

LINGUISTIC THEORIES AND NATIONAL IMAGES IN 19TH CENTURY HUNGARY¹

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1. Introduction

In 1791, Johann Gottfried Herder commented:

...as for the Hungarians or Magyars, squeezed between Slavs, Germans, Vlachs and other peoples, they are now the smallest part of their country's population and in centuries to come even their language will probably be lost (cited in Pukánszky 1921: 35).

We are used to understanding Herder as a founder of western philology and anthropology, as one of those who helped put into place the great discursive opposition in 19th century European thought between the Aryan and the Semitic races (Olender 1992: 37-51). He is usually cast as a precursor of Europe's "orientalist" project (Said 1978). Herder's comment on the Magyars forms a single subordinate clause in a four volume work, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*; he has little more to say about them. Yet in Hungary, Herder's name is popularly known mainly for this prophecy of national death, and throughout the 19th century Hungarian writers repeatedly argued with the prophecy, and tried to vitiate it through linguistic and educational reform.² Its effect on Hungarian thinking concerning language is by no means over. A book entitled *Herder amyékában* 'In Herder's shadow,' warning yet again of the dangers of language loss, appeared in 1979 in a popular paperback series.

The difference in magnitude between Herder's comment and the Hungarian response highlights the power disparity between regions and scholars, and is part of my story. In sympathy with writers on colonial discourse and orientalism who have criticized recent work as overly focused on the European center (e.g. Dirks 1992), I propose to reverse the perspective, viewing German metropolitan thinkers on language from a distinctly peripheral, that is, Hungarian point of view.

Much of eastern Europe can be considered among Europe's first colonies - agricultural producers for the Prussians and the Habsburg Empire - part of that "east" which European scholarship and administration created to define itself. As

¹ Many thanks to Kit Woolard for her stimulating questions, and to Bill Hanks for his comments at the AAA symposium.

² Pukánszky (1921) carefully describes the few paragraphs that Herder devotes to the Hungarian language and people, tracing the reception and influence of this part of Herder's work on Hungarian scholarship and literary life in the 19th century.

was the case in many overseas colonies, elites of eastern Europe were in constant contact with German, French and English scholarship during the 18th and 19th centuries. Indeed, Hungarian, Romanian and Slavic elites helped create these ideas, sometimes to form their own "eastern" identities in opposition to "Europe." At other times they argued for their own "Europeanness" and thus for political and military support to guard European frontiers against invaders from further east (Verdery 1991: Chap 2). Then, as now, this dichotomous discourse about "Europe" and the "east" worked as a symbolic counter, a linguistic shifter of identity (Gal 1991). Thus, I focus not on the orientalist project of the metropole building its vision of itself by constructing a devalued, homogenous, changeless other, but rather on what the changing and far from homogeneous objects of that categorizing did with some of these ideas.

More specifically, my aim is to examine briefly two well-known linguistic debates of the late 19th century in Hungary (roughly 1870-1890): a) on the origins and genetic relationships of the Hungarian language, and b) on the ways in which the language should be modernized, expanded and reformed to meet the needs of an increasingly capitalist society. The two debates, while contemporaneous and equally discussed in Hungarian historiography, are nevertheless rarely treated together. This is perhaps because they appear to take up quite different issues. Nevertheless, it is clear that the participants wrote for and read the same few journals, were involved in close collegial or student-teacher relationships, and those best known for their contribution in one discussion occasionally also commented on the other.³ I suggest that the implicit links between the two debates become clearer if we view them not only as scholarly arguments about specific linguistic problems, but simultaneously as coded contests that, in different ways, proposed to define the "nation" and a national public. At the same time, the debates were equally about claims to a professional expertise that could legitimately provide such definitions.

