

THE MYSTERY OF TEXTUAL SYMMETRY DISCLOSED OR SELF-STRUCTURING AND SELF-CLOSING TEXTUAL STRUCTURES IN 19TH CENTURY HUNGARIAN LYRICAL POETRY

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I do not intend to deal with "poetic closure" in the same sense as Barbara Herrnstein Smith, who referred the problem to thematic solutions and to some extent to the idea of the aesthetic whole.¹ Nor shall I deal with "verse closures" in a similar general sense.²

This means that I am not quite satisfied with the answer Barbara Herrnstein Smith gives to a question she poses. "Are there not, in real poetry, formal structures which in themselves create the sense of closure at their conclusions? Is there no poem in which a termination point is implied by the very principles that generate its formal structure?"³ Having considered the alternatives of the sestina and the rondo in this regard (the claim for a "sense of closure" is noticeable), her answer is, "What we must emphasize at this point is that there is no formal principle which in itself can prevent a poem from continuing indefinitely."*

This answer is correct, as no sensibility is ever obliged to keep the laws of logic or formal linguistic construction. Yet if there are any, one may try to trace them by textual analysis. My purpose is (a) to explore *textual wholes* describable in formal terms and (b) to call attention to the cultivation of self-closing textual schemes in 19th century Hungarian lyrical poetry, especially that of János Arany (1817-1882).

1. The Self-closing Logic of Thomas Sebeok's *Cheremis Sonnet*

Inspiration to find self-closing forms came first from a Cheremis folksong analysed by Thomas Sebeok. In Sebeok's translation:

1. Sky's cuckoo, my father, remains.
2. Cuckoo wing, my mother, remains.

3. Sky's swallow, my elder brother, remains.
4. Swallow wing, my elder brother's wife, remains.
5. Summer butterfly, my younger brother, remains.
6. Butterfly wing, my younger sister remains.
7. Summer flower, myself, I depart.
8. Flower blossom of mine, remains.

Sebeok explains that in odd-numbered lines the subject is a male and in even-numbered lines a female member of the family. His interpretation assumes that "flower blossom of mine" refers to the "essential inward being" of the departing recruit and to his wish to remain, spiritually, with his parental family. He seems to be saying, "my thoughts of you and your memory of me - stay here at home."⁵ But, in keeping with the overall scheme of the male - female division according to odd- and even-numbered lines, line 8 refers to a female character who is not a "wing" yet but a "blossom" (the *petal* of the flower) because she, the boy's girlfriend or bride, is not yet a wife and thus an integrated member of the family.

Sebeok refers to Lévi-Strauss's formulation, "repetition has as its function to make the structure of the song apparent; the structure seeps to the surface, if one may say so, through the repetition process."⁶ In my view systematic repetition here also constructs a formal and logical closure to the song. (Sebeok employs the term *sonnet* "in its genetic sense," with the genre including "the medieval Sicilian strambotto, out of which the sonnet familiar to Western literary tradition developed. Sung by minstrels, these verses were eight lines in length, and were divided into groups of two lines each...")⁷

The textual structure of the *Cheremis Sonnet* seems to be self-closing by its pattern of logical dichotomy. But the pattern does not terminate the poem at any definite point, after a certain length, or a determinable number of repetitions. Or, does it? A catalogue of the members of a nuclear family is, of course, finite. Yet it is not sensible to make the list complete, i.e. to add or detract relatives depending on the actual size of the family of the singer. The catalogue of the *Cheremis Sonnet* must be representative as it is. In folklore 77 (or 99) stand for infinite amounts. Spells send the evil to 77 (or 99) places to disperse and perish. Similarly, the *Cheremis Sonnet*, with its representative list, expresses the anguish of any conscript.

This communal or cultural limitation of the length of the catalogue is of no consequence for the self-construction of the poem as a textual whole, or the logical means with which it prepares its closure from the beginning.

It seems obvious that the same rules structure the closure as the catalogue, which (a) is concerned only with members of the nuclear family, (b) follows a definite order: (a) from couples standing close to or representing the "nucleus"

to less representative couples: (β) the hierarchy of sexual status in the individual couples. These two rules of selection define the algorithm of progress, but they do not limit the length of the catalogue. In other words they support no self-concluding textual stratagem.

The conclusive turn is due to a *quasi algorithmic* "twist." The enumerative sequence preserves a semblance of the integrity of the algorithm. Nevertheless, a deviant step is taken as the sweetheart or bride is not a member, she counts only as an eventual future member of the family. This "would-be" status appears under the guise of "flower blossom," which is, at the same time, a thoroughly correct metaphorical proposition, with no deceptive implication because the girl is not referred to as a "wing," the metaphor for a wife or a sister. This quasi familial status of the recruit's sweetheart is acceptable to the village community (the "interpreting community"), which is, of course, aware of the "trick."

The algorithm of the catalogue does not offer a "self-closing" textual strategy. But the capacity of the "twist" to close the process is rooted in the logic of the algorithm, or, more precisely, in an innate anomaly of the system. The "twist" fills a gap that is open in a stable synchronic, ^temporal hierarchical pattern of family relations, which is unable to take into account a would-be member, someone in the present status of the young man's sweetheart. To eliminate the anomaly a "fuzzy system" of asynchronous temporality is needed but such a system would not conform with the community's need to maintain stable and fixed family relations. Asynchronous temporality involves terms like "not yet but almost," or "this looks like a conclusive arrangement for the future," or other terms reflecting a time (and fate) dependent transition from secret and illegal through half secret and semi-legal to publicly acknowledged and legally affirmed partnership. With the transgression of the boundaries of the two logical systems, i.e. with the "deconstruction" of the rigid dichotomy of the stable formal system and the recognition of another plane of logic, the sequential form of the song becomes "self-closing" and the text of the poem (with its metaphorical solution) wins the status of a kind of "kenning" or "riddle."⁸

2. Forms of Inclusion

Internal growth is structurally developed in forms based on "framing" or "inclusion."⁹ *Ábránd* (Fantasy, 1843) by Mihály Vörösmarty consists of a hierarchical system of "inclusions."

Szerelmedért
 Feldúlnám eszemet
 És annak minden gondolatját,
 S képzelmem édes tartományát;
 Eltépném lelkemet
 Szerelmedért.

For thy love
 I would lose my mind,
 All my thoughts
 And the sweet province of my fancies;
 I shall tear my soul to pieces
 For thy love.

Szerelmedért
 Fa lennék bérc fején,
 Felölténém zöld lombozatját,
 Eltűrném villám s vész haragját,
 S meghalnék minden év telén
 Szerelmedért.

For thy love
 I shall be a tree on a cliff,
 Clad in green foliage,
 Suffer the wrath of lightning and tempest
 And die annual winter death
 For thy love.

Szerelmedért
 Lennék bérc-nyomla kő,
 Ott égnék földalatti lánggal,
 Kihalhatatlan fájdalommal,
 És némán szenvedő,
 Szerelmedért.

For thy love
 I shall be a mountain-pressed bulk of stone,
 Burn in subterraneous flames
 And suffer silent
 Immortal pain
 For thy love.

Szerelmedért
 Eltépett lelkemet
 Istentől újra visszakérném
 Dicsőbb erénnyel ékesítném
 S örömmel nyújtanám neked
 Szerelmedért.

For thy love
 I shall reclaim
 My torn soul from God,
 Embellish it with more glorious virtues
 And delighted give it to you
 For thy love.

