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NEMZETKÖZI MAGYARSÁGTUDOMÁNYI TÁRSASÁG

Folytonosság és megszakítottság a magyar kultúrában

A doktoriskolák

VI. nemzetközi magyarságtudományi konferenciája

(Bécs, 2019. szeptember 5–6.)

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The politically motivated language of fashion in the magazine *Nővilág* in 1859–1860*

The social discourse about national unity and its sustainability was not restricted to the medium of spoken and written language in 19th century Hungary. Martial law, which had been in effect since the lost revolution and war of independence of 1848–1849, was abolished in 1854, and the political rigour seemed to ease.¹ The rules of publishing print media changed too: instead of prepublication censorship, the new practice was a posterior inspection by the police.² This method appeared to be more lenient, or it could be eluded. However, editors and publishers who failed to comply with the rules could receive harsh punishment; for example Gusztáv Heckenast, the owner of the magazine *Nővilág* [Women’s World] had to pay a heavy fine and his editor, János Vajda was held captive for eight days in 1862, when they failed to send an obligatory copy for police inspection.³

After 1849 the press slowly started to reorganise itself, and the void left by banned political newspapers and periodicals was filled by fresh family- and fashion themed magazines, approved by the authorities. On the surface, these women’s magazines were free from politics, but underneath, they were far from being neutral. It was not only the language that changed, because of self-censorship, caused by police inspection, but its participants too. Female authors appeared in great numbers in journalism in the 1850s, 1860s. One of the most important and popular articles of these women’s magazines was beyond doubt the fashion report. The formal language of dressing up made it possible to make a political statement at public occasions without uttering a single word. As Anikó Lukács declares in her book titled *Nemzeti divat Pesten a 19. században*:

For the coevals [Hungarian people in the 19th century] the Hungarian national outfit – together with the language, the nation’s morals and traditions – was a tool of expressing Hungarian national character; it was a sign representing the nation itself, ensuring its preservation, for some even serving as a guarantee.⁴

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¹ Géza Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó és újságírás története a kezdetektől a rendszerváltásig* (Budapest: Wolters Kluwer, 2016), 144.

² Id., *Magyar hírlaptörténet 1848–1918* (Budapest: Corvina, 2008), 31.

³ Piroska D. Szemző, „A Nővilág megszűnési körülményei”, *Magyar Könyvszemle* 95, no. 2. (1979): 134.

⁴ „A kortársak számára a magyar nemzeti öltözet – a nyelvvel, a nemzet erkölcsével és szokásaival együtt – a magyar nemzeti jelleg kifejezésének eszköze, a nemzetet reprezentáló jel, egyúttal a nemzet megőrzésének egyik biztosítója, egyesek szemében egyik kritériuma volt.” (Translation: J. K.) Anikó Lukács, *Nemzeti divat Pesten a 19. században* (Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 2017), 9.

Júlia Jósika was the fashion adviser and a leading contributor of *Nővilág* since the start of the magazine in 1857. As the wife of the famous novelist and political refugee Miklós Jósika, she lived in Brussels. Both of them had a regular correspondence with Hungarian literary circles; they published novels, short stories and various articles in magazines and books including original texts as well as translations. The emigrant perspective provided her with the opportunity to have firsthand information about the Parisian fashion, and its Belgian and even English adaptations, therefore her fashion tidings were extremely popular until 1860, the year when the column was taken over by Lenke Bajza, who promoted the Hungarian national fashion of Pest instead. The transition was not without antecedents, nor did Júlia Jósika leave the magazine immediately, which allows me to compare the rivalling different narratives of western and Hungarian fashion in the volumes 1859–1860.

In the first months' issues of *Nővilág*, editor János Vajda phrased the program of the magazine in a serial essay titled *About Beauty to the Beauties*.⁵ His interpretation of the national character, greatness, and even survival was founded in the creation of works of art with high aesthetic value and the cultivation of the idea of beauty. According to this, the national character was not a self-enclosed entity that should be examined in comparison only to its own historical past. Besides, the ways to preserve Hungarian national culture could only be defined in a European context, in relation to the cultural achievements of other nations. He would stick to some of these aesthetic principles declared at the start of *Nővilág* even much later. In his 1896 essay *Hungarians and National Self-esteem. Sickly Streams*, he wrote: „We can not conquer with armed forces, only with the light of our erudition.”⁶ In the essay *About Beauty to the Beauties*, Vajda, who attached particular significance to aesthetic values, rejected the idea of a national literature founded upon folk poetry. He stated that going back to antique Greek and Roman art was the only way of subsistence because it was what made it possible to connect with European culture.⁷ (Later he modified this harsh statement in the *Letters of aesthetics*, published in *Nővilág*, 1861. Henceforward he rejected eastern orientation, as something that would hinder progress, as well as the folklore poetry of the Petőfi-epigones;⁸ however, he reconsidered his former opinion about real folk poetry being obscure and one-sided.)⁹

It is essential to see János Vajda's fundamental principles because *Nővilág* was built upon his conscious aesthetic program based on a pro-Western policy with aims to enhance middle-class women's education, engagement in economic roles, and at last but not least their social and political emancipation. Though this latter endeavour did not succeed at the time, it never became a defining feature of the magazine either.¹⁰ In the beginning, *Nővilág* numbered 2500 subscribers. By the time of its termination in 1864, this number had decreased to 800.¹¹ It is a well-known fact that the owner and

⁵ János Vajda, „A szépről a szépekhez”, *Nővilág* 1, no. 1; 7; 13; 16 (1857).