Both of the debates drew on ideas about the nature of language and its relation to social life that were developed earlier in German and English writings. By reworking these ideas and inscribing them in everyday practices, Hungarian thinkers, publishers, newspaper writers, administrators and politicians were literally creating the Hungarian language, along with its popular image. In this process, they also created categories of identity that formed *external* boundaries defining what "Hungarian" was vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Simultaneously, they formed *internal* boundaries defining what part of the population counted as really Hungarian; what part would be imagined, taken-for-granted as the anonymous "public" or "people" who spoke that language. This question was particularly salient for the Kingdom of Hungary in the late 19th century, as for other similar structures all over the continent. Hungary was culturally and linguistically very heterogenous, and its earlier form of ideological unity - loyalty to the Crown of St. Stephen - was being challenged as a form of political legitimacy by nationalisms imagined in ethnic terms. Both kinds of boundaries were thus matters of struggle, not only among linguists,

³ For biographical information as well as evidence on friendship links between the linguists of the period, see Pinter (1934), who provides much more straightforward information, especially on religious and ethnic background, than any works produced during the state-socialist period.

but also among broader social groups and classes.

In analyzing these 19th century arguments, I draw on a notion of "public" as an ideological construct that is often dependent on print, and thus on the decontextualization of language. It is not an empirically countable audience, nor even a notion of readership, modelled on face-to-face interaction. Rather, one might call it a logic for the legitimation of political power that gets its authority from supposedly including "everyone." This negative notion of the public has been identified in a number of forms in recent studies of post-absolutist Europe and North America. Warner (1990), building on Habermas' early work on European publics, argues that the legitimacy of 18th century American republicanism was based on the idea of disinterested individuals who, because the anonymity of print allowed them to be no-one-in-particular, could claim to represent the "people." Anderson's (1983) notion of an "imagined community" plays on this same logic of a non-face-to-face social group defined through simultaneous reading as everyone-because-no-one-in-particular. The related idea of the *Volk* accomplishes the same thing: Collections of tales whose authors were deliberately effaced to produce an image of the authentic folk who are "everyone" because no-one. In 19th century Hungary, one set of arguments about the national language worked in just this way to create the image of a political unit defined and legitimated through a standard language supposedly linked to no particular group, whose inherent laws were discovered through the disinterested expertise of linguistic science.

2. External boundaries

By the middle of the 19th century, the earlier influence of Herder in Hungary was far outstripped by the ideas of the Victorian linguist, Max Müller. Müller's *Lectures on the science of language*, delivered to the Royal Society in the 1860s, argued for the view that linguistics is a natural science, and languages are organisms of the natural world. Lecture 8 proposed the famous hierarchy of languages and cultures which is recognizable as part of the wider discourse about Aryan and Semitic peoples. Müller first distinguished the isolating languages, exemplified by Chinese, in which grammatical relations are not signalled by suffixation at all. In contrast, agglutinating languages, exemplified by what Müller called the "Turanian" language family of Central Asia, added suffixes without altering the roots, and their speakers were nomadic hordes unsuited to state-making. The highest evolutionary category included the Semitic and Aryan languages which were inflecting. The root was systematically changed by affixation signaling grammatical relation. These, Müller asserted, were the languages of high civilizations.

Müller's lectures were reviewed in Hungary soon after their publication and, unusual for contemporary linguistic works, were translated into Hungarian in the 1870s. This interest was perhaps not entirely scientific, but due in part to matters of self-representation. Müller had wide, international influence. A-German-born philosopher, linguist, and orientalist who had gone to England in his youth, his research on eastern languages was supported by the East India Company. Although he wrote in English, and held a professorship at Oxford, he was translated into German and several other languages. Most importantly, he had discussed Magyar directly, placing it among the Turanian family of languages, those whose speakers

were categorized as incapable of state-making. Such news came at a bad time for Hungarian elites, who were just embarking on yet another effort at political independence, trying to undo the effects of their defeat in the 1848 revolution against the Habsburgs.

In addition, Müller's work arrived in the midst of a centuries-long debate among Hungarian nobility and literati about the origins of their language. During the early 19th century the view that Hungarian was related to Hebrew and Sumerian was sustained alongside the idea that it was related to Persian, Chinese, Hun or Tatar, or without any relatives at all, and older than Sanskrit or Hebrew (Láncz 1987: 93-4). Note, however, that the idea of genetic relationship and methods for determining it were far from fixed at this time. Indeed, on the issue of Hungarian provenance one could find apparently contradictory views even within the work of single scholars.

