the paler gold of a winter sun refracted by the crystalline cold. Or the sky was gray but rich, great flakes of snow were coming down all over Budapest; a celestial filling, like the goose down in the comforters of its bedrooms. In 1900 in Budapest winters came earlier than they come now. They were colder and snowier. There were still years (though not in the calendar year 1900) when the entire Stretch of the Danube was frozen, and adventurous men could walk across the ridges of ice from Pest to Buda. There was a sense of feeding and of innocence in the air. Unlike in the snow-laden country, winter in Budapest was something eise than a season of long rest and sleep; it was another season full of promise and excitement. The streets of the Inner City were filled before noon, with women and girls parading in their winter finery, and with promenading gentlemen in their fur-collared great coats. Girls without furs were equipped at least with a furry muff. They were stepping in and out of the confectioneries and the flower shops and the glove-makers with tiny packages wrapped in rosy, crinkly papers, hanging daintily from the tips of their little fingers. Among the horse-drawn carriages on the avenues in 1900 there still slid in and out a few sleighs - black-lacquered, drawn by black horses, and with silvered tackle, with the laps of their passengers wrapped in ancient fur-lined blankets. What the city offered was this agreeable and satisfying contrast of exterior ice and inferior fire: of the diamantine, light blue, crackling cold climate of the streets only a few steps away from the inner atmosphere of the houses with the cozy warmth of their cosseted bourgeois interiors, with deep-red carpets underfoot and perhaps with crimson tongues of fire not only in the grates of the tile stoves but in many hearts. Even in the dark, grimy streets, with their forbidding doorways and freezing entrances, the white snow thick around provided not only a contrast in color but in atmosphere: gazng inside to sense the hot interior fug, or looking outside from their cramped interiors into the snowy streets was equally good. The crunch of the snow, its odd chemical smell, the roofs and the windowsills and the shop signs and the monuments of Budapest picked out in white gave the city a compound of secure feeling. Behind those windowsills the house-wives patted the long square insulating bolsters between the double Windows into place; and the few walkers along the quays or up along the deserted streets and parapet walks on Castle Hill must surely have been lovers.

It was the season of long dinners, of heavily laden tables with the roasts, sausages, bacons, bowl and game sent up to the families from the country; of the smells of wet wool and leather and pastry cream and perfume in the shops of the Inner City; of the anticipations of Christmas, of dancing assemblies and balls; and for the young, the chance of meeting on the skating rink of the Budapest Skating Club, on the frozen lake in City Park, under electric Lights on weekday evenings. When the little blue flag of the club was up at Octagon Square it meant that the ice was sufficiently hard for the skaters - and for their flirtations, while the girls' chaperones would gossip behind the Windows of the clubhouse that was warm as an oven, aglow in the dark like the redness behind the isinglass of a stove, reeking of oiled leather, coal-smoke and the melted ice on the rough floors of that waiting room. It was a city of distinct anticipations and of distinct seasons, more distinct than now.

The year 1900 was the noon hour of Budapest, even in winter. Summer was galloping in its skies and in its heart. Foreign visitors arriving in that unknown portion of Europe, east of Vienna, were astounded to find a modern city with first-class hotels, plate-glass windows, electric tramcars, elegant men and women, the largest Parliament building in the world about to be completed. Yet the city was not wholly cosmopolitan. There was the presence of the Hungarian provinces within its streets and within its people, so many of whom had come to Budapest from the provinces where they were born. In another sense, too, it was less cosmopolitan than the backward, unkempt town of a Century before, whose inhabitants had been a
mixture of Magyars, Germans, Swabians, Greeks, and Serbs. Now everyone, including the considerable number of Jews, spoke and sang, ate and drank, thought and dreamed in Hungarian. This was a very class-conscious society: there was as great a difference between the National Casino of the feudal aristocracy and the Café New-York of the writers, artists and artistes as there was between the elegant clubhouse and the plebeian grandstand at the racetrack. These worlds were separate, yet they were not entirely unbridgeable. Certain aristocrats respected the writers and painters; in turn, most of the writers and painters admired the aristocrats, especially when these were to the manner born. They read the same papers, sometimes the same books, saw the same plays, knew the same purveyors. They dined in different places, their tables were set differently; but their national dishes, their favorite musicians, their physicians, and their actresses were often the same. In Budapest there was no particular vie de bohème restricted to writers and artists; indeed, the city did not have an artists’ quarter - no Bloomsbury or Soho, no Montmartre or Montparnasse, no Munich Schwabing.