⁶ Id., *Magyarság és nemzeti önérték: Kóros áramok* (Budapest: Singer and Wolfner, 1896) 11.

⁷ Mihály Szajbély, *A nemzeti narratíva szerepe a magyar irodalmi kánon alakulásában Világos után* (Budapest: Universitas, 2005), 314.

⁸ Great wave of talentless followers of the famous national poet, Sándor Petőfi after his death in the war of independence in 1849.

⁹ Szajbély, *A nemzeti narratíva...*, 316–317

¹⁰ Domokos Kosáry and Béla G. Németh, eds., *A magyar sajtó története 1848–1867*, vol. II/1: Szabolcsi Miklós, ed. *A magyar sajtó története* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1985), 435–436.

¹¹ D. Szemző, „A Nővilág megszűnési...”, 127.

the editor created *Nővilág* to be the equivalent of the prestigious weekly newspaper, *Vasárnapi Újság* for women.¹² Literary fashion magazines were popular in the reform era, but by this time they have become outdated,¹³ so following a western model, they published a high-quality weekly which included contemporary literature and fashion. Keeping the standards higher than its competitors required focused work and the recruitment of renowned authors.

Júlia Jósika, the fashion columnist of the magazine since the first issue, was an overall favourite. Vajda himself found her *Original fashion tidings* and lifestyle articles to be the most popular pieces of *Nővilág* – although sometimes he had to edit her writings in fear of police inspection. He wrote in his letter to Miklós Jósika in 1859:

I read the article titled „Courage”, just like all the letters coming from the Rt. Hon. Baronesse for the first time only when revising them. They were harmless in the political sense, but at home [in Hungary] we know that the press-police reads between the lines straightaway, especially in case of a magazine in mass circulation and especially these days with the current happenings [...]. They would have indeed banned my magazine, whereon already weighs a written warning, moreover a trimester ago I barely eluded six weeks of captivity for a couple of reckless lines of mine. Thus I must be overmuch alert. I had to sacrifice the true meaning of the article „Courage”, and I changed it, as I could, and as it was possible so quickly.
[...] I have to admit that the letters from Brussels are most valuable for my magazine; therefore I pay great attention to them, and I am embarrassed when I can not decipher some of the lesser-known fashion technicalities in the manuscript.¹⁴

The quoted fragment sheds light on two relevant factors regarding my topic. On one hand, János Vajda testifies to the exceeding popularity of Júlia Jósika's column. It was clear even from the constantly growing font size with which her name was printed in subscription advertisements; in the words of Gyula Barla, her column was „the most attractive feature” of *Nővilág*.¹⁵ On the other hand, the letter clearly shows the

¹² János Miklóssy, „Irodalmi folyóirataink a Bach-korszakban”, *Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Évkönyve* (Budapest, 1973), 233–290, 274–275: <http://epa.oszk.hu/01400/01464/00012/pdf/233-290.pdf> (hozzáférés: 2022. 01. 31).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹⁴ „A »Bátorság« című cikket, mint a Mélt. bárónő minden levelét, csak revisionál olvastam először. Világos, hogy politikailag ártatlan volt, de mi tudjuk itthon, hogy a sajtórendőrség, kivált egy elterjedt ujságban, és a jelen mozgalmak közt [...] mindjárt a sorok közt olvas. Bizonyos, hogy letiltotta volna lapomat, melyen már egy írásbeli intés súlyosbodik, azonkívül, hogy harmadéve alig menekedtem hat heti fogságtól egy pár meggondolatlan soromért. Tehát szerfölött óvatosnak kell lennem. Föl kelle áldoznom a »Bátorság« című cikk helyesebb értelmét, s változtattam a hogy tudtam, s a hogy hamarjában lehetett. [...] Belátom, hogy a brüsszeli levelek teszik lapom legfőbb értékét, ezért nagy figyelmet fordítok rájuk, s nagy zavarban vagyok, ha néha egy egy ismeretlen divatműszót a kéziratban nem tudok elolvasni.” (Translation by J. K.) János Vajda, „Jósika Miklóshoz”, in Vajda, János, *Levelezés*, eds. Dezső Boros and János Barta János, Vajda János Összes művei 10 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982), 12.

¹⁵ János Vajda, *Kisebbségi költemények*, comps. Gyula Barla and Dezső Boros, ed. János Barta, Vajda János Összes művei 1 (Budapest: Akadémiai 1969), 295.

delicate relationship between the weekly and the authorities; furthermore it expresses the need for increased caution with any (seemingly) political topics.

It was not entirely a gratuitous assumption to suspect political messages in the article *Bátorság*. Regarding the Jósika-correspondence it is clear, that the pair did have active connections to Lajos Kossuth and his family, together with other Hungarian political emigrants.