The relationship with Lapp, Finnish and Estonian that later became the accepted orthodoxy had also been written about for centuries, inside as well as outside Hungary. However, in contrast to the other hypotheses, which had ardent supporters, this one was not a popular view within Hungarian literary circles in the mid-19th century. On the contrary, despite increasing information from scientific expeditions to the Scandinavian countries, inner Asia, and northern Siberia, all pointing to the existence of a Finno-Ugric language group in which Hungarian could be considered one of the Ugric branch, disputes about this matter continued well into the twentieth century and received not only scholarly but also great popular attention. It occupied the family picture magazines, as well as the political, and cultural weeklies that mushroomed in Budapest in the final decades of the 19th century, as increasing foreign investment finally produced the growth of a literate, capitalist middle class.

In the 1880s, champions of the Finno-Ugric relation faced off against those arguing for a link to Turkish. There was linguistic evidence for both positions. Much depended on how one defined genetic relationship, and well-trained linguists could be found on both sides. Nevertheless, subsequent accounts of this debate, dubbed the "Ugric-Turkish War" have cast the Finno-Ugric camp as the heroic defenders of positive science, matched against hopeless amateurs. As Békés (1991) has recently suggested, it would be more accurate to read this as a later construction, written by the institutional winners of the debate. The Finno-Ugric side regularly appealed to the authority of unshakeable scientific truths, and argued about methodological issues: The proper application of the comparative method, the importance of eliminating loan words before making judgments about genetic relation, the centrality of affixation and regular sound change (Pusztay 1977). They accused their opponents of insufficient scientific expertise. The other side, in contrast, called such matters mere minor details and pointed to the indisputable and major presence of Turkic elements in Hungarian vocabulary.

But for the general reading public, what proved to be crucial was the very different images of the Magyar self offered by the two sides. These images relied on the metaphor of "family" and "relatedness" and had political implications both at home and abroad. Note that both sides acknowledged the "Asian" as opposed to "European" provenance of Hungarian. It was a question of what to make of that. The self-styled experts, in the name of science and thus a higher Europeanness, accepted the family relation with the simplest of Asian societies: Voguls and

Ostyaks, small fishing communities of the upper Volga, the only populations of the Finno-Ugric peoples that actually lived in what was doubtless thought of as the wilds of Siberia. The supporters of the Turkish connection, in contrast, fed the popular appetite for Turkic imperial exoticism and the special affection for the empire of the Ottoman Turks, who had accepted Kossuth (leader of the 1848 revolution) when he fled from the Habsburgs, and who opposed the Pan-Slavic movement that was seen as a threat to Hungarian sovereignty.

Those linguists and literary men who rejected the Finno-Ugric hypothesis later summarized their view in the contemptuous motto *halszagú atyafiság* 'a kinship connection that smells of fish.' For instance, the linguist Gábor Szarvas remembered his early years as a provincial gymnasium teacher, when he had refused to read the journal that published evidence of the Finno-Ugric connection on the grounds that: "We don't need a science that smells of fish," (1893: 441). He had preferred to see the Magyars as descended from the conquering hordes of the Asian steppe: Proud, calm, mysterious horsemen, born warriors and leaders. This alternate view was well represented in a popular handbook of Hungarian literature that saw six printings and was long used in schools. Opening with a memorable chapter entitled "From the banks of the Volga: A few ancient characteristics of the Magyar soul," it pictures a single "eagle-eyed horseman" in "leopard-skin with Persian sword" calmly scanning the horizon, awaiting his enemy. "If only a few of them come, he will fight them alone; if they come in a horde he will call the others," (Beöthy 1896: 15-16). This image certainly suited the specific political tasks of the late 19th century, when Hungarian elites were attempting to recover from the defeat of 1848, re-establish a semi-independent state within the Dual Monarchy, and continue to claim the moral right to rule over an ethnically diverse and increasingly restive population.

