

BETWEEN THE MODERNITY AND ARCHAISM AN
INTERPRETATIVE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PORTRAIT

It was a few years ago, in a winter night when we had a conversation with uncle Géza (59) and aunt Erzszi (80) the owners of one of the poorest houses in the Antalok valley. The house was built directly by the sloping road, at the foot of a mountain, and with a tiny yard belonging; and did not the house consist of more than two rooms. The living space is restricted to the modestly furnished kitchen where we were sitting up during that particular evening, while our host was trying to put a very old radio into operation: the single device that reminded us of modernity. In the news the central broadcasting station of Budapest was just trying to analyse the causes of the popularity-decrease of the English Tories. Uncle Géza suddenly interrupted the our conversation with his beginning to interpret the news. He said he did not understand why „gentleman” (politicians) always increased the price of "conserves" (tinned food) no matter how extremely expensive and why they were not able to comprehend that this action might lead to social unrest? First his interpretation had astonished us and we did not understand it, but after some meditation, everything became clear. Our host interpreted the text of the news being originally a background noise of our talk, a little bit peculiarly. The expression „conservative was the single intelligible password in the context for him and, by grasping it, he associated with the word „conserve”.¹ This association was more than enough for him to create a „story”. He joined together his everyday experiences of „bread-and-butter-worries” and the enigmatically objective message of the news and the „conserve-conservative” associative language-game. At the first hearing, Géza’s interpretation seemed extraordinarily entertaining to us. But while thinking about the situation more deeply it became clear that when detaching the anecdotist level there is a characteristic example of the most determining aspect of problem of social-scientific research praxis: namely, that we have to cope with the hermeneutical sense of our being here.

1 The word „conserve is used in Hungarian as the single word to express the preserved food in special metal containers and according to its phonetic form, it is very similar to the word „conservative”.

We had got acquainted with uncle Géza and aunt Erzsi in 1991. Three years later we started a systematic research in *Gyimes*. The title of our project is; „Socio- and Philosophical Anthropological Examination of a *pataka* in *Gyimes*.² To be more exact, pointing to the title of the project, our direct goal is to interpret a single picturesque *pataka* from social- and philosophical-anthropological viewpoint. Beside its geographical meaning *pataka* has also a „geosociological” connotation, since in its socio-hierarchical sense it is the next stage above the family. Among the families who live there, a close kinship can be observed, moreover, they form a compact community. According to their manners the *Gyimesians* have preserved quite a lot of autarchical, feudalistic, farming motives in their culture. Such a motive is for example the „partly” transhumance keeping of animals, but all of