As units of an extended metaphor (a Romantic *conceit* indeed), stanzas 1 and 4 create a "frame," a formal "*inclusion*" of the enclosed individually elaborated inclusions of stanzas 2 and 3. The two interlocked stanzas do not enter the dramatic context of the Triangle (the Poet with his soul, God and the Lady) of the conceit in stanzas 1 and 4. It is doubtful whether they are capable at all to share in the structural energy of the "frame." The close relationship of stanzas 1 and 4 is loosened and space is opened for "internal growth," practically for any number of excessive Romantic statements between the opening and closing stanzas.

Hymnus (1823; the words of the Hungarian national anthem) by Ferenc Kölcsey has a similar structure: while a sequence of emblematic scenes depicts an abbreviated history of the nation, the framing stanzas are a prayer to the Lord claiming a better future for the Magyars on the right that they have already paid a penalty not only for the past but also *for the future*.

3. Textual Symmetry

Symmetrical forms (*inclusion* also implies symmetry) arise on any structural level (from the literal or phonematic to the thematic planes) and are coexistent with, or responsible for, the organization of the poem as a whole.

A) Thematic Symmetry

On thematic levels symmetry may appear "spontaneous," yet it is reducible to formative techniques and principles. A unique example is *Plevna* (1877) by János Arany.

There is a close thematic symmetry in the first nine stanzas of the poem. Stanzas 1-3 and 7-9 discuss in the old rhetorical tradition the unworthiness of the poet for the high task of greeting the victory of the Turkish army at Plevna. In Arany's eyes the proper person to equal the task would be Sándor Petőfi, the great poet who died in action in 1849 during Hungary's War of Independence. Stanzas 4-6 deal with the actual historical event trying to explain why the people of Hungary, a country which suffered Turkish occupation for 150 years in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, welcome a Turkish victory against Tsarist Russia. People in the Balkan, "enchanted by the dragon's magic," expect Russia to free them from the Turkish yoke. *N. B.* The Hungarian War of Independence was defeated by Russian intervention and Hungarians were deeply concerned with the threat of Pan Slavism. (Arany's exultation over a Turkish victory at Plevna was premature: the battle was won by the Russian army.)

(The typographic lay-out serves the illustration of thematic symmetry; normal stanzaic sequence is indicated by numeration.)

1. A Haemus ormán s a Dunánál,
ím, óriások harca foly:
S az én múzsám - kisebb magánál -
A porba' játszik, ott dalol.
2. Hát hol van a magasztos ének,
Mely a győzőt megilleti:
Hogy két világra zengenének
Neve méltó dicséreti?
3. Hol van lant, melynek húrja váltson,
S ne a nagy letteknél alább?
S a harc zaján is túlkiáltson:
"Csak diadalra!... Csak tovább!..."
4. Ki zsarnok volt s Európa réme,
Most *ezt* nagy rémtől menti meg,
S a népszabadság szent nevébe'
övé a zászló, mely lebeg.
5. Mert így jutnak, idő lejártán,
Magok a szerencsétlenek
Szabadsághoz, kik most a sárkány
Szemétől megszédültének.
6. Elvész, bizony, varázsa, büve,
Miképp hatalma megtörött,
S ez a győzelmi zászló műve,
Mely leng a vérmező föl őlt.
7. Azért e zászlónak dicsőség!
S *magyar* ajakról kétszeres!...
Ha volna költő - volna ő még,
Kit vágyunk holtan is keres!
8. De én lantom bágyadt idegjét
Addig íészíteni nem merem,
Habár olykor elhagyja szegjét
S unalmat űzni dalt terem.
9. S nem szólok népem - a magyarhoz,
Tán meg sem ismerné szavam;
A *szebb* napnak, mit e vihar hoz,
Őrülök csendesen, magam.
10. Szabad, egy még érző tetemnek,
Síríg szeretni a hónát:
S e diadal-nap életemnek
Megaranyozza alkonyát.

1.

High on Haemus, down by the Danube
 Giants' struggle is on.
 My Muse, smaller than herself,
 Playing in dust sings a song.

2.

But where is the song sublime,
 Worthy of the winner,
 Sounding proper praises
 In both worlds, here and there?

3.

Where is the lute tuned
 To equal the deed?
 Rise above the battle noise-
 "Forward! Triumph!... Proceed!..."

4.

Late tyrant, Europe's terror,
 Saves *her* from tyranny,
His flag flutters in the sacred
 Name of people's liberty.

5.

For thus, in time, freedom
 Reaches those tragic
 Nations still enchanted
 By the dragon's magic.

10.

A corpse with live senses,
 Faithful to my country till death:
 This day of triumph crowns
 My sunset with golden wreath.

9.

I sing no call to my Magyar s-
 They'd fail to recognize my voice;
 At a *clearer* day this storm brings
 I, silent and single, rejoice.

8.

To *that* key I dare not tune
 The weakened chords of my lute
 Which only leaves its holder
 To ease my solitude.

7.

Therefore to that flag "Glory!"
 And from *Magyar* lips, twice!...
 Were but the Poet alive whom
 We wish from the dead to rise!

6.

The charm will vanish
 Just as his powers yield
 To the flag of triumph
 In the bloodstained field.

The concluding two lines, creating a "frame," mirror the two opening lines. The words, "struggle of giants," evoke a mental sight of a landscape ("High on Haemus, down by the Danube"), and in the closing lines "day of triumph" is synchronous with a metaphorical sunset in a spiritual landscape. By the end of the poem the Muse, who in the overture is reported to be "smaller than herself," rises to the occasion with a song, not hortatory or jubilant but passionately meditative. "But where is the song sublime" in stanza 2 is consonant with "I sing no call to my Magyars" in stanza 9, and the praise sounding "in both worlds" contrasts with the poet rejoicing "silent and single." Tuning the lute occurs in stanzas 3 and 8, the stanzas which also contrast the mighty call of the lute powerful enough to "Rise above the battle

noise" and its intimate, soft melody "to ease my solitude." Stanzas 4 and 7 repeat the "flag" theme while the phrase, "the sacred Name of people's liberty" is a near quote from Petőfi. The pivoting stanzas (5 and 6) develop the same theme repetitiously as if expressing two reflexive symmetrical aspects of one idea: a) "thus" (i.e. thanks to the flag of freedom in stanza 4) those nations which are still bewitched by the eyes of the dragon will, "in time," win freedom; b) the charm of the dragon will be broken just as its power has been thanks to the flag of triumph fluttering over the bloody field.

The symmetrical form parallels the dual antithetical development of the subtheme of the poem:

1) *growth* from the declaration of the unworthiness of the poet to sing the victory, through the struggle with the idea that the only worthy singer is dead, to the "solution" that Arany who is "dead" too (a live corpse) finds an adequate way (or grown up to the task in the very verses he is writing) to praise the triumph, which crowns the sunset of his life with golden ("golden" means "arany") rays;

2) *decrease* from the sonorous invocation and high mythological reference, through somewhat subdued meditations, reflections and hesitations about the historical lessons of the event and the seclusion of the poet, to the closing scenes of silence and quietude.

B) *Figurai Symmetry*

Symmetry also appears on "lower" levels of poetical structure. *Palindromes* (texts which read the same backwards or forwards) are based on letters (phonemes), syllables, words, phrases or verse lines. Technically all these forms are self-closing, they end as soon as the sequence of their units reiterates the initial item.

Anagrammatic textual structures (acrostics, onomasticons, chronograms, chronostichons etc., etc.) are *figurai*. If a sequence of symbols is produced in a given communicative dimension, the sequence that structures the text of the anagrammatic message will evolve in topological space, i.e. rely on another dimension of communication.