For all concerned, the debate quite self-consciously involved images projected not only to domestic audiences but to western metropolitan audiences who were potential political allies and foes. The most prolific writer embracing the image of the-Turkish-Asian was Ármin Vámbéry, a Turkologist, eccentric journalist and political correspondent who in his travels in Asia had managed to gain notoriety by penetrating several sacred Islamic sites in disguise. He frequently reported to the British press on conditions in Turkey and the Caucasus. On several lecture tours to England in the course of the 1870s and 1880s, his eye-witness accounts of military activity in the Balkans were especially welcomed. His books on the east, including a history of the Hungarians, appeared in popular editions in English as well as German and Hungarian (e.g. Vámbéry 1895).

Among those on the other side were Joseph Budenz, finno-ugrist and general linguist, and the eminent polymath Pál Hunfalvy, who was founder of Hungary's first technical linguistics journal and first president of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society. While opposing Vámbéry bitterly at home, Hunfalvy was no less attuned than he to foreign audiences and to a larger international context that could potentially influence Hungarian political alliances.

In 1874 Hunfalvy attended the second Orientalist Congress, held in London, and registered what students of colonial discourse would surely call contestation. In the name of science, he delivered a scathing attack on the theories of Max Müller, whose preeminence among orientalists was signalled by his role as President of the Congress. Hunfalvy questioned Müller's category of "Turanian" languages; he tore

to shreds the categories of isolating, agglutinating and inflecting languages, demonstrating that agglutination and inflection are not mutually exclusive processes, and could occur together in a single language. Most radically, Hunfalvy asserted that one cannot logically and scientifically infer, from a categorization of languages, any hierarchical ordering of cultures or levels of political development. The implication was that the scientifically established link between Hungarian and the languages of simpler, stateless societies should have no necessary political entailments. In his report about the Orientalist Congress, delivered to colleagues at home, Hunfalvy sadly noted that the President was unaffected by these arguments, clearly having political commitments to his own position (see Hunfalvy 1875, 1876; Zsigmond 1977). Yet Hunfalvy himself gained legitimacy for his science at home by publicizing this dispute with Müller.

And the two opposed positions in the Ugric-Turkish War were not without their further ironies. The very expeditions to Russia, Siberia and Mongolia that ultimately provided the evidence to clinch the Finno-Ugric case also created the opportunity for Turkish exoticism. Such expeditions were dished up in lurid detail by the popular weekly magazines for the delectation of a new, bourgeois audience. These urbanite readers were intensely interested in a romantic, mysterious orient, and their own relation to it. The press offered them travelogues, but "begged to differ" from the scholarly conclusions drawn on the basis of the newly gathered evidence, emphasizing instead a Turkish-Hungarian kinship. Nor did the defenders of the Finno-Ugric connection necessarily believe that the linguistic relationship they so ardently supported implied any stance of social closeness or solidarity. When József Budenz, in the 1880s, was writing his ground-breaking works on the grammar of the Samoyed language, he was able to consult some native speakers of that language who had been brought to Budapest. A newspaper report of the period remarks, in passing, that Budenz's visits to the Samoyed couple were complicated by the fact that they were forced to reside in the Budapest zoo.

3. Internal boundaries

Hunfalvy and Budenz both suffered attacks in the press and in literary circles for their supposedly unpatriotic opinions on the origins of the Hungarian language. Such charges were especially outrageous in the case of Hunfalvy who had been jailed by the Habsburg police for his pro-independence activities in the 1848 Revolution. Both men claimed loyalty to Hungary, but both were vulnerable to such charges because, in fact, neither was ethnically Hungarian. Nor were many of the major figures on the opposite side. Vámbéry was the son of poor Jewish tradesmen in northwestern Hungary; Hunfalvy was from a Saxon German family in what is now Slovakia; Budenz was born in German Fulda and only came to Budapest as an adult to teach in a German-speaking Lutheran gymnasium. None was a native speaker of Hungarian (see Pinter 1934).