In 1859 Lajos Kossuth joined György Klapka and László Teleki – regardless of their past disagreements – and together they lead an initiation in London, which sought to induce a new outburst of the Hungarian revolution against the Habsburg.¹⁶ The Franco-Austrian war was around the corner, and the group, formed of Hungarian emigrants hoped to make use of the possible international political rearrangements to support the Hungarian cause.¹⁷ Although later the endeavour failed and this expected second revolution never happened, in 1859 the agencies of emigrant Hungarians made an echo in Hungary too.

All of this was closely related to the spread of the Hungarian national attire, since under these circumstances fashion was a comfortable and safe area in the national narrative.

Júlia Jósika, who gained her popularity with her reports on French fashion, found the most suitable role – regarding her temperament as an author and the demands of the market – in the duplex cultural transfer during her ten-year-long stay in Brussels. Her career started with the translations of Miklós Jósika's novels from Hungarian to German, after which came her own volumes in Hungarian, one after the other. She edited annuals, miscellanea, and was also a press-correspondent to several newspapers and magazines in Pest by reporting about cultural, scientific and economic news of Western Europe, as well as the everyday life of Brussels. Spreading Hungarian culture in the west was not confined to the translations mentioned above: for example, in 1860 she wrote a thorough and detailed history of Hungarian literature in French, beginning with the reform era up to the contemporaries in the Parisian *Revue Contemporaine*.¹⁸

Stirring up Hungarian cultural life through Western European influence perfectly matched the program of János Vajda and *Nővilág*, especially the emerging new female social roles. However, despite all the ideological parity and her immense popularity, Júlia Jósika lost her fashion column in 1860, and until the next year, her writings vanished from the magazine.

The young and ambitious Lenke Bajza, her competitor in this rivalry, which never escalated to a public press-debate, joined the editorial staff of *Nővilág* in 1858.¹⁹ Just like Júlia Jósika, Lenke Bajza had the right family connections to prevail in the literary scene. Her father, József Bajza provided her with proper education, and she chose to be a writer at a remarkably young age. Later in her life, she evolved to be one of the most popular and without question the most prolific Hungarian female authors of the second half of the 19th Century; though in aesthetic aspects she did not belong to

¹⁶ Ibid., 10–12

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Julie de Jósika „La Littérature Hongroise, Pendant les dix dernières années”, *Revue Contemporaine* 2/17 (1860): 125–147.

¹⁹ Zsuzsa Török, „Legtermékenyebb összes női íróink között”, *Irodalomtörténet* 96, no. 4. (2015): 375–398, 378.

the group of authors consensually considered talented.²⁰ Her first marriage to Gusztáv Heckenast played a massive role in the start of her flourishing career. He was the one who published her first volume titled *Short stories* in 1858.²¹ Note should be taken that Gusztáv Heckenast, the owner of *Nővilág* (and other newspapers) was also the publisher of the *Jósikas*; so among other factors, it could have been a reason why the rivalry between the two fashion columnist ran under the surface, and none of them risked an open confrontation.

For Lenke Bajza *Nővilág* was safe ground and meant publicity, but her name became truly famous only after her second marriage, this time to Ferenc Beniczky, who was also a devoted supporter her work.²² Her début in *Nővilág* took place upon the publication of her first book. János Vajda wrote a warm opinion piece about the volume *Short stories*; furthermore, the magazine promoted the book in every possible way.²³ Only the smaller part of the review is about the actual texts of Lenke Bajza, in the rest, Vajda took a stand in the big debate about female authors that was happening at the time²⁴ – and had nothing to do with the fashion-debate. In the brief part about the short stories, he emphasises their moral value and also levels his not too favourable criticism at the lack of originality and the author's modest skills in the use of language – with particular regard to the fact that the volume is the début book of a very young, up-and-coming author.²⁵ After this Lenke Bajza became a regular contributor of *Nővilág*. She published short stories, travel journals, and by 1860 she obtained the fashion column as well.

As Piroska D. Szemző suggests in her paper on the termination of *Nővilág*, Lenke Bajza strengthened her position in the summer of 1859 when she took over copy editorial tasks from János Vajda during his illness and recovery away from Pest.²⁶ It had to be a short-lived, temporary solution because they did not even place her name next to the editor Vajda's name, nor was it stated in the current subscription advertisements. However, huge publicity followed next year, when the fashion column went through an overall transformation to keep in line with the explosive spreading of Hungarian national attire, and Lenke Bajza's first fashion reports were published.

And now it is time for the central questions of my paper, which puzzled the publicists of the period. May tradition become fashion? Can Hungarian national clothing be subsumed into the waves of fashion that change with the seasons? Is it possible to conserve national dressing, frozen in time, in its one and only historical state (if it even exists), in the crossfire of fashion magazines' and social events' hunger for novelty?

²⁰ Anna Fábri, „*A szép, tiltott táj felé*”: *A magyar írónők története a két századforduló között: 1795–1905* (Budapest, Kortárs, 1996), 133.

²¹ Török, „»Legtermékenyebb...«” 378–379.

²² *Ibid.*, 381–382.

²³ *Ibid.*, 380.