It was a grand place for literature. The ancient Magyar language, the vocabulary of which was reconstructed and enriched with great care, sometimes haltingly, by the patriot writers and classicists of the early nineteenth Century, had become rich, muscular, flexible and declarative, lyrical and telling. But the Magyar language is an orphan among the languages of Europe. It does not belong to the great Latin, Germanic or Slavic language families. Mostly because of this, Hungarian literature had no echoes, no reverberations, no reputation beyond Hungary. During the entire nineteenth Century only one Hungarian writer, Mórjókai, was frequently translated abroad; and by 1900 Jókai - as well as the style and scope of his novels - had grown very old. But in 1900 Budapest rang with the reverberations of literature. Every Hungarian writer knew that. During the literary, cultural and political revival of the nation in the nineteenth Century none of the great poets and writers had been born in Budapest. In 1900 this was still largely true, but they all had gravitated there. They lived in Budapest not only because of the evident advantages of living close to the newspapers and publishers who would purchase their words. They needed the atmosphere of the city. This was true even of such fine writers as Geza Gárdonyi or Kaiman Mikszáth, who were truly provincial in the best sense of that adjective: country writers, saturated with the colors, odors and music of the countryside and with the Speech of its people. But for the first time in the history of Hungarian literature, in 1900 there were writers who chose not only to write in, but of Budapest. They were not necessarily the greatest writers of that period, though some of them were. In 1900 Budapest, and Hungarian literature, had become inescapably intertwined.

So I am compelled to describe three writers who wrote about Budapest in 1900 - in the ascending order of their talents. They were Tamas Kóbor, Ferenc Körmendi and Gyula Krúdy. The very title of Kóbor's book and the very date of its publication fit our theme exactly. The title of his novel was, simply and squarely, Budapest, written in the year 1900 and published in 1901. Portions of it actually appeared, seriatim, in 1900 in the literary periodical A Het, which was the principal literary periodical at the time; Kóbor was one of its principal contributors. He was the very first Hungarian novelist who was actually born in Budapest.4 Kóbor's Budapest is a period piece, largely forgotten now, but not without some merit, and of considerable interest for our purposes. What Kóbor attempted in Budapest was a Budapest Version of Arthur Schnitzler's La Ronde, the famous book published in Vienna as Reigen four years before. It is surely possible, and almost probable, that Kóbor was influenced by Schnitzler. The theme of both books is a chain (in Budapest a sequence rather than a circular chain) of sexual liaisons, of love affairs. There is, however, a great difference between the two books. Schnitzler was a very talented craftsman; Kóbor's writing is more uneven, cruder. Schnitzler's main interest was sexuality; Kóbor's the social portrait of a city. Schnitzler is a sometimes brilliant Journalist, an exponent of that bourgeois neurosis within a culture that agitated and inspired the theories of Freud; but his portraiture of a place is definitely secondary to his main theme. Kóbor's book is deeply pessimistic, whereas Schnitzler's pessimism is implied: in almost all of Schnitzler's writing one senses a cynical smile on his lips, whereas there is no smile on Kóbor's face at all. In Kóbor's Budapest the conditions of the sexual lives of kept girls and married women and their husbands are meant to illustrate his main concern, which is the immorality - immorality, rather than neurosis - of a city where misery and riches, servility and naughtiness, abjectness and power, the still strong presence of a feudal class-consciousness and the ever stronger, ever increasing influence of money live side by side. And it is the abjectness of moneylessness, the poverty-ridden lives of women and their daughters in the dark warrens of apartment houses with which Kóbor was so familiar, which shocks and moves us in his book. His description of the lives and the conditions of the upper class is definitely successful. It is a book of miseries rather

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4 The only other writer of considerable stature born in Budapest was the brilliant literary critic Jenő Peterfy, who was also a musicologist and thoroughly bilingual (his occasional German essays were masterpieces of style). A nervous and profound man, inclined to depressions, he killed himself in 1899.