It is doubtful if the text of a *figurai* poem like *La colombe poignardée et le jet d'eau* by Apollinaire is self-closing despite its close definition by the figure. Anagrams may occur in textual forms with no spatial regulation but spatially organized, consequently *figurai*, anagrammatic poems have a pre-fixed literal structure. The text is destined to fill in spaces the anagrammatical spatial

positions leave open. If the pre-fixed structure of a figurai poem defines the whole text with all its elements, it will give up all its textual complexities, e.g. shrink to a single word or name, and become a kind of linguistic arabesque in a purely decorative context as in cabalistic cubes. Anagrammatic poetry, acrostics, onomasticons, chronograms, chronostichons etc., (as a rule) open a room for free play around the symbols standing for the concept anagrammatized.

Anagrams are not limited to alphabetical writing, they occur also in lexicography. Professor Eugene Eoyang (Indiana University, Bloomington) reports that in a poem printed in the Chinese newspaper *People's Daily*, March 20, 1991, the Chinese characters running diagonally through the poem read "Li Peng (Chinese Prime Minister) step down, mollify the people's anger."¹⁰ The anagrammatic manoeuvre is based on the lexical fact that the pair of characters standing for the statesman's name has a meaning: "li" is "plum" and "peng" is the name of a mythological bird.

To close the poem the poet added a line which is structurally independent from the anagram. This again indicates that anagrammatic structures do not necessarily imply self-closing stratagems.

4. Non-Formal Central Ordering by Structural Conceit

Almost any aspect of the thematic structure of the poem may serve as a starting point to study the poem as a textual whole: a central theme, a conclusive story, an ordered description of a subject, an accomplished allegory, a well-organized sequence of variations, or any of the classes of "Thematic Structure and Closure" as exemplified in Barbara Herrnstein Smith's study (paratactic, sequential, associative and dialectic structures).¹¹ Thus it is no surprise that certain closely knit poems are based on a single conceit or extended metaphor. Classical examples are *The Flea*, *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning* or *The Extasie* by John Donne. In *The Flea* the substantial poetical gesture is the varied extension of the argument while sustaining the complex metaphorical image which is not the flea as such but the idea of a strange and unholy *trinity* ("three lives in one flea"). Again in *A Valediction* the central metaphorical image roots in an abstract ideal, that of the synchronical distance and union of two loving souls, and the extended metaphors of the foliated gold and of the movement of the compass are only instances of the argument evolving the main conceit. Similarly, *The Extasie* develops a trinitarian mystery of love with the idea of the union of two souls and the birth of a new one.

It can be seen that an abstract notion, that of the mysterious unity of separate spiritual entities, is a metaphorical structure as it stands. It acts as an extended metaphor rather than the central theme of the argumentation, as it informs complex textual wholes as a single source of theorization and also intermediary metaphors. There is however a textual formation in which a central metaphor informs individual parts of the text without lining them into a sequence of arguments (argumentation is ingrained in Donne's poetry).¹² In such cases the extended conceit appears as *a structural complex of metaphors* as in *Kortársam R. A. halálán* (On the Death of My Contemporary, A. R., 1877) by János Arany.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Kidölt immár sok ép, erős,
Ki velem indult és haladt;
Kevés itt fenn az ismerős:
Oh, mennyivel több föld alatt!</p> | <p>1. Many who started with me fell
Though they appeared all safe and sound.
Few whom I knew have stayed above,
Oh, more are gone under the ground.</p> |
| <p>2. Reményem - elzárt völgy-fenék,
Nincs onnan út, kivezető;
Emlékezet üdülne még -
De az meg egy nagy temető.</p> | <p>2. My hope is a closed valley where
The roads recurve in symmetry.
Memory could refresh me yet,
Were it not a vast cemetery.</p> |
| <p>3. Olt fekszenek távol, közel;
Egy-egy külön sír jeleli
Futó harcban hol estek el -
Mint a Horácok elleni.</p> | <p>3. There they lie all, one far, one near,
Their separate graves signify
They dropped in a running battle like
The foes of the Horatii.</p> |
| <p>4. S én a pályán vagyok ma még,
Leggyöngébb a futók között;
Fenntart egy szálnyi tartalék,
Bár testem és lelkem törött.</p> | <p>4. I am still on the track to date,
The weakest runner of them all,
Held by a thin thread of reserve
Though broken are body and soul.</p> |
| <p>5. Még elkerült ásó, kapa -
S tán engem a sors arra tart,
Hogy visszanézve, mind csupa
Sírhalmot lássak, ravatalt.</p> | <p>5. Spared by the speedy spade and hoe,
Fate keeps me up here to look back
And see, as I pass, every grave,
Every tomb, every catafalque.</p> |
| <p>6. Most a tiédet hantolák:
Im tőlem is rá e göröngy!
Oh! hitte volna egy világ,
Hogy <i>te</i> elébb búcsút köszönj?</p> | <p>6. It came now to your burial:
I drop <i>this</i> clod on your grave.
You bid farewell ahead of me
Though this the world cannot believe.</p> |
| <p>7. Egy nap derült volt rád s reám:
Nem várhatál még keveset?...
De sírunk sem lesz messze tán,
Ha bölcsőnk oly közel esett.</p> | <p>7. Our day of birth was one and same:
Why, had you no time left to lose?
Nay, our graves will not lie far
If our cradles rocked so close.</p> |

The central metaphor of the poem cannot be defined in terms of a single image or notion. Perhaps the image or notion of *succession* is of some help: succession in space and time and also a sequential order based on a difference of physical strength and endurance. Whatever it is, it preserves its unnamed status while it informs the poem at least on five different levels of imagery: (1) a temporal sequence of the deaths of one's contemporaries; (2) the spatial sequence of the graves in a graveyard; (3) the classical reference to the "running battle" of the Horatii and Curiatii, in which the dead bodies (and later, the graves) of the fighters milestoned (4) the "race-course" of the battle; (5) the race-course as a biblical reference and as a metaphor for contrasting the weak and the strong participants of the life-race.

This means that the poem unifies, and the individual stanzas elaborate, a series of logically interwoven metaphorical instances, an intellectually and poetically amplified *structural concetto*. Its substance, the parallelism of spatial and temporal sequences on various planes of life, is inexpressible in prose paraphrase, and, save for its latent omnipresence, it is left unexpressed in the poem.

It is interesting that the succession of the individual stanzas of the poem is not defined closely by the direction of the argumentation or the operation of its central structural *concetto*. Some of the stanzas are interchangeable or omissible. Stanza 2 is presentable as an independent piece of poetry, stanzas 1 and 5, or 1-5, or 1, 3-5, or 1, 4-5, or 1-3, 6-7 also make a poem on their own. Were the poem concluded with stanza 1, it would leave the reader with the haunting vision of a Dantesque multitude in subterranean vaults.

In *Anyátlan leányka* (Motherless girl, 1843) by Mihály Vörösmarty textual structure results from a shifting movement from one metaphor to another. The central metaphorical principle is an *algorithm of metamorphoses*, a sequence of change inherent in the individual metaphors. Thus the adjective "flower-eyed" implies the blue of spring flower and sky. From the union of the sky and the spring flowers "a ray of charm" issues and the metamorphosis of the mother's soul, which in the shape of a flower appears in sky-blue clothes brought from heaven and finds her earthly heaven in her daughter's eyes, whose blue stands for hope and memory in romantic flower symbolism (the violet and the forget-me-not).