For this very reason, these men can serve here as emblems of the major social processes transforming Hungarian society in the second half of the 19th century. As a relatively underdeveloped part of the region, Hungary was a lucrative site for western capitalist investment after 1848, and especially after the Compromise with Austria that created the Dual Monarchy in 1867. What followed

was the rise of an urban middle class, focussed on the new capital of Budapest, and made up of very diverse social and cultural elements: The Hungarian gentry and aristocratic ruling stratum were only a small part of this population. It included as well Hungarian-speaking peasants migrating from the countryside and from smaller cities, along with Slovakian, Romanian, Ukrainian and German-speaking migrants. Important as well were the original inhabitants of Hungarian cities who were German-speaking, guild-based craftspeople, and German-speaking Jews engaged in crafts and commerce. These groups were now joined by a new Jewish migration from Moravia in the west and from Poland, Russia and Ukraine in the east. In addition, the administrative and clerical workers of the Dual Monarchy were German-speaking Austrians, and they made up a sizable part of Budapest's population.⁴

Despite this cultural mix, it was elements of the Hungarian-speaking gentry and the high aristocracy that traditionally constituted the politically active segment of the population. They had led the 1848 Revolution. They had also produced those literary men and politicians who initiated the reform of the Hungarian language at the end of the 18th century. Works from that period attest to the nobility's frustration as they attempted to translate western literature into Hungarian. The effort convinced many that Hungarian was an inadequate language, persuading them of the necessity to change and develop it if Hungary was to participate in European artistic movements, science, nation-craft, and capitalist, industrial and technical advance. Further impetus to this first linguistic reform was the "enlightened" Language Decree of 1784, in which the Habsburg court, aiming for bureaucratic efficiency, attempted to make German the official language of the entire Empire. The Hungarian nobility's resistance to this decree was intense, and took the form of ever stronger initiatives to defend and develop the Hungarian language as a form of national consciousness. By the first decades of the 19th century thousands of new words had been coined, roots were "discovered," and word-formation devices invented, along with stylistic and genre experiments in poetry, prose and drama.⁵

However, when the technical and commercial changes of early capitalism in fact started to transform the country, some fifty years after the first initiatives of language reform, the social strata involved were only partially the Hungarian speaking gentry and higher nobility that had been most centrally active in the earlier movement to renew the language. Indeed, as late as the 1860s, much of Hungarian economic life, state administration, and scholarly life were conducted by German-speakers in German. Those who tried to create scientific and economic vocabularies for Hungarian in the 1850s, for instance, were not themselves native speakers of Hungarian (Fábián 1984: 42-50).

⁴ The classic account of the social processes in late 19th century Hungary that are very briefly sketched here remains Hanák (1975); for economic history covered in detail, see Berend and Ránki (1974).

⁵ This important episode has a voluminous literature. Among the better known recent works: Szegedy-Maszák (1988) gives a useful outline of Hungarian romanticism and its linguistic component; Fábián (1984) is a complete history of the language reform movement in Hungary. Fábri (1987) provides a fascinating view of the literary salons of the early 19th century and their literary and linguistic ideologies.

By the end of the 19th century, the linguistically heterogeneous migrants to Budapest were forming a middle class whose disparate elements were actively seeking the symbolic means to distinguish themselves from their origins and from other strata. It was the new magazines and newspapers that provided, in part, their conceptions of who they were, new values and practices linked to consumption, cultural production and politics. The newspapers provided templates as much for language use and everyday etiquette as for morality and aesthetics. Yet a great gulf was apparent between literary life, which was largely Hungarian, and the urban newspapers which had for centuries been written mostly in German. When Hungarian papers started to appear in increasing numbers in the 1860s, they were often no more than Hungarian versions or bilingual versions of German papers. Articles were translated directly, and German stylistic models were freely adopted. Indeed, the Hungarian papers were written by the same journalists as the German ones, or by others who were similarly newcomers to Hungarian: The children of Slovak, Jewish, or Romanian migrants. The readership itself was largely bilingual. Thus the debates about correct Hungarian usage I describe below are best seen as part of the means by which these middle classes tried to make themselves, and make themselves Hungarian. For, although the literary heirs of the Hungarian gentry who had controlled the earlier language reform retained enormous prestige in the eyes of the new middle classes, they were no longer the undisputed leaders of these massive linguistic and cultural changes.