*Kóbor's title may have been influenced by Zola's Paris, also published in 1896."
than of grandeurs, a somber book full of harsh smoke and strong, unrefined flavors. As Köbör wrote in his Introduction in 1901: "I directed my light to the depths above which Budapest is being built." He did not quite succeed, in part because its depth does not a building make. Yet Köbör's Budapest, with its dark wintry scenes, remains a significant corrective to that no less real climate of summer that in 1900 galloped in the skies of Budapest and in its heart.

Another book that illuminates that place and time, in a very different way, is the monumental novel of a writer who is largely forgotten, even in his native country, despite the fact that his A boldog emberölő ("The Happy Generation") had indifferent and abbreviated translations in Paris and New York. Ferenc Körmendi's writing career in Hungary was very short, a mere seven years in the 1930s, after which he left Hungary for England and then the United States, where he wrote little. Significant of The Happy Generation is, again, its chronological condition - in this case, the lynchpin of Körmendi's entire theme. It is the story of a man who is born in Budapest on January 1, 1900, on the first day of the new Century. It is a great Budapest haut-bourgeois novel, even though, I repeat, it is not (perhaps not yet) so recognized. Körmendi was as much influenced by Thomas Mann as Köbör had been by Schnitzler's La Ronde; but there is an essential difference between Mann's Buddenbrooks and The Happy Generation. Buddenbrooks is the story of the rise and tragic decline of three generations of a family; The Happy Generation is the story of a half-generation, the life and family of a single thirty-year-old man, a descent from a sunlit plateau of prosperity and security to the tragic collapse of his own desire for more life. It is entitled The Happy Generation because in 1900, when its protagonist is born on Andrássy Avenue, everything is suffused with the optimism of security, respectability, cultivation and progress; indeed, on one occasion his father says so. "The generation," he tells his two sons, "in which you will grow up will be fortunate... there seems to be no reason why it should not be so."

Of course this novel, unlike Köbör's Budapest, was written and inspired by retrospect, by the painful and melancholy retrospect of the 1930s (it was published in 1934. the year after Hitler had assumed power), when the world of 1900 seemed so blessed, so far away, so irretrievably lost. In this, The Happy Generation precedes Stefan Zweig's The World of Yesterday by nearly a decade and is a novel, not a wistful memoir, but the respect for the secure Standards and values of the world of 1900 is as strong in Körmendi's novel as in Zweig's nobly pathetic reminiscences written in his Brazilian exile. For our purposes, The Happy Generation is important because it shows the sunny atmosphere of the Andrássy Avenue bourgeoisie at and after the turn of the Century: not only the sureties and the securities but also the presence of the solid bourgeois virtues of personal and civilizational probity, perhaps concentrated in the admirable doctor and father, the head of the Hegedüs family. Their spacious apartment may be full of bibelots, their curtains may be heavy, but the sunshine of that summy Budapest of 1900 filters through. It is a world of protective affinities: of a few old family portraits, many comfortable armchairs, and the noonday scent of the forever first course of the Sunday family dinner. With all of this, The Happy Generation is not really tainted with nostalgia, while it is a nearly perfect rendition not only of the atmosphere but of the mental aspirations of a class of people, of a place, of a time. It is the greatest work of Körmendi (surely in size: 850 pages), who was not a very great writer; yet The Happy Generation deserves recognition not only in the annals of literature but also by historians who wish to know much about that place and time.