Hadd lássalak, le kis
 Virágszemű leány;
 Szemedben ég van-e
 Vagy tavaszi virány?
 Vagy ég és a virány
 Úgy egyesültének,
 Hogy bájvilág gyanánt
 Szemedben égjenek?
 Anyádnak lelke tán
 Virággá változott,
 S a honbul, melybe kelt,
 Égszín ruhát hozott?
 S most e világra vált
 Kis mennyben itt mulat,
 Folytatni üdv gyanánt
 A földi napokat?
 Nézz vígan kis leány.
 Mosolygjon kék szemed;
 Szent fény, mi benne ég:
 Remény s emlékezet.

Let me enjoy your looks,
 You flower-eyed little thing;
 Is the sky in your eyes
 Or the blossom of the spring?
 Did sky and blossom fuse
 And finally arise
 As brilliant rays of charm
 Gleaming bright from your eyes?
 Perhaps your mother's soul
 Has now become a flower
 And from the realm where she passed
 Brought sky-blue clothes to wear?
 Does she dwell in that small
 Heaven transformed to this
 World to spend earthly days
 But in heavenly bliss?
 Be cheerful, little girl,
 Eyes smiling merrily,
 Their light is sacred light:
 Of hope and memory.

5. Linear Order Ordered

Catalogue as Form

Catalogues are perhaps the simplest formulaic texts in which self-construction leads to self-destruction by an actual or symbolical exhaustion of the stock. The symbolical regulation of the length and order of Psalm 119 by the Hebrew alphabet or the numerical structure of the *Divina Commedia* may be considered as secondary developments of the catalogue form.¹³

A) Spells

In analogical magic a linear progress of utterances on increase or decrease (with incidental reference to numerical sequences) models the mobilization of healing or destructive powers.

B) Formulaic Chain Stories

The algorithm of formulaic chain stories¹⁴ genders formally endless continuity with a more or less arbitrary ending or turning point. Then, with a systematic change, the algorithm is reversed to trace back the sequence of events

to where they started from. E.g. a turning point with a logical (or, rather, paralogical) reason: the cloud which did not give rain changes its mind when the frog begins croaking, and thus the events that led up to this point are re-wound, and the cow will not eat the flower. (*The Cow and the Flower*, an Indian folktale.) In a collection of folktales (1862) by László Arany (János Arany's son) we find *The Bush and the Little Bird*. The little bird asks the bush to rock her. The bush will not rock her. Next she asks the goat to eat the bush. The goat refuses. The wolf would not eat the goat, and the village would not hunt down the wolf. The little bird turns to the fire, the water, the bull, the stick, the worm, and the cock. Finally the cock cannot resist temptation and eats the worm. This triggers a reel-back of events: the worm pierces the stick, the stick slays the bull, the bull drinks the water, the water extinguishes the fire, the fire burns up the village, the village hunts down the wolf, the wolf eats the goat, the goat chomps the bush, and the bush begins to rock the little bird. This series of fantastic reversals (the *dead* bull drinks the water which, then, extinguishes the fire etc., etc.) is an ironic version (disclosing the irony of the scheme) of the ordinary chain-tale pattern in which such astonishing reversals do not necessarily occur.

Except in pieces written for children such formulaic patterns do not seem to be cultivated in "high poetry." A number of successful folk-tale imitations on this mood were written by Pál Gyulai, a close friend of the Arany-family.

6. Permutation

A good instance for the purely technical regulation of self-closing textual progress in verse form is the *sestina*.

In his book, *The Skin of the He-Wolf*, Csaba Szigeti reflected on the belated entry of the form into Hungarian poetry.¹⁵ As to the form itself, he seems to be convinced that the permutative organization of verse also informs the total meaningful structure of the poem as it defines an actual sequence of meanings with its regulation of the sequence of line-ending words. His conclusion is that "the *meaning* of the poem cannot be explored without an exploration of the nature of organization."¹⁰

In the case of the *sestina* and its kindred forms "arbitrarily accepted rules prescribe the size of the poem in an algebraic way in contrast to the sonnet whose fixed length was set by culture and tradition."¹⁷

The permutative linear structure in a poem like *Fughetta* (1956) by Sándor Weöres appears as a conceit-like organizing principle of imaginative dynamics revealing how phasic snapshots of spatial movement bring into being their own metaphorical space.

egy gerenda legurul
 piros csörgők tündökölnek
 kék tojások énekelnek
 tarka csigaszarvak lengnek

a beam is rolling down
 red rattles glitter
 blue eggs sing
 dappled snail horns sway

piros csörgők összetörnek
 egy gerenda legurul
 kék tojások énekelnek
 tarka csigaszarvak lengnek

red rattles break
 a beam is rolling down
 blue eggs sing
 dappled snail horns sway

piros csörgők összetörnek
 kék tojások szétfeccsennek
 egy gerenda legurul
 tarka csigaszarvak lengnek

red rattles break
 blue eggs splash
 a beam is rolling down
 dappled snail horns sway

piros csörgők összetörnek
 kék tojások szétfeccsennek
 tarka csigaszarvak tűnnek
 egy gerenda legurul

red rattles break
 blue eggs splash
 dappled snail horns disappear
 a beam is rolling down

7. Parallel Structure

A) Self-Closure by Concurrent Linguistic and Musical Sign-Components

In "Some Aspects of the Analysis of Verbal Works of Art" János S. Petőfi presents an elaborate terminology for the linguistic description of certain textual structures, i.e. for the description of "texts taken in a narrower sense (obtained by projecting the musical and the linguistic component on one another)."¹⁸ The "musical component" consists of "a phonetic and a rhythmic subcomponent," while the "linguistic component" consists of "a syntactic and a semantic subcomponent." His analysis of *Őszi dal* (Autumn Song) by Sándor Weöres is based on the status of these components as constants and variables in the two stanzas of the poem.

őszi ködben
 zúgó ötven
 nyárfa,
 ötven dal van
törzsetekbe
 zárva.

In autumn's fog
 booming fifty
 poplars,
 fifty songs are
 closed
in your trunks.

őszi csöndben
 nyíló ötven
 láda,
 ötven szív van
deszkákba
 zárva.

In autumn's still
 opening fifty
 cases,
 fifty hearts are
 closed
in your planks.

(English translation by János S. Petőfi)

He points out that in the Hungarian text both composition units (both stanzas) have an identical structure which, taken into account the syllabic qualities of individual words, is representable in a graph (blanks correspond to word boundaries):

2	2	2	2	2
2	11	4	2	

This reveals that "the structures of the linguistic and musical sign-components are concurrent" (...) "This concurrent structure links the two units."¹⁹

The same concurrent structure may, of course, link any number of units, but - in Weöres's materialization of the form - two are enough to exemplify (or exhaust) the range of the formal compositional principle of the poem.

This is, virtually, a non-conclusive (or endless) form of text-construction, almost like any stanzaic form of which numberless samples are issued. Yet it involves the problem of "saturation"²⁰ or that of exhaustion. After a number of stanzas the poet runs out of contextually meaningful rhyming words and, after a while, of a sensible context for words that meet the demands of the form, and the only way out is transition to nonsense verses.

Poems with this kind of parallel stanzaic structure and elaborate pattern of linguistic and musical components extend, as a rule, only to a few stanzas. Close parallelism of two successive stanzas develops a dual form, which, though not completely symmetrical, repeats an image of the model first introduced. What emerges as textual novelty in the second stanza must have the power to exhaust the chances of poetical variety.