All the more reason for literary men in this period to complain about the "ruination" "deterioration" and "corruption" of the Hungarian language, its "unhungarianness." In response to their perception of these problems they mobilized the Academy of Sciences to establish a journal called *Nyelvőr* 'Language Guardian', with the express aim of once again reforming and saving the language from destruction by "cleaning" it of foreign elements. This initiated the second wave of reform, a purist movement whose descendants, still fighting "In Herder's shadow" to save the language, remain quite active in Hungary.⁶

The second linguistic debate I discuss centered around the activities of this journal, the conceptions of its editors about proper Hungarian, the notions about language in general that determined the journal's policies, and its recommendations for reform. The scholars embroiled in the Ugric-Turkish debate contributed to the *Nyelvőr* as well, but were less active in the editorial policy I examine here. Like Hunfalvy, Budenz and Vámbéry, the editors and other contributors of the *Nyelvőr* were mostly the sons of newly mobile or newly Hungarian-speaking families. For instance, Gábor Szarvas, the first editor, migrated to Budapest from a Hungarian town in what is now Slovakia; his close assistant György Volf was of a German-speaking family from the outskirts of the city; Zsigmond Simonyi, who later replaced Szarvas as editor, had started out as a teacher in a Budapest rabbinical academy.

Again, like their contemporaries in the Turkish debate, Szarvas and his allies

⁶ For this description of the late 19th century culture wars, and the language ideologies espoused by the various contesting parties, I have relied primarily on Németh's (1970) astute analysis, on Lánosz's (1987) detailed account of the philosophical assumptions and scholarly issues of the second language reform, and a selective reading of the contemporary popular and scholarly press. Also useful is the encyclopedic history of the Hungarian press of the period (Kosáry and Németh 1985)

drew on the theoretical proposals of writers like Max Müller, August Schleicher and other influential German linguists, changing these ideas while deploying them for new purposes in Budapest's cultural scene. Central for Szarvas, as for many others, was the view that language is an organism with laws of growth and change independent of its users.⁷ He added, however, that these laws could best be ascertained by linguists studying older varieties and forms used in the countryside. Rural dialects and the stylistic devices of the rural gentry were considered to be less susceptible to language-external damage, but even these forms were sometimes led astray, away from the immanent, internal laws by which each language develops. The linguists of the *Nyelvőr* considered themselves the guardians of these laws, using the entire apparatus of European linguistics as their authorization (Láncz 1987: 55-63). In effect, they attempted to create what they called a *népnyelv* 'language of the people', that would be scientifically authorized, because its rules would come from outside of social life, from "nowhere." Under the stewardship of the linguists, this was the anonymous yet unanimous, all-inclusive language of the people which nevertheless implicitly excluded those who refused the linguists' authority.

The linguists themselves claimed no direct power to arbitrate cultural correctness, but saw themselves as the righteous experts who alone had the knowledge to decode the necessary laws of nature, of language as a natural object. Thus the language would not be linked to any particular class or group, no region or stratum would have priority. Indeed, current usage was irrelevant to them. The printed forms appearing in the *Nyelvőr* were meant, in themselves, to constitute correctness.