And now we come to the greatest writer of Magyar prose in the twentieth Century, perhaps to the greatest prose writer in all Hungarian literature, and surely one of the great writers of Europe - even though he is seldom translated and remains largely unknown outside Hungary. This is Gyula Krúdy, who arrived in Budapest in 1896, when he was not yet eighteen, and whose first contributions had been printed by provincial newspapers when he was thirteen. He was one of those writers in the Hungarian provinces for whom Budapest had become a magnet. His father wanted him to be a lawyer. "I shall be a poet in Budapest," the son said. (He never wrote a single poem there.) The father, a member of the old, impoverished gentry of his province and country, disintegrated him, for more than one reason. It was a break not only between two generations but between two

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5 One of the weaker portions of The Happy Generation consists of its young protagonist's love affair during a year spent in a Swiss tuberculosis Sanatorium, amidst men and women from many nations - the obvious influence of The Magic Mountain.

6 He actually says "happy" (boldog) but somehow that English word is not quite appropriate here or, indeed, in the book title. Perhaps it should be "blessed."
centuries. Again there is a chronological coincidence. The father died on December 30, 1900, the exact last moment of the old Century. By that time his son was a published writer in modern Budapest. The first volume of his stories was printed in 1899, when he was twenty years old. His first long novel appeared in 1901.

Except for short absences, he remained in Budapest for the rest of his life. But for many years he did not write about Budapest. He wrote about melancholy provinces on the great Hungarian plains, about little towns in the shadows of the Carpathian mountains. It was not until later, about 1912, that he began to turn the magical searchlight of his memories on Budapest. Thereafter he would write often about the city, and about the city around 1900, in his own lyrical style, with a depth and with an evocative music, in ways in which no one has written about it either before or since, and perhaps - no, most probably - no one ever will.

For this introductory chapter of this book I must translate a few of his passages about Budapest at some length. This is inevitable, since he is the writer of colors, odors and sounds. His descriptions of Budapest were scattered in hundreds of places in his novels, Sketches and feuilletons. Here and there some of them have been put together in small volumes, published decades after his death. In this fantastic profusion of his passages and writings about Budapest there is a duality or, radier, an evolution. Krúdy, who with all of his liberality of spirit and startlingly modern prose style, was a very historically minded writer, a reactionary in the best sense of that much abused word, would flau, on occasion, the loud, commercial, shamelessly eager metropolis of 1900 - contrasting its spirit with its slower, calmer, respectable, near-provincial past. At times he wrote that the city lost its virtue around the time - perhaps in 1896, the year of the great Millennium Fair - when cannons boomed and the city glowed, celebrating the greatness of Hungary, the very year when he had arrived in Budapest. He wrote once about Franz Josefs visit to Budapest in 1896, to this once town of "smaller houses and modest citizens, of young, rosy, patriotic girls waving their handkerchiefs, of a quiet and unrebellious antiquity." But now "Pest had thrown off its mask of modesty; each year she put on more and more jewelry; the unassuming had become loud, the thrifty had turned to gambling, the virgins brought up in severe convents had begun to take pride in the fulness of their breasts. . . . Pest had become unfaithful. . . ."

This raffinee courtesan of a city had forgotten the triumphs of the young monarch at whose bosom she had once thrown herself, in the time of her fresh innocence. . . . Her shoulders no longer breathed the odor of holy water. Pest lifted her once downcast eyes; she was no longer satisfied with little presents of honey and gilded walnuts. She had become conscious of her developing charms; she
discovered her new side that was both gamine and cosmopolitan; this once little wallflower had begun to appreciate herself; and the thrifty old gentleman was dis-turbed to find that the demanding cocotte that Pest had become no longer loved him. The naive virgin, who in the 1860s so happily imitated the crown-like hairdo of the thin-waisted Queen Elizabeth whom she had seen at the Merchants’ and Artisans’ Ball - she had become a wide-hipped, eager, unbridled female. The gentlemen, who at the time of the Coronation had begun to train their sideburns with the help of the Kishid Street barbers, had become fewer and fewer; and now only old janitors, veteran soldiers and ancient civil servants wore the Franz Josef beard. . . .