A poem by Katalin Ladik, entitled *a kés* (the knife, 1988),²¹ illustrates how exhaustive or conclusive is the parallel pattern of a second stanza if its

meaningful textual context implies jumping to a conclusion by an extreme observation of the rules of the game.

a kés

ha kettévágjuk a körtét
a piros hajú kislány
nem fog sírni többé

ha kettévágjuk a kislányt
a piros hajú körte
nem fog sírni többé

the knife

if we cut the pear in two
the red haired little girl
will not cry any longer

if we cut the little girl in two
the red skinned pear
will not cry any longer

In the Hungarian text the only variables are "körtét" and "kislányt" as "haj" means both "skin of a fruit" and "hair." In the English version "haired" and "skinned" also appear, by necessity, as variables. Mechanical application brings out the full irony of the scheme (like the mechanical reversals in a chain tale) and helps stanza 2 land in the realm of nonsense poetry.

Parallel structure prepares the closure in *Down by the Salley Gardens* by William Butler Yeats.

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

Identical phrases ("constants") in both stanzas'.

.....my love and I did

.....snow-white.....

She bid me take.....easy, as the.....grow(s) on the.....

But I...young and foolish.....

In the two stanzas lines 1 and 3 have the same syntactical structure. The *variables* also represent parallelism in kind, as sentence-elements and as natural equivalents, e.g. "meet - stand," "feet - hand," "leaves...tree - grass...weirs." The variance is greatest between the five word long phrases at the end of stanzas 1 and 2: "with her would not agree" and "now am full of tears." These are antithetical statements. Together they accede to the irreversibility of

temporal order and causality: the tears of memory or repentance fall in consequence of, and to annul, a past disagreement of the lovers. With this single "twist" or "turn" the movement of the poetic thought reaches a standstill and one may wonder at the distinct and thorough precision with which the conclusion is advanced at the end of stanza 1. The "turn" in the last phrase to the *present* and to a *nostalgic mood*, which arises as a consequence of the past, comes about as a meaningful utilization of the chances of self-closure inherent in the logical and musical structure of the poem.

Barbara Herrnstein Smith quotes *Down by the Salley Gardens* to illustrate the role of temporal sequence in a *sequential structure* (her term). It is obvious that she is less interested in textual than in thematic structures. In this particular case she explains that "narrative lyric" based on a sequence of past events "will usually conclude with some comment very much in the present"²² and it is common to have "a poem that develops for a certain portion through the narration of past event, but concludes with a »turn« that breaks out of the strictly narrative mode, or simply continues beyond it in some other way."²³ She adds that "temporal sequence in such a poem presents no problem for closure because time is stopped *before* the conclusion and, as in nonliterary anecdote, the speaker concludes by explaining its significance, adding some general or reflective comment, or otherwise »framing« the anecdote with some indication of why he told it in the first place."^{24*}

B) Forms of Thematic Summary

A summary of themes mentioned or developed in earlier parts of a poem is another formula of conclusion. The idea is comparable with the *reprise* in pieces of music.

There are quite a few lyrics written by Pál Gyulai in the form of "theme summary":

Virágnak mondanálak (1846)

Virágnak mondanálak,
A rózsza, liliom,
Mint egy tőnek virági,
Virulnak arcodon.
De a virág nem érez,
Ne légy virág nekem...
Maradj kedves leánynak,
S légy hű szerelmesem!

Csillagnak mondanálak.
Mely est koránya lett,
Virasztva édes álom
S édesb titok felett.
A csillagfény hideg fény,
Ne légy csillag nekem...
Maradj kedves leánynak,
S légy hű szerelmesem!

Hajnalnak mondanálak,
Mely hogyha felkőszönt,
Ég és föld mosolygva
örömkönnyüket önt.
A hajnalláng múltó láng,
Ne légy hajnal nekem...
Maradj kedves leánynak,
S légy hű szerelmesem!

Vagy légy virág s virulj fel
Itt híved kebelén;
Légy csillag, fényt sugárzó
Balsorsom éjjelén;
S hajnal, mely harmatot hoz,
örömkönnyűt nekem:
Oh légy a nagy világon
Egyetlen mindenem!

I'd Call You Flower

I'd Call You flower,
The lily and the rose
Like two flowers on one stem
Are blooming on your face.
But flowers are senseless things,
Be not a flower to me...
Remain a darling girl, true
Through all eternity!

I'd like to call you star,
The dawn of night who is
Vigilant on our sweet dreams
And sweeter mysteries.
The star's light is a cold light,
Be not a star to me...
Remain a darling girl, true
Through all eternity!

I'd like to call you dawn
Who greets the sky and earth
And they return her greeting
With bright dew - tears of mirth.
The flame or dawn will vanish,
Be not the dawn to me...
Remain a darling girl, true
Through all eternity!

Or be flower, on the bosom
Of your sweetheart to bloom
Be star, the only radiance
In the night of my doom;
Or dawn to bring bright dew and
The tears of mirth to me:
Oh be for me all in one
Through all eternity!

Out of the repetitive organization (constants) of each stanza emerge the thematic words "flower," "star" and "dawn" (variables). In the closure of the poem the thematic words and phrases form a sequence which revocates the earlier negative thematic statements.

A similar but simpler construction, stripped almost to the skeleton of the formula, occurs in *Nyíló rózsza...* (Rose in Bloom..., 1861):

Nyíló rózsá, nap sugara
 Csalogánydal, lepke szárnya
 Mind oly szép, úgy szeretem.
 Oh de, lásd, te csalogányom,
 Rózsám, lepkém, napsugárom
 Egyben együtt vagy nekem.

Rose in bloom, radiant sunlight,
 Nightingale's song, butterfly's wing
 All so nice. I love them all.
 Oh but, see! you, my nightingale,
 My rose, my butterfly, my sunlight,
 You are for me all in one.

The summary of the themes, though it certainly creates a kind of closure, does not necessarily coincide with the end of the poem. (Nor does the *reprise* in a piece of music.)

Petőfi's poem, *Az erdőnek madara van...* (1847) gives us a hint how thematical summary, instead of being used as a closure in itself, is developed, by antithetical division, to singling out as winner one thematic component, the "lad":

Az erdőnek madara van,
 És a kertnek virága van,
 És az égnek csillaga van,
 S a legénynek kedvese van.

Flower belongs to garden,
 Bird belongs to wood,
 Star belongs to sky,
 Lassie belongs to lad.

Virítsz, virág, dalolsz, madár,
 És te ragyogsz, csillagsugár,
 S a lány virít, dalol, ragyog...
 Erdő, kert, ég, legény boldog.

Flower blossoms, bird sings,
 Star gleams overhead,
 The lassie blossoms, sings and gleams:
 Happy are all: garden, wood, sky and lad.

Hej elhervad a virágszál,
 Csillag lehull, madár elszáll,
 De a leány, az megmarad,
 A legény a legboldogabb.

Hey! flowers vanish
 Birds leave, stars fall,
 But the lassie is faithful,
 And the lad is happiest of all.

Though the structure of thematic summary is crystal clear in a lyrical episode of *Buda halála* (Buda's Death, 1863), a long heroic poem by János Arany, it is not conclusive in the sense of creating a poetic closure; instead, with a single phrase, it recurs to Etelë and the events of the narrative:

Ébredj deli hajnal, te rózsá-özönlő!
 Már lengeti keblét hűs hajnali szellő;
 Ébredj puha fészkek melegén, pacsirta!
 Már tetszik az égen hajnal elő-írja.

Támadj koronás nap! már zeng neked a dal;
 Serkenj hadi kürtszó, költs sereget zajjal!
 Fuvalom, hajnal, kürt, pacsirta, had és nap,
 Ébredjelek mind, mind! Etele ím gyorsabb.

Awake, Thou gracious Dawn, flooding with rose-blossom!
 A coolish morning breeze sways her gentle bosom.
 Awake, Skylark, awake, from thy warm nest rise high!
 Early purple light tints the brim of the dark sky.