²⁴ The debate was started in the *Pesti Napló*, 1858. No. 61. by Pál Gyulai, who questioned women's capability of any intellectual work, which also sets them back from fulfilling their main duties as housewives. Vajda took the opposite side; he encouraged women to take an active part in cultural life, and he welcomed all female writers. János Arany entered the debate in the middle: he thought that the aesthetic value of a text is more important than the gender of the author. See more: Gábor Vaderna, „Gyulai Pál, Arany János és a nők: A női írás a 19. század második felében Magyarországon”, *Irodalomtörténet* 96, no 2. (2015) 146–175.

²⁵ János Vajda, „Könyvismertetés: Bajza Lenke beszélői – Két kötet – »Az eskü«, »A különccz«, *Nővilág* 2, no. 26 (June 27, 1858).

²⁶ D. Szemző, „A *Nővilág* megszűnési...”, 129.

The year 1859 brought a significant change to the bourgeois society's fashion in Pest. In November–December the fashion columns in the magazines *Napkelet*, *Nefelet*, *Divatcsarnok* and *Nővilág* informed the public about Hungarian *dolman* (hussar pelisse), so-called *kanász-hat*, and the peculiar jacket called *atilla* for both men and women. The topic of appearance had stronger political meaning than ever. The fashion, filled with symbolic significance, created political parlance, and no one could back out of it by the necessity of clothing²⁷.

The craze about this type of attire was so prevalent that particular pieces of Hungarian clothing were on sale in foreign countries too – naturally without the ideological overtone.

The Hungarian attire derived from the 17–18th century noble formal wear, and compiled of western and Turkish elements was not a national symbol because of its Hungarian cultural origin, but because of its unchanging nature. In this era, folk clothing was considered to be vulgar; therefore, no elements²⁸ of lower classes' ethnic dress became part of the Hungarian national attire, which belonged to the bourgeoisie and the nobility.²⁹

The temporary recrudescences through epoch and epoch can be connected. National clothing, enriched with a new meaning appeared at the turn of 1820s and 1830s at the international events of Hungarian aristocracy, for example in 1829, at a Hungarian dance evening in Paris. The report about the ball, published in *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* in the same year, provides detailed portrayals of the guests, the dancecard, and of course, the Hungarian costumes.³⁰ This report was published once again in 1859 in *Vasárnapi Újság*³¹ as a reaction to the current fashion trend and for the 30th anniversary of the Parisian Hungarian dance evening.³² The editorial remark is worthy of note because it explains the reason behind the new publication of the old article:³³ „This report, which generated delight when it first appeared, as some of our elderly readers remember, has not lost its significance today when we are celebrating its 30th anniversary.”³⁴ These lines prove that in the carnival season of 1859 it was not rare to see Hungarian costumes just like those that were described in the article from 1829.

The general fashion of national clothing rested upon tradition, and the columnists often referred to old articles, making the impression that it was a continuous process, but the enthusiasm about Hungarian dressing whisted shortly after every occasion. The pieces of Hungarian attire that were widespread in the 1850s–60s later, in the

²⁷ Lukács, *Nemzeti divat...*, 10.

²⁸ There was one exception, in the carnival-season of 1844–1845 when the *kékfestő* [‘blue print’, patterned linen fabric in ethnic dressing and home furnishing] was worn with ball-gowns as a gesture of support to the national trade but this fashion lasted only one winter. See more: Katalin F. Dózsa, „A kékfestő az úri divatban”, in Id., *„Megbámulni és megbámultatni”: Viselettörténeti tanulmányok* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2014), 191–195.

²⁹ Lukács, *Nemzeti divat...*, 13.

³⁰ Gáspár Fekete, „Magyar táncz Párisban (Február 9-én 1829)”, *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, 13, vol. 1 (1829): 114.

³¹ Id., „Magyar táncz Párisban (Február 9-én 1829)”, *Vasárnapi Újság*, 6, no. 6 (February 6, 1859).

³² Zsolt Gere, *Szebb idők: Vörösmarty epikus korszakának rétegei*, Irodalomtörténeti Füzetek 174 (Budapest: Argumentum, 2013), 200.

³³ Id., *ibid.*, 200 (footnote 49).

³⁴ „E közlemény, melyly megjelenésekor, mint idősebb olvasóink emlékeznek, igen öröndetes hatást gerjesztett, most sem vesztette el érdekét, midőn annak épen 30-ik évfordulóját értük.” (Translation by J. K.) *Vasárnapi Újság*, 6, no. 6 (February 6, 1859).

second half of the century served as the full dresses for formal events in the upper classes, although well-off peasants borrowed some of its elements and incorporated them into the folk dressing.³⁵

Following or refusing fashion trends has a function to show identification to or separation from a specific group. Traditionally it is an unambiguous sign of societal status, but, thanks to its complex semiology, it can convey much more about its wearer than just their wealth.

Copywriters of *Napkelet* who used appearance for visible political identification set up two categories: one was the ideologically charged *clothing*, which they considered superior to the other type, the ideology-free *fashion*, which they rated low.³⁶ In other newspapers these two terms were interchangeable.