The mythical hero of an unfinished Krúdy novel

. . . saw that in the forest of the town the white-waisted, sentimental, virginal birches trembling in the wind had become fower and fower; he saw that those embroideries and needlepoints and laces that had been stitched by busy, Hght, feminine fingers were disappearing from the drawingrooms in the houses of the old citizenry; that the coiffures and the countenances of women no longer resembled the antique Madonnas in the churches of the Inner City or of Buda, but that the fashions were now dictated by infamous transient female personages, dancers and cocottes. . . . The tone of talk is ever more frivolous, the pursuit of pleasure ever more shameless as it whispers its selected phrases bending over the uncovered shoulders of the women in the theaters, or on the streets bending at the sides of their veiled hats, or even in the apartments of families where one can still smell the scent of the wax candles from a Christmas Eve hardly past. . . .

He saw, too,

. . . the blue-white towers and the endlessly rising roofs; the white ships multiplying on the river and the rainbow-hued Danube bridges . . . the coming and going of wrinkles on the faces of those ladies whom one could find out of their houses every time, and who keep a spirit from the Thousand and One Nights in their homes (in the form of a scrubby little maid who does all the work, who sews the torn clothes of the children and cooks the midday meal for the husband). He saw the proud gentlemen forced into higher and higher collars to hide the premature folds of their necks and the premature trembling of their heads; he saw those heart-rending days in spring when the new frocks bedeck the pavements like flowers in the meadows; and the lilting, snowy days in winter when the sun comes out at noon on Andrassy Avenue to encourage the poor office girls to step out with the gait of duchesses. . . .

Sometime during the darkening years of the First World War Krúdy’s flagellation of Budapest began to give way to a quieter, lyrical kind of nostalgia, a remembering of what was lovely and good m Budapest at its once noontime. And by 1920 and 1921, when Budapest - surely the spirit of Budapest - was under attack by a nationalist wave of sentiment and by the nationalist regime, “They are reviling Budapest in the Parliament,” Krúdy began.

Well, Pest has never been an agreeable town. But desirable, yes; like a racy, full-blooded young married woman about whose flirtations everyone knows and yet gentlemen are glad to bend down and kiss her hand. . . . No matter how we country people may have been irritated, it was in Budapest that Hungarian culture, about which so many of the old, blessed Magyar people had dreamed, received its hallmark. Here the dancing in the theaters is the best, here everyone in a crowd may think that he is a gentleman even if he had left just the day before; the physicians’ cures are wonderful, the lawyers are world-famous, even the renter of the smallest rooms has his bath, the shopkeepers are inventive, the policeman guards the public peace, the gentlefolk are agreeable, the streetlights burn till the morning, the janitor will not allow a single ghost inside, the tramcars will carry you to the farthest places within an hour, the city clerks look down on the state employees, the women are well-read from their theater magazines, the porters greet you humbly on the street corners, the innkeeper inquires of your appetite with his hat in hand, the coach drivers wait for you solemnly over the uncovered shoulders of the women in the theaters, or on the streets bending at the sides of their veiled hats, or even in the apartments of families where one can still smell the scent of the wax candles from a Christmas Eve hardly past. . . .

Yes, in those times:

How much is there to say about those blessed, peacetime years! Of the air of Budapest which, true, was often dust-laden in the wind blowing from the Räkos fields; but that air became that much sweeter in spring when the wind had turned and began to breathe from the direction of the Buda hills; depend-able old gentlemen insist that one could then smell the violets from Mount Geliert within the city. . . . And listen again to the tale of those respectable men, because you will learn that in those times it was not at all shocking to wear houndstooth trousers in the spring, and a tiny bouquet in one’s lapel, to wait on a certain street corner as if one were the swain of the Swabian flower seller and not of the lady in the blue veil who would approach from Váci Street. . . .
Váci Street - the main shopping street of the Inner City:

The little squares of the Inner City were like confectionery boxes. There the breeze from the Danube was pirouetting with the rays of the sun, there glanced the hired carriages at their stations from which countesses with their delicate feet had just descended; old pensioners sat on benches in their spotless clothes; the grocer with his wicker baskets and the baker smelling of his fresh kaiser rolls kissed the hands of the chambermaids in their black bombazine when these had rung the bell; the Serpentine waists of the vendeuses, the white blouses of the millinery girls ... and the silvery heads of the booksellers gave the tone to this district. Whoever settles in the Inner City will remain a distinguished person for the rest of his life. It was easy to dress well from its shopwindows, easy to learn how to be fashionable, and every purchaser could have credit. The famous shops that sold the best goods from London, suits, hats, gloves, were memorable like a grand fahscheit in autumn. The merchandise from Paris arrived directly, scented like women before a grand soiree. . . . The waiter in the coffeehouse put the recent Le Figaro in your hands. The barber had learned his trade in Paris; virgin embroidered initials on linens; the spiceshop had the odors of a great freighter just arrived from Bombay. Around the hotels shone the footwar of wealthy foreigners, the carriage curtains would seldom veil the adventurous demi-mondaines, the jewels binned with their shine and the bank tellers paid out brand-new bills. Blessed Inner City years! Like youth - will they ever return?

And in other streets, too:

Women smelled like oranges in Japan. Rákóczi Avenue was full of women of doubtful repute; yet they were pretty and young enough to be princesses in Berlin. Around the Encke coffeehouse stiff lieutenants and fake country gentlemen kept reviewing them. . . . The youngest girls wore silk stockings, and white-haired women found their own brand of connoisseurs. The city was blessed with its cult of women. The eyes of men trembled, the women were so beautiful: black-haired ones, as if they had come from Seville, and in the tresses of the blond ones tales from an Eastern sun were playing hide-and-seek, like fireflies in the summer meadows.

The tone of the cello was deepest when Krúdy saw the duality of Budapest:

They kept on building every day, palaces topped by towers rising toward the sun; and at night it was as if there were endless burials - an everlasting row of tumbrels hauled the old broken matter out of the town, the cadavers of old people and of old houses, of old streets and old customs.

Perhaps from these translated excerpts English-speaking readers may be able to recognize, or at least sense, the particular tone not only of Krúdy's language but of the Magyar literary language - and of the Magyar spirit - which is that extraordinary combination, the constant presence of a minor key within the basic key of a major.

So beneath the noisy boom of Budapest there was that presence of a wistful and melancholy tone; and there was more to it than the echo of nostalgic memories, heard only in solitude and silence in the deep of the night, when the city noise had died down. But that blending of major and minor, of optimism and pessimism, of light and darkness is, after all, the inevitable human condition, and also the condition of any culture that is worthwhile. It is only that some people - and this is true about Hungarians - are more conscious of it than are others. As Pascal said, men are both beasts and angels. Hungarians know that - which is the reason why the fanatic insistence of a Dostoevsky about that duality and about its coexistence in the human soul leaves them, by and large, unmoved: that unkempt Russian tells them nothing that they do not know.