Solemn song wakes thee, Sun, Radiant Crowned, rise!
 Blow Thou, Warring Trumpet, stir the armed crowd's noise!
 Breeze, Dawn, Trumpet, Skylark, Army, Sun, wake all ye!
 Wake, though loo late for the long awake Etele.

János Hankiss quotes a four liner from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* to point to an implied summary of themes:

Der Himmel ist mein Hut,
 Die Erde ist mein Schuh,
 Das heilige Kreuz ist mein Schwert,
 Wer mich sieht, hat mich lieb und wert.

The text is completed by line 4, which is "a consequence and an atmospheric climax (I am not really poor, as I own the sky and the earth and the cross, therefore anyone who sees me will love and honour me)."²⁵

The rhetorical power of closure by thematic summary lies in the similar progress of two parallel enumerations of which the latter is usually accelerated by the concentrating effects of the summary. The parallel antithetical development of themes is rhetorically effective even if there is no formal summary in it, or when the summary is only a slightly abbreviated repetition of the enumeration. Thus enumerations may underline simple antithetical statements as in Eve's words in Book IV of *Paradise Lost*

With thee conversing I forget all time,
 All seasons and their change, all please alike.
 Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
 With charm of earliest Birds; pleasant the Sun
 When first on this delightful Land he spreads
 His orient Beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flour,
 Glistening with dew; fragrant the fertil earth
 After soft showers; and sweet the coming on
 Of grateful Evening milde, then silent Night
 With this her solemn Bird and his fair Moon,
 And these the Gemms of Heav'n, her starrie train:
 But neither breath of Morn when she ascends
 With charm of earliest Birds, nor rising Sun
 On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, floure,

Glisring with dew, nor fragrance after showers,
 Nor grateful Evening mild, nor silent Night
 With this her solemn Bird, nor walk by Moon,
 Or glittering Starr-light without thee is sweet.

The rhetorical structure of the passage is based on a sequence of positive values followed by a sequence of negative statements on the same themes. The doubled inclusive poles are "with thee" - "without thee" and "sweet is" - "is sweet."²⁶

C) *The Case of Self-Closing Text-Construction*

A masterpiece of the form with an inherent and fully developed logical conclusion and a completely self-closing structure generated by the linguistic and the musical components is *Nem kell dér...* (1878) by János Arany:

Nem kell dér az őszi lombnak, Mégis egyre sárgul: Dér nekül is, fagy nekül is, Lesohajt az ágrul.	No frost bids the autumn foliage Ever to turn yellow, No frost, no freeze, yet it lingers Downward from the willow.
Nem kell bú az aggott főnek, Mégis egyre őszül: Bú nekül is, gond nekül is Nyugalomra készül.	No pain bids one's head at old age Ever to grow grayer, No pain, no care, yet it craves for Rest with every prayer.
Hátha dél-fagy, bú-gond érte, ősze is már késő: Hogy' pereljen sorsa ellen A szegény lomb és fő!...	But when frost-freeze, pain-care hit them And their autumn's too late, How'd the withered foliage and head Plead against their due fate?

One would hardly think that a triple logical manoeuvre is at work in the "dianoia" ("poetic thought" or unified ideatic-metaphoric structure) of the poem.

(A) The logical procedures inherent in the text:

(1) A summary of terms as in a calculation of propositional logic: i.e. stanza 3, with its summerizing merger of the central terms ("frost-freeze," "pain-care," "foliage and head") is a logical summary of the variables in the first two stanzas ("frost," "foliage," "freeze" in stanza 1, "pain," "head," "care" in stanza 2).

(2) A dual syllogism whose terms are, individually, the following propositions: (a) if there is no need for frost and freeze to turn the foliage yellow, how much more it is exposed to its doom when its autumn is "too late" (i.e. frost

and freeze are inevitable), (b) if there is no need for pain and care to turn one's head gray, how much more it is exposed to its doom when its autumn is "too late" (pain and care are inevitable).

(3) A unification in stanza 3 of the two (1, 2) processes (above) as equally representative metaphorical elements of two distinct series (each mirroring the other). The logic of distinct self-mirroring reflection appears in the parallel syllogistic formulae (2). Unification is carried out by the summerizing processes and formulae ("and"* or " - ") of propositional logic (1).

(B) Genetically the textual linguistic coherence of the poem derives from two sources, which in the actual text coexist and extinguish one another. One is *Parallelism Based on Concurrent Linguistic and Musical Components*, the other *Parallelism Concurrent in Thematic Summary*.

(1) *Parallelism Based on Concurrent Linguistic and Musical Components*, the identical system of the "constants" of the poem includes not only single words and phrases but also the complete linguistic and musical structure. This complete parallelism whose components are separately exposed in stanzas 1-2 is inherently present also in stanza 3. If for stanza 3 the consequences of the thematic summary are suspended, the individual thematic structure, based on two different series of "variables" in stanzas 1-2, will extend, textually, to two parallel stanzas:

- (a) * Hátha dér is, fagy is érte,
 ősze is már késő:
 Hogy' pereljen sorsa ellen
 A szegény lomb!...
- (b) * Hátha bú is, gond is érte,
 ősze is már késő:
 Hogy' pereljen sorsa ellen
 A szegény fő!...
- (a) * But when frost and freeze hit it
 And its autumn's too late,
 How'd the withered foliage
 Plead against its due fate?
- (b) * But when pain and care hit it
 And its autumn's too late,
 How'd the withered head
 Plead against its due fate?

Obviously this alteration of the linguistic and musical characteristics of the poem, including its verbal phrasing and its rhythm and rhymes, changes the poem as a complete linguistic and musical structure.

(2) *Parallelism Concurrent in Thematic Summary*. The poem seems to present a special instance of thematic summary. Not only the main verbal protagonists (grammatical subjects) of the parallel text units (stanzas 1-2) are summarized ("foliage *and* head") but also the names of the physical or psychical factors which affect them (frost and freeze, or pain and care, respectively). The summary of the latter takes place in two (coincidental) steps: (1) the summary of the factors affecting the foliage (frost-freeze) and the head (pain-care) separately; (2) the sum total of the factors affecting both the foliage and the head ("frost-freeze," "pain-care").

The conclusion of the linguistic and musical processes of the poem (not to speak of the logical coherence of its "dianoia") *create a definite closure forbidding continuation*. The same processes *exclude an internal growth of the text*. No stanzas, lines or words can be inserted in the poem at any point without a detrimental effect to its perfect self-construction.

The forms described above are in a sense repeatable: they have a diagrammatic, schematic nature as mere patterns or formulas. Pál Gyulai seems to have consciously exploited them, or at least those easily adaptable to his poetic purpose. His poems based on parallel structure and thematic summary are masterly discoveries of the commonplace. These forms serve as patterns for ready-mades. In the latest period of his poetry when he became interested in them, Arany seems to have experimented with their polar extremities. He tested his capacities of verbal precision and economy in a strict though inventive construction of a complex abstract scheme and his suggestive power by *the creation of outstanding poetic dianoia* within the boundaries thus defined. I do not intend to discuss the "mood," "atmosphere" or "profundity of thought" in *Nem kell dér...* Nor will I examine how the word "plead" is brought in at the right moment to reverberate a recurring phrase, "Plead my cause..." in *Psalms* (35:1, 119:154).