Judging Hungarian clothing based on aesthetic aspects was a matter of dispute amongst its followers. There was a conservative group of people who saw the survival of tradition in a self-enclosed system, where any synthesis with current European fashion was impossible. An anonymous writer in 1860 in *Napkelet* detaches traditional, invariable *clothing* from *fashion*, regarding the principles of neatness and beauty. Changing every season, experimenting with new patterns for the sake of a flattering appearance is the nature of everyday *fashion*. The author claims that when it comes to wearing Hungarian *clothing*, there is no place for vanity about good looks because the ideology behind it is far more important.³⁷ This way, they transformed clothing from an aesthetic category into a moral philosophical category; and the demand for change and diversity was eliminated. This approach also did not deal with the intercultural origins of the Hungarian national attire.

Some thought just the contrary. János Vajda in 1859 in *Nővilág* captured the essence of Hungarian clothing in its high aesthetic value. He stated that its beauty and grandiosity allows the national dress to *become* fashionable not only in Hungary but also abroad, and it is the main reason for its persistence. He welcomed the phenomenon when an original national treasure becomes so popular that it can create fashion by itself and spread all over the countries. From his point of view, these are the cultural footprints of a nation, something to be remembered.

We may perish from the face of the earth, and we may completely change, melt away in time just like other, more mighty peoples, our language may fade away, but our clothing may survive, until the current generation of the world perishes, and as the language of the Latins in the clergy, the hussar-uniform will be common in Europe's armies.

And now, as we start to wear our national attire in public life again, we can say with unwarping and well-deserved pride, that we venerate not only a peculiarly Hungarian but also a European fashion.³⁸

³⁵ Lukács, *Nemzeti divat...*, 13.

³⁶ Sándor Hites, *Még dadogtak, amikor ő megszólalt; Jósika Miklós és a történelmi regény* (Budapest: Universitas, 2007), 250

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 251.

³⁸ „Elpusztulhatunk a föld színéről, és elváltozhatunk, szétolvadhatunk idővel csakugy, mint más hatalmasabb népek, elenyészhetik nyelvünk is, de öltözetünk fennmarad, míg a föld jelen nemzedéke el

Vajda shows through military uniform that the spread of a hussar-uniform in Europe is sufficient proof for a warm welcome of Hungarian clothing in the fashion of other nations, and not inferior in beauty to the English or even the French style. From his point of view, it is desirable for Hungarian clothing to become fashionable so that it may expand, and it is also a way to become a part of the Western European cultural community.

Vajda's article *The immortality of Hungarian attire* prepared the next volume's changes of the fashion column, simultaneously defying *Nővilág's* attitude in the matter. The image shift of the magazine did not come from thin air; however, the extent of the change, dictated by the new wave of Hungarian fashion, was not well-communicated at the beginning of the year. Even Vajda and Heckenast possibly made the decision only later about their radical transformation regarding fashion. In January 1860 the subscription advertisements, published in several issues, were promoting the magazine with a free bonus copy of *Ladies' Calendar* edited by Júlia Jósika, and of course, with her fashion reports as well:

Original weekly fashion tidings will be written henceforward by b[aronesse] Júlia Jósika, known to be unrivalled in this matter; furthermore she will continue her generally beloved lifestyle articles in the literature column of our magazine.³⁹

The fashion reports from Brussels survived those subscription advertisements for barely more than a month; the last *Original Fashion Tidings* by Júlia Jósika was published on 12 February, 1860.

The first promotion of the Hungarian attire in *Nővilág* took place on 11 December, 1859. The attached fashion-plate pictured a female *mente* (a typical Hungarian pelisse). According to the caption, beside the already rife Hungarian men's wear, the female versions were evolving too. Júlia Jósika mentions in her fashion report that in a Brussels shop she found a female *atilla* (dark frogged jacket), similar to the one she had read about in a Hungarian fashion magazine. It was not the first occasion that she had spotted Hungarian clothing abroad. Beforehand, in 1857 she described the garish and ridiculous Hungarian costumes of two Belgian gentlemen.⁴⁰ The same year

nem pusztul, s mint a latinok nyelve a papságnál, úgy huszáregyenruha Európa hadseregében – általános lesz. És midőn jelenleg újra viselni kezdjük a közéletben is nemzeti ruhánkat, elfogulatlan s méltó büszkeséggel mondhatjuk, hogy nem csak sajátlagosan magyar de egyszersmind – európai divatnak hódolunk.” (Translation by J. K.) János Vajda, „A magyar öltözet halhatatlansága”, *Nővilág* 3, no. 52. (December 27, 1859).

³⁹„Eredeti divattudósításainkat hetenkint jövőben is az e részben páratlannak ismert b[.] Jósika Júlia irandja; ezenkívül általánosan kedvelt élettani irányozásokat is folytatni fogja lapunk szépirodalmi részében.” (Translation by J. K.) „Előfizetési felhívás”, *Nővilág* 4, no. 2. (January 8, 1860.)