In 1900 not only the colors and tastes and sounds but also the psychic tones of Budapest and Vienna were very different from each other. Budapest was still full of self-confidence. Its building fever, its financial prosperity were the consequences of that condition. This had much to do with the Magyar temperament, in which a deep-rooted (and nonreligious) pessimism is often broken by sudden bursts of appetite for life, of a physical appetite stronger but perhaps less finely woven than what the French phrase joie de vivre suggests. The results of this were visible, and palpable, in 1900. Vienna may have been neurotic; Budapest was not. There were plenty of troubles, dissatisfactions, shadows, darknesses in the life of the city; but there was, as yet, no definite desire to break with the past and no self-conscious doubts about the future. Within Magyar pessimism there is the sad music of the futility of human endeavors, but none of that German Angst: the tone is often melancholy, but the appetite for life - including the material pleasures of words, sounds, colors, tastes and touches - abounds. The Hungarian mind inclines to psychosis rather than to neurosis; but the German idea of the subconscious (as distinct from the unconscious), the idea that something is truer because it is "deeper," has had no appeal to the Hungarian mind, especially when it is expressed in intellectual categories whose very language is removed from the everyday realities of life. The Hungarian mind is very observant and sensitive to every psychic nuance, but it tends to recognize these from expressions of the conscious mind. Long after 1900, Freud's influence in Budapest was slight. One of the reasons for this is the declarative character of the Hungarian language and of Hungarian habits of Speech. There is this odd contradiction of the Hungarian temperament: a deep masculine reserve, but without the inclination to hide one's prejudices, loves and hates. There were Hungarian disciples of Freud (Sándor Ferenczi), and there were Hungarian writers of great talent, Mihály Babits
and Geza Csáth, who wrote profoundly about schizophrenia; but the great Magyar writers, knowers and alchemists of the human soul such as Krúdy, obsessed as they were with dreams and with the reality of dreams, never felt any need to expiate upon the "subconscious"; and what they did not know about the strange inclinations of the male and the female, of the child and the mature spirit and mind, may not have been worth knowing.

Much of this is fairly evident from the literature of the relations of the sexes at the time, when the erotic life, too, of Budapest was less neurotic than that of Vienna. It was largely untainted by the late nineteenth-century despair of the Romantic Agony. At worst, erotic life was crude and male-dominated. At best, it was late-aristocratic rather than late-bourgeois, in the sense that the desire to please had a definite priority over the wish to be loved. Perhaps this is why foreigners found Hungarian men even more attractive than they found Hungarian women, whose beauty did have a definite renown at the time; for instance, many Viennese women married Hungarian men in 1900, while the reverse of such alliances was rarer. Romantic love, the desire to please, is the main theme of writers such as Krúdy, who otherwise was startlingly and at times even shockingly knowledgeable of the frailties of the sexes. The very different, but thoroughly Budapestian writer Ernő Szep, in one of his best novels: "I was telling myself: I am in love, I love. To enjoy this woman physically: ah! there's an animal. I am an animal, too, but what I feel is not only that but its very opposite. . . . And, as a man, what I want from a woman I’ll take in a way that is a hundred times sweeter for her than it is for me. She will be happy with me between her faintings and tears. Her fever will come, her tremblings will come, and her mouth will smother in the pillow a burning scream that cannot be heard beyond the wallpaper. . . ." And the serious Catholic Mihály Babits in his otherwise dark novel, Halälfián; "That was the age of love in Hungary, of the love learned from the oldest Magyar novelist, a love that had turned to a phraseology: for what else could have been interesting in life?" A great poem by Babits is entitled Two Sisters. The two sisters are Desire and Sorrow. The poem is a deep, pessimistic tour deforce of parallel and paradox (Sorrow becomes Desire, and Desire becomes Sorrow), but there is nothing neurotic or decadent in it. In the Budapest of 1900 desire and sorrow may have been sisters, but desire surely dominated that family scene; and, for once, Desire was the older sister and Sorrow the younger one.

This Hungarian comprehension of human nature (a comprehension that, however, is almost always individual, never collective), together with the reluctance of the Magyar mind at abstractness - may have been a factor not only in the quality of modern Hungarian literature but also in the worldly success of so many Hungarians after 1900. I wrote "after 1900" because this, too, is something that we can recognize only in retrospect: the extraordinary and varied success of a generation of 1900 coming out of Budapest. For it was around that time that from the gymnasia and the universities, from the bourgeois homes of Budapest and the gentry families of these then fairly obscure and relatively small nation an extraordinary generation of scholars, scientists, writers, thinkers, inventors, philosophers, financiers, faiseurs, painters, composers, musicians - a generation of Nobel Prize winners and mountebanks (in some cases, perhaps the same persons were both) - came into the outside world that knows the names of many of them even now, while it knows the names of some of the best of them not at all. In the succeeding tragedies and vicissitudes of Hungary many of them left to seek their fortune and acquire their fame elsewhere. And some of the seeds of those tragedies and vicissitudes were already there in 1900.