Arany's experimentation with marginal cases instead of the commonplace potentials of formulaic composition is illustrated by *Csalfa sugár* (Deceptive Sunshine, 1880), a song-like poem brooding playfully over a premature romance of his small grand-daughter:

Kis bokor, ne hajts még,
Tél ez, nem tavasz;
Kis lány, ne sóhajts még;
Nem tudod, mi az.

Small bush, don't bloom yet,
It's winter, not spring;
Small lass, don't sigh yet;
Of that you know nothing.

Bokor új hajtását
Letarolja fagy;
Lány kora nyillasát
Bú követi, nagy.

Frost will blast the small bush,
Its fresh bud, new leaf;
Lassies' early flowering
Ends in lasting grief.

Szánnám a bokorkát
 Lomb- s virágtalan:
 S a lányt, a botorkát,
 Hogy már oda van!

I'd pity the small bush,
 So leafless, so bare;
 And the lass, though foolish,
 Left soon to despair.

The self-closing algorithm is clear. Two parallel processes (the fate of the bush in stanza 1 and that of the girl in stanza 2) integrate in stanza 3 so that the separate parallel descriptions (in lines 1-2, of the bush; in lines 3A, of the girl) continue and instead of a summerising fusion of the two terms, bush *and* girl, two rhyming words of *nearly identical* vowel and consonant structure ("bokorkát"- "botorkát"; in the translation "small bush"- "foolish") guarantee *metaphorical identity* for the bush and the girl.²⁷

*

Self- Closing Conclusions

Symmetry, however partial, seems to be inevitable in figurai poetry. Most figurai poems are linked by their figurative element to a symmetrical arrangement. This arrangement belongs to (is coadjacent with, or reflects) a dimension different from that of the primary structure of the text. (The terms "primary" and "secondary" are interchangeable due to a relativism inevitable in the interpretation of dimensional differences.) The figurai arrangement, however well it is integrated in the structure of a text, has its own specific figural-textual arrangement, which makes it discernible (viz. visually) and functions as its code or part of its code. The coincidence of two or more codes of communication appears as an anomaly in systems based on the hierarchy of primary and secondary codes (or dimensions of communication). For this reason de Saussure's linguistic system attributed an anomalous nature to the anagram as a marginal case due to a coincidence of two different text-structuring media, the verbal or phonic and the written or graphic symbolism.

The additional dimension opened by the visually self-supporting spatial scheme of a text raises "topological" problems. The transition from one dimension to another is permanent. This is why difficulties arise in the *trans-scrip Hon* of a figurai text to non-figurai linear sequence. Linear transcription changes the "structure" and "meaning" of the figurai poem. (Quotation marks are inevitable, as in the present context neither term is qualified to unequivocal application.) Istán Kilián comments his linear transcription of a

"Harmonika-Gedicht" (Accordion Poem) by Lukas Moesch, by mentioning that more initial, central or final letters occur in the linear transcription than in the accordion shaped original. "Man sieht also, dass aus den Buchstaben des Akrostichons bzw. Mesostichons der Name IOANNES so zusammengestellt werden kann, dass das I and das S zweimal, das A dreimal und das N viermal in den Zeilenanfängen vorkommen. Im Mesostichon ergibt sich die Reihe der Buchstaben anders, doch ist der Name IOANNES auch so herauslesbar. Das Telestichon hingegen verschwindet in dieser Auflösung vollkommen."²⁸ In the two dimensional arrangement two lines start with the same letter "I" and three lines with a single "A." This is inimitable in "one dimensional" linearity.

As a rule, it is impossible to render an accurate linear arrangement of certain figurai poems (e.g. rose-form poems) according to the author's assumed intention as the figure is incapable to define the order of lines. The difficulty is enhanced by the fact that in figurai poems textual coherence is often substituted by, or totally dependent on, figurai cohesion.²⁹

"Topological" Consequences of "Spatial" Arrangement on Any Textual Level

The concept of the coincidence of diverse dimensionalities is extensible to any spatial form that arises from and regulates the poetical arrangement of textual sequence. As we have seen, there are poems like *Kortársam R. A. halálán* from whose textual arrangement a central structural conceit emerges and proves to be the governing idea of the poem as a whole and as a unity of definite segments. The structure of the text does not support the assumption of a self-closing algorithm. Nor does it support the assumption of any coherent linear segmentation either. As I explained earlier, complete poems are latently present in stanzas 1 and 5, or 1-5, or 1, 3-5, or 1, 4-5, or 1-3, 6-7.

This help us to see some of the structural principles of self-construction and self-closure. Though the central conceit of the poem is about sequential order (of deaths, of graves etc., etc.) no such order is preserved, by and large, in the linear structure of the poem. It is informed by its central structural conceit in the same figurative way as in a figurai poem a rose-form or a wheel-form informs its textual segments about their place in the figure without defining their sequential order in linear transcription.

This means that such a central figurative principle (the form of the graphic figure in one case and the central conceit in the other) governs a non-sequential sequence of scolon-type units, or it maintains a coherent arrangement in a graphic (or in the other case, in a metaphorical) medium by a manoeuvre of de-arrangement in the medium of linear textual sequence.

That the arrangement of the form determined by the rules of the *sesdna* is spatial (or the spatial reference of its structural laws), needs, I think, no proof. But it is worthy of attention that one customarily regards this form as a special kind of stanza sequence. Thus it is relegated to the order of stanzas, or an ensemble of stanzas, defined by a stanzaic rhyme scheme as if it were of minor importance. Nevertheless its governing scheme is a pattern of *words* (the last words of the individual lines) and not of rhymes. The same is true of the *sonetti a corona*: the structuring principle of this garland of sonnets is not a rhyme pattern (as of the individual sonnets) but a pattern of the repetitive order of *lines*.³⁰ In both cases *the pattern of self-closure is based on meaningful linguistic units*. Palindromes and similar symmetrically self-closing linguistic devices are dependent on their ordering of meaningful sequences. On the other hand, certain polar types of figurai poetry, e.g. cabalistic cubes, are disabled to maintain a self-closing textual pattern because their spatial figure or anagrammatic scheme, however perfect as a figure with its figurai self-enclosure, has no outlet to the meaningful structure of the text as a whole. Thus the geometrical-topological problem of the transcription of a spatially performed figurai poem into linear arrangement turns out to be a problem of the "inner form" (whatever that is). The two dimensions in play preserve their complementary character and functioning but complementation is reduced to *external form*, to decorative illustration and a kind of textual composition, which, though with a meaning of its own, is independent from the textual consequences of the form.

In this regard the forms described above as Parallelism Based on Concurrent Linguistic and Musical Components and Parallelism Concurrent in Thematic Summary excell with their capacity to generate (or maintain or develop) a formative spatial principle on their given levels or planes of linguistic and linguistically musical composition. The procedure is comparable to the construction of arches in the Roman or Gothic tradition: shape and dynamics conform in perfect balance. A self-closing poem such as *Nem kell dér...* or *Csalfa sugár* holds high its own burden with its dual concurrent sequence of verse as a pair of arches closed by a "keystone."

These are but metaphors. The actual process is, by and large, what I tried to explain when I discussed *Nem kell dér...*, especially under (B).

In terms of textuality the process is practically the same as what is at work in Symphonia, an overtly figurai kind of poetry. In line (a) certain elements ("constants") are identical with elements in a similar sequential position in line (b); the identical elements, i.e. those common to lines (a) and (b) can be written in a separate line (ab):

Quae	P	propter	pec	per	(line a)
	ira Dei	atris		cata emit	(line ab)
M	fr	acies	pia	red ³¹	(line b)

This procedure does not involve self-closure (N. B. Its structural elements - "P," "atris," "pec" etc. - are not meaningful units of the language) but it illustrates, once again, how topological space functions in textual operations.

Structural descriptions of poetical texts are obliged to rely on topological reference even when the texts have nothing in common with figurai effects, parallel structures or concurrent self-closing stratagems. Dealing with Goethe's *Wanderers Nachtlied* János Hankiss attributed the enhancement of the sense of closure to a lack of congruence between the two basic systems structuring poetic texts, (1) the intellectual or grammatical and (2) the metrical and musical structures. (His terms suggest the same dichotomy as the terminology of János S. Petőfi.) János Hankiss discovered a slip between the grammatical and the linear segmentation of the poem, i.e. a source of tension due to something inexpressible on either plane but whose presence is suggestible by their confrontation *via* an irrational, extra-dimensional topological space to which the closure is an overture. "Les frontières trop rigides des articulations *a - d* sont en partie affaibles et comme dissoutes par la musique des vers dont les lignes de partage *A - E* ne coïncident pas toujours avec celles de l'analyse intellectuelle. Ce manque de congruence entre les deux systèmes (structure intellectuelle ou grammaticale - structure métrique et musicale) (...) ajoute à notre jouissance un élément de plus, pareil au contrepoint et à la fugue."³² The indices *a - d* and *A - E* refer to a graph showing that while in lines 1-2 the grammatical interval coincides with the pause suggested by the rhyme pattern ("...Ruh' "), in line 5 it overruns the Halt! signalled by the rhyme word ("du").

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When Barbara Herrnstein Smith wrote her book she could be convinced that "the development in modern poetry" was characterised by a tendency "of deliberate anti-structure and anti-closure."³³ Since then we have witnessed a renaissance of figurai poetry and the cult of the permanent effectuation of self-reflexive *n + 1* dimensions of communication.³⁴ A scheme for endless self-closure.

Notes

1. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure. A Study of How Poems End*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago-London, 1968.
2. Cf. Pál, S. Varga, *A gondviselésihittől a vitalizmusig* (From the Belief in Providence to Vitalism). Csokonai Kiadó, Debrecen 1994. See esp. p. 123, and G. Béla Németh and László Szörényi as quoted in Note nr. 255.
3. Barbara Herrnslein Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
4. *Op. cit.*, p. 50.
5. Thomas A. Sebeok, "Decoding a Text: Levels and Aspects in a Cheremis Sonnet." In Thomas A. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language*. The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass. (1960) 1968, p. 234.
6. *Op. cit.*, p. 233.
7. *Op. cit.*, pp. 234-235.
8. There is a humorous child-rhyme version of the song in Cheremis folkpoetry which works as a riddle. Family relations are enumerated as in the "Cheremis sonnet" ("My father is sky's cuckoo" etc., etc.) but with no reference to the departure of the speaker, apparently a little girl. To the question in line 7, "But what am I after all?", the jocose reply is (line 8), "A tiny grain of millet, that I am after all."
9. Cf. Barbara Herrnstein Smith on paratactic structure, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-109.
10. Cf. *The New York Times*, AprU 30, 1991. Cf. Eugene Eoyang: Primal Nights and Verbal Daze: Puns Paranomasia, and the People's Daily. *Tamkang Review*, Summer 1992 (vol. XXII.) Nos 14, pp. 253-362.
11. Cf. Barbara Herrnslein Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-150.
12. Cf. "Ifs, Ands, Buts for the Reader of Donne" by Josephine Miles in *Just So Much Honour: Essays Commemorating the Four-Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of John Donne* ed. by Peter Amadeus Fiore. The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park and London 1972, pp. 273-291.
13. On numerical composition see "The Hidden Sense" by Maren-Sofie R[^]stvig in Maren-Sofie R[^]stvig, Arvid L[^]sner, et al., *The Hidden Sense and Other Essays*. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, Humanities Press, New York 1963, pp. 1-112.
14. Cf. Mihály Hoppal, "Az »első« mese. Az ismétlés szerkezete a folklórban" (The »first« tale. The Structure of Repetition in the Folklore.) In Iván Horváth and András Veres (eds), *Ismétlődés a művészetben* (Repetition in Art). Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1980, pp. 244-266.
15. "Az első magyar sestina? Weöres Sándor: A szegény kis üdülőgondnok panasza." (The First Hungarian Sestina? The Laments of the Poor Little Rest-house Warden by Sándor Weöres). In Szigeti Csaba, *A hím farkas bőre. A radikális archaizmus a mai magyar költészetben*. (The Skin of the He-Wolf. Radical Archaism in Contemporary Hungarian Poetry.) Jelenkor Kiadó, Pécs 1993, pp. 141-163.
16. "...a költemény jelentése nem tárható fel a szerveződés természetének feltárása nélkül" (The meaning of the poem cannot be disclosed without disclosing the nature of its organization). *Op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.
17. "Látható, hogy a szerkezetépítés alapfelletelei miként szabják meg a vers terjedelmét sorszámmi pontossággal. Az önkényesen felvett szabályok a továbbiakban algebraikusan előírják a terjedelmet, ellentétben például a szonettel, ahol a kötött terjedelem kulturálisan, tradicionálisan rögzült." (It is visible how the basic conditions of structure determine the length of the poem to Üie exact number of lines. The arbitrarily chosen rules prescribe size

- further** on in an algebraic way, in contrast e.g. with the sonnet where the length was fixed by culture and tradition.) *Op. cit.*, pp. 133-134.
18. Petőfi, János S., *Towards a Semiotic Theory of the Human Communication (Text Linguistics – Semiotic Theory)*. Gold Press, Szeged 1991, p. 92.
 19. *Op. cit.*, p. 102.
 20. Reaching "saturation" by repetition. *Æ* Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
 21. Atilla Nyilas, undergraduate at the University of Miskolc, called my attention to this unique performance.
 22. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
 23. *Ibid.*
 24. *Op. cit.*, p. 124.
 25. János Hankiss, *Irodalomszemlélet. Tanulmányok az irodalmi alkotásról*. (An Approach to Literature. Studies on the Literary Work.) A Kir. Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda Könyvesboltja, Bp. 1941, p. 117.
 26. This also illustrates how a closure is constructed in "Milton's blank verse »paragraphs«" as described by Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-84.
 27. Cf. Szili, József: Arany-féle ördöglakatok. *Új írás* 1991, No. 3, pp. 89-101, No. 4, pp. 76-85.
 28. István Kilián, "Figurengedichte im Spätbarock." In B. Köpeczi, A. Tarnai (ed.), *Laurus Austriaco-Hungarica: Literarische Gattungen und Politik in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest - Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1988, p. 146.
 29. Based on a verbal comment by Professor Kilián.
 30. Cf. John Lotz, *The Structure of the Sonetti a Corona of Attila József*. Almqvist, Wiksell, Stockholm, 1965. (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Studia Hungarica Stockholmiensia 1.)
 31. István Kilián, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
 32. Jean Hankiss, *La littérature et la vie. Problématique de la création littéraire*. Sao Paulo 1951, p. 147.
 33. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
 34. And also earlier, János S. Petőfi subjected *Canto Beduino* (1932), an eight line poem in symmetrical form by Giuseppe Ungaretti, to thorough textual analysis [*op. cit.*, pp. 125-143]. Dorottya Németh, a student of the Janus Pannonius University at Pécs, called my attention to the presence of self-closing parallelism in the poetry of Sandro Penna (1906-1977). In Hungary Sándor Weöres was an influential representative of this mode since the 1940s. His eight line song *Túl, túl, messze túl...* (Far, Far, Very Far away..., 1940) is a precedent to the technique of *a kés* by Katalin Ladik.