⁴⁰„Two gentlemen appeared in Hungarian costume – but what was that like! – I think, Mr. Kostyál [master tailor of Hungarian attire] would have had an apoplectic fit, had he suddenly seen these two compatriots. – Imagine two stubby Belgian gentlemen, not the youngest ones, in loose, crimson pantaloons with golden trimmings, all of this tucked into high boots, on which golden fingers hung, the size of a fist. Thereto came blue vest – also trimmed – and, in addition, short green tail-coat storiated with lace and trimming. Both likeable characters wore hugeous grenadier caps on their heads, which they deigned to call Colbag, while long flat swords rattled on their sides. Here you have it, Hungarian!” (Translation: J. K.) – „Két uri ember magyar öltözetben jelent meg – de minőben! – azt hiszem a guta ütötte volna meg ijedtében Kostyál urat, ha hirtelen megpillantja a két compatriótát. – Képzeld csak két köpcös belga urat, nem

in the Hungarian carnival season the rope-moulding *pruszlik* (short bodice), *párta* (traditional coronet for unwed girls) and embroidered apron also turned up in full dresses.⁴¹ It is possible that these sporadic appearances foreshadowed the flourish of the Hungarian attire that was to come in 1859–1860.

In the penultimate issue of *Nővilág* of the 1859 volume the portrait of Júlia Jósika was published (which they promised in the subscription advertisement in July), followed by the next piece on her lifestyle articles in the last issue with the suggestive title: *Silence*. In the same issue, unconventionally, János Vajda confers about fashion in his article, *The immortality of Hungarian attire*, to which I have formerly referred.

Henceforward, in her *Original fashion tidings*, Júlia Jósika would always allude to rope-moulding and frogged Hungarian ornaments in western fashion. *Nővilág* dedicates the fashion-plates and captions to promoting the „suddenly arose Hungarian fashion.”⁴² At the end of the issue, the editorial staff made a promise to give an accurate and extensive presentation of Hungarian fashion in the year 1860. They allured readers to buy the magazine as follows:

[...] may You deign to subscribe to our fashion weekly, even so, because it is the cheapest and so far [...] also the most pervading one – and if though it was fortunate enough to earn Your high contentment, it is certain, that in the future it will make itself even more worthy, providing regularly, what foreign fashion magazines are not able to give: original Hungarian fashion-plates [...]⁴³

Hardly surprising that the blooming Hungarian clothing overshadowed the fashion news from abroad. According to the articles, by this time there was almost no interest in Parisian novelties, because anyone, who did not want to be stigmatised by fine society, had to wear Hungarian attire.⁴⁴ This was the very attitude that later the

épen a legfiatalabbikat, vörös bő pantalonban arany paszománttal, magos csizmákba dugva, melyeken ökölnyi arany bojt függött. Ahoz kék mellényt – szintén paszománttal – s ezenfelül zöld rövid frakkot, arany csipkével s paszománttal kicifrázva. Fejeiken roppant gránátos főveget viselt e két szeretetre méltó egyéniség, melyet Colbag-nak méltóztattak nevezni, míg hosszú egyenes kard csörgött oldalakon! Nesze neked magyar!” (Translation by J.K.) Jósika Júlia, „Eredeti divattudósítás”, *Nővilág* 1, no. 18 (May 10, 1857).

⁴¹ Katalin F. Dózsa, „A női divat változásai 1850–1895 között”, in Id., *Megbámulni és megbámultatni: Viselettörténeti tanulmányok* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2014), 302.

⁴² „Müterem”, *Nővilág* 3, no. 52 (December 25, 1859).

⁴³ „[...] méltóztassanak előfizetni divatlapunkra, már csak azért is, mert ez legolcsóbb, s ugyancsak [...] eddig legelterjedtebb is volt – és ha ugyan eddig is szerencsés volt magas megelégedésüket kiérdemelni, bizonyos, hogy jövőben erre még méltóbbá teendi magát, adandván rendesen azt, a mit külföldi divatlapok adni nem képesek: eredeti magyar divatképeket [...]” (Translation by J. K.) „Tárcza”, *Nővilág* 3, no. 51 (December 11, 1859).

⁴⁴ „[...] there are already lots of people, and more every day, who are not wearing Hungarian clothes out of patriotic fondness, but because of the natural desire to adore the ruling and irresistible fashion, and to avoid being found out by their not-Hungarian attire.” (Translation: J.K.) „[...] már is sokan vannak, és napról napra többen lesznek olyanok, kik nem annyira nemzeties előszeretettől, de csupán azon természetes okból is kénytelenek magyar ruhába öltözködni, hogy az uralkodó, az ellenállhatatlan divatnak hódoljanak, és nem magyaros viseletük által föl ne tűnjenek.” János Vajda, „A magyar öltözet...”, 822.

editors of *Napkelet* revolted against, because – in their eyes – this way the Hungarian attire was degraded into a cheap whim without any principals and political awareness.

But why was it so outrageous to wear pieces of Parisian fashion in Pest at this time? After the national movements of Europe in 1848-1849, in the 1850s emerged the so-called *second rococo*, which favoured the Habsburg restoration. In German territories, it meant that people stopped wearing revolutionary barricade-clothing, and started to follow the eccentric fashion of aristocracy again.⁴⁵ It was similar in Hungary too: after the fall of the revolution, the call for traditional national dresses dwindled.