Three generations and nearly ninety years later the Budapest of 1900 looks better than it was. In 1920 the Budapestian culture of 1900 was exorcized by many Hungarians, and very definitely by the official public philosophy of the nationalist and counterrevolutionary regime. Fifty or sixty years later, the officially Communist and Marxist government of Hungary has found it proper not only to permit but also to promote the commemoration and the celebration of monuments and of people, and the publication of the arts and letters of that bourgeois era, through historical reconstructions that are suffused with respect and often even with admiration. But, then, much of the same has happened with the reputation of Vienna in 1900 (or with the urbane and bourgeois civilization of much of the Western world at that time). Who, in 1920 or even in 1950, would have thought that "Vienna 1900" would be the subject of the most successful and fashionable exhibitions in New York and Paris; that it would become the subject of a spate of books by non-Austrians; and that the cult of Franz Josef and of the Habsburgs would become sacrosanct in Vienna, with public homage paid to it by Socialist governments in Austria? Yes, Budapest 1900, too, attracts us; but we must watch for the Symptoms of an uncritical and, therefore, unhistorical nostalgia.

Still, 1900 was both a milestone and a turning point in the history of Budapest. It has a meaning that is more than chronological. It provides a contrast with Vienna 1900 and Paris 1900 - two capital cities of capital importance for the culture of the Western world - about which so many books have been written. The belle époque is a pleasant nostalgic phrase, but the crisis of an older France and the breaking away from the
ideas, ideals and Standards of the nineteenth Century had begun in Paris fifteen or even twenty-five years before 1900. In Vienna, too, 1900 was the end of the Austrian fin-de-siècle, with many of its interesting artistic and intellectual Symptoms and alarming manifestations. In Budapest, le mal (if it was a mal de siècle) was only about to begin. Yes: in that sense, perhaps, Budapest was behind Vienna. But what is "behind" and what is "ahead"? Yes: the crisis of the old Liberalism, the breakdown of the old political and capitalist order and of the urbane social and financial equilibrium had come in Vienna seven or ten or twelve years before Budapest. It is, of course, not arguable that what happened in Vienna (and what was happening in some Viennese minds, too) would influence the twin capital, that junior one, the Budapest about which many Viennese in 1900 were superdubious. They (as had Freud, for example) looked down on Budapest and on its Hungarians, that semibarbaric country and place. But what the Viennese did not know - and how could they? - was that in 1900 in Budapest the breaking away from the nineteenth-century habits of thought, vision, manners and even Speech was occurring even faster than in Vienna, and in different ways. At the very moment when Budapest became the indisputable focus of Hungarian culture, a new generation of Hungarian painters, writers and composers sought and gained their inspiration from the Magyar countryside. The new Hungarian painters Ferenczy, Hollósy, Rippl-Rónai and Csontváry had learned nothing from Klimt, Schiele and Kokoschka; the writers Krúdy, Kosztolányi, Ady, and Babits were very different from Musil, Trakl, Hoffmannsthal; Bartók and Kodály had little in common with Schönberg and Webern. Only in the architecture of Budapest can we still see a definite Austro-German influence.

For Budapest 1900 was the noon hour. The zenith of its prosperity in that year coincided with the zenith of its cultural life; and a few years later - rather precisely, again, in 1905-06 - the breakdown of its parliamentary and political order coincided with many of the first appearances of new forms, shapes, manners, expressions. A new generation of men and women were coming into their own. Some of the colors, sounds and words - the atmosphere, language7 and music of Budapest - would eventually change. "Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent" - there are few times and places in the world that illustrate that famous line from Baudelaire's Correspondances better than Budapest in 1900.

7 With the new Century, even Magyar spelling changed. In 1900 the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, after serious discussions and study, declared that the old Hungarian usage of the double consonant cz must give way to the more modern f (both corresponding to the sound ts in English).