Although brought into being by the literary establishment in the Academy, the *Nyelvőr* was soon at odds with it, as well as with the popular press. The literati were appalled that the *Nyelvőr* refused to consider matters of beauty in language, and that it refused to acknowledge the ability of talented native speakers; they insisted on the poets' role of inventing new linguistic forms and judging acceptability. The *Nyelvőr*, in contrast, denied the importance of what the literary men called their *nyelvérzék* 'feeling for the language.' The linguists at the *Nyelvőr* even rejected the efforts of the earlier generation of literary men to expand and reform the language. They attempted to outlaw many of the neologisms invented in the early 1800s which had in fact become common in everyday usage. Szarvas and his colleagues insisted that only by following the scientifically discoverable rules and paradigms of the language could "correct" new forms be made. Convention, aesthetics and current usage were devalued. "Nothing can be beautiful that is not correct," was one of their mottos.

Much of the popular press also disagreed vociferously with the *Nyelvőr*, while being equally obsessed with linguistic correctness. The popular press frequently printed articles on language, often even with long lists of "incorrect usage," "faulty translations from German" and recommended neologisms. Their general ability to be arbiters of taste and style was quickly emerging in areas of consumption, family

⁷ As in the wider European discussions, however, this was hardly the only position. There were Hungarian linguists (e.g. Sándor Imre) who differed profoundly from Szarvas, and viewed language as a historical and social phenomenon that depended in part on the will of its speakers. On Imre's views see Láncz (1991); for a discussion of the larger issue, Taylor (1990).

form, entertainment, moral uplift and other realms of culture. Only in the central sphere of language was their authority attacked, as the *Nyelvőr* attempted to keep usage under strong surveillance by printing and ridiculing supposedly mistaken forms found in other journals and magazines. Furthermore, the everyday linguistic practices (and problems) of the journalists themselves, as well as their readership, were never explicitly addressed by the *Nyelvőr*. Whereas both journalists and readers had to negotiate daily between two or more languages, to distinguish translations and borrowings that would work and those that would sound foreign, the *Nyelvőr* simply ignored such problems.

The linguists of the *Nyelvőr* opposed their language-from-nowhere to both the linguistic resources of the Hungarian literati and those of the popular press that reflected and constructed the practices of the newly assimilating middle classes. While critics noted that the *Nyelvőr's* judgments often represented the forms typical of Hungarian rural life, especially the conservative rural gentry, the linguists themselves claimed to be doing no more than protecting the inherent laws of the language itself. Only the government-sponsored newspapers and magazines supported the *Nyelvőr's* arguments, being pleased to be associated with a scientific standard, a language of the people that could claim to be authentically Hungarian, yet supposedly favored no particular social group.

4. Conclusions

I have tried to show the way in which elements of metropolitan linguistic theories were implicated in the making of Hungarian identity in the periphery of Europe at the end of the 19th century: Science, professionalism and political authority were intertwined. Metropolitan linguistic theories were part of a colonial discourse that Hungarian linguists contested. But such theories, along with the linguistic evidence itself, also provided the materials for arguing about images of a national self, built on metaphors of "family" and linguistic "kinship." Thus, images of Hungarians were created in part by arguments about the kinds of people to whom Hungarians were historically and linguistically related. These images were important first for external audiences who heard at least two versions of the Hungarian self - Turkic and Ugric - both denying, in different ways, the evolutionary category into which some western linguistic theories had thrust the Hungarians. They were important as well for internal audiences, who were socially and culturally heterogeneous, but often seduced through the newly emerging popular press, literary handbooks, and school texts by a single unified and dramatic image of sober, conquering Asian heroes.

But metropolitan linguistic theories, when inserted into a Hungarian cultural scene, were also transformed by various groups of Hungarian linguists. In their new guises these theories produced another kind of domestic effect. Linguistically heterogeneous Hungary was faced with the question of what kind of language its assimilating populations would speak. With new classes forming and vying with older social strata for political as well as cultural authority, who would be the arbiters of linguistic correctness, mobility, and cultural taste? The theories of Muller and Schleicher, among others, enabled linguists to challenge both the literati and the newly emerging capitalist classes, and to construct their own professional authority

through an alliance with European science. They made an argument for a national standard that only they themselves could reveal. This would be a code supposedly based on the inherent, objective, linguistic characteristics of the Hungarian language; a language that they claimed would be "everyone's", because it purported to be no-one's in particular.

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