The central figure of the second rococo was Eugénie, Empress of France, the wife of Napoleon III. She admired the style of Marie Antoinette and collected her relics. Empress Eugénie was a fashion-idol all over Europe. Thanks to her, tight-lacing; deep cleavage, crinoline and berthe spread quickly in French fashion.⁴⁶ Naturally, in Vienna, they welcomed this fashion with delight, as it honoured an illustrious member of the House of Habsburg; it is also an explanation for the sharp conflict between Parisian and Hungarian style.

In her very last *Original fashion tiding* Júlia Jósika welcomes the overwhelming headway of Hungarian clothing, and at the same time, since her readers are not interested, she refuses to write about the French style.

This lovely Hungarian attire is a nice and joyful thing; and I am happy with all my heart, that it came to light again – but I have to admit, that there is a lot of selflessness in this joy on my side, because we, poor fashion-reporters have trouble with it! You do not need French fashion anymore – so why would I speak of these? It is a logical conclusion; I wish I had realised what I should write about. However, Hungarian gowns are also made of silk-fabrics, namely beautiful fabrics, and those also needed some lace, ribbon and jewellery etc. So from now on, I will speak about these kinds of things [...]⁴⁷

Speaking of the future of her column, she attempted to adapt to the new wave through descriptions of fabrics all around the world, which can be used to make Hungarian dresses, but she was not competitive enough to keep the column. She kept on writing about fashion now and again, but never in the official fashion column of *Nővilág*. With this, she started a new series of articles about everyday life and holidays in Brussels, wherein she introduced Belgian culture and social life. She praises the more frugal festivities – compared to those in Pest, which naturally manifests itself in clothing too. True to her former style she points out that Hungarian balls and soirées are

⁴⁵ Isabella Belting, *Mode und Revolution: Deutschland 1848/49*, Historische Texte und Studien 15 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1997), 153.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 154.

⁴⁷ „Szép dolog és örvendetes ez a kedves magyar viselet; s szivemből örülök, hogy ismét napvilágot lát – de meg kell vallanom, hogy ez örömben részemről nagy az önzéstelenség; mert ugyan meggyült ezáltal a bajunk, szegény divattudósítóknak! Nincs többé szükséged francia divatokra – tehát minek szóljak ezekről? Ez igen logicus conclusio; bár csak épen annyira tisztában volnék már a fölött is hogy miről irjak. Azonban magyar köntösök is selyemszövetekből készülnek, még pedig szép szövetekből, s azokhoz is kell csipke, szalag, ékszer stb. Tehát ezekről fogok ezután szólni [...]” (Translation by J. K.) Júlia Jósika, „Eredeti divattudósítás”, *Nővilág* 4, no. 7 (February 12, 1860).

exaggerated and wasteful, so she offers a western alternative to arrange festivities with moderate expenses, which in return can be held more often. She did not write those articles in a blinkered manner; did not keep back the weaknesses of Belgian societal events from her readers, for example, she criticised the pitiable music at some dances, and the occasionally appearing scandalous costumes.⁴⁸ Those articles, however, do not speak a word about Hungarian clothing, which intrigued the public the most.

Surprisingly, with all the buzz around Hungarian clothing, *Nővilág* took time to announce the new fashion expert. The magazine had published the latest fashion-plates of Pest, but the first fashion report by Lenke Bajza, where she made a stand by Hungarian clothing, was published only two months later on 1 April; at first anonymously.⁴⁹ The author appreciated the work of her predecessor, and simultaneously, she ended the report this way:

[...] my task is easier than my predecessor's, since for a Hungarian woman it is easier and without doubt more rejoicingful to write about Hungarian fashion than about the common European, but still alien, so-called Parisian fashion.⁵⁰

It was a remarkable act under János Vajda's editorship to dissociate Hungarian fashion from that of Europe and renounce the magazine's western orientation, but it was exactly what she did, and maybe there was no other way to go about it within the current circumstances of the market. A bizarre situation occurred: to show support for the Hungarian revolutionary initiative by emigrant Hungarian politicians in Western-Europe, people turned away from western culture and celebrated an enclosed, eastern-oriented fashion, which they could call their own. It resulted in the political emigrant Júlia Jósika, who, through her husband, had an actual connection to Kosuth and his circle, losing her most important position in *Nővilág* to Lenke Bajza, just because of the enthusiasm about the Hungarian cause.

The initial silence around the new fashion reporter's name was probably the publisher's technique to arouse interest in the new colleague. They published the name „Lenke Bajza-Heckenast” at the *Original fashion report* only at the end of the month, 29 April, 1860. Then came a short editorial note, which clarifies: to avoid *Nővilág* becoming more expensive, Lenke Bajza takes over the column as a „patriotic offering”⁵¹ (sc. for free); besides, they reassured the public, that Júlia Jósika would remain an associate of the magazine.

In July, Lenke Bajza's name appeared for the first time on the subscription advertisement for the second half of the volume, moreover, with a larger font size than her rival's. Altogether the 4th volume was dominated by Júlia Jósika's short stories, life-style advice and other articles, but they took her name off the subscription advertise-

⁴⁸ Id., „A farsang Brüssellen”, *Nővilág* 4, no. 8–9 (February 19–26, 1860).

⁴⁹ The few anonymous *Original fashion reports* belonged to Lenke Bajza without doubt. Besides the obvious features style and structure, she referred to them in the first one, where they published her name.
⁵⁰ „[...] feladatom könnyebb elődöménél, mert hiszen magyar nőnek magyar divatról könnyebb s kétségkívül örvedetesebb dolog írni, mint a bár európailag közös, de mégis idegennek mondható ugynevezett párisi divatról.” (Translation by J. K.) Lenke Heckenast-Bajza, „Eredeti divatjelentés”, *Nővilág* 4, no. 14 (April 1, 1860).

⁵¹ „Tárcza, Pesti Hírek”, *Nővilág* 4, no. 18. (April 29, 1860).

ment for the 5th volume in December, 1860, and Lenke Bajza, who became a leading contributor in 1861, gradually supplanted her from *Nővilág*.

The new stream rejected influences of the Parisian fashion, which meant building in so-called „non-Hungarian”, „bizarre” elements into the national clothing, which can please only foreigners. It satirised the radical and frequent changes of western fashion compared to the traditionalist Hungarian attire, which was praised over the Parisian way concerning both comfort and neatness. Its followers, however, did not refuse certain changes, which made the attire, originally designed as full dress, convenient as everyday wear.

According to fashion reports, by the summer of 1860, Hungarian clothing had become common regardless of age, gender, location of residence and social status. The weakness of Lenke Bajza’s fashion reports was the ungainly use of language, which was criticised earlier by János Vajda regarding her first book of short stories. For her garbled, sometimes almost unreadably poorly formed sentences⁵² she compensated her readers abundantly with the description of „ancient Hungarian attires, one more beautiful than the other”, worn by well-known ladies of Hungarian social life.⁵³ For the subscribers it was more important to meet names and events that are familiar from their own circles, than to read about some famous marquise or Belgian duchess and their fabulous balls, however well-written the article was.

However, the news, the stores and saloons of Pest were full of national fashion-wear, yet the renaissance of Hungarian attire lasted no more than a couple of years both in the capital and in the provinces. Authors of fashion reports struggled in vain against making Hungarian clothing part of a superficial fashion trend, the press tried to link the issue of clothing with national ideology and make it permanent but its journey proved to be rather short.

After the first ball-appearances in 1857, Hungarian clothing filtered in the everyday wear, and it culminated in 1860 when it completely supplanted Parisian fashion from magazines and social events. This exclusivity lasted only one year. In 1861 western elements started to appear, and in 1862 Hungarian noble ladies started to follow the style of Alexandra of Denmark, the future Princess of Wales. In 1865 the patriotic enthusiasm faded away regarding everyday female clothing, and by 1868 it had almost wholly disappeared,⁵⁴ together with the revolutionary ideas.

To choose Hungarian clothing instead of Parisian fashion, which was so popular in Vienna too, favouring one’s own tradition over a foreign trend was considered as important as the preservation of the language in the narrative of national unity – for some time. In the end the issue of the Hungarian attire’s general spread amongst the whole population as a tool of national self-preservation proved to be the one thing that it despised the most: a short-lived fashion, unable to become more than appearances, just a fad for a couple of seasons.

⁵² E.g.: „In this regard for us it is not only interesting, what is new, but what is interesting.” (Translation by J. K.) „Ezen szemponból kiindulva előttünk nem csupán az érdekes a mi új, hanem az a mi érdekes.” Lenke Heckenast-Bajza, „Eredeti divatjelentés”, *Nővilág* 4, no. 16. (April 15, 1860)

⁵³ Id., „Eredeti divatjelentés”, *Nővilág* 4. no. 16. (April 15, 1860.)

⁵⁴ F. Dózsa, *A női divat...*, 305–314.

ABSTRACT

The politically motivated language of fashion in the magazine *Nővilág* in 1859–1860

At the turn of the 1850s and 1860s a topic, which generated serious disputes in the reform era, was a fad again in Hungary – national clothing. With the slackening political rigour, the traditional Hungarian dress as a symbol of national togetherness was on the agenda yet again in Hungarian-language fashion magazines of Pest.

The *Nővilág* [Woman's World] edited by János Vajda aimed to work on women's aesthetic education since the start of the magazine in 1857. The column named *Original Fashion Report* was written by the leading contributor of the magazine Júlia Jósika, who has been a correspondent on up-to-date French and Belgian fashion from Brussels. Her articles had widespread popularity until 1860. The *Original Fashion Report* with this name was published for the last time in February, 1860; then the column was renamed, and as a result of a slow process until the end of the year Júlia Jósika's fashion reports disappeared from *Nővilág*. Her place was taken by the young writer with increasing publicity, Lenke Bajza, who stood up for national fashion. She, just like Júlia Jósika, worked for the magazine as a fiction writer and fashion professional.

This change can be associated not with aesthetic but political decisions. Because of a delicate international political situation in the year 1859 Hungarian revisionists started to hope again for a new revolution for independence from Austria. With a press being strictly supervised by the police, traditional Hungarian fashion became part of the language of national solidarity.

In my paper I will describe the competition of French fashion and traditional Hungarian clothing through Júlia Jósika's and Lenke Bajza's confronting fashion reports and the changes made to *Nővilág* in the context of the politically charged alternative language of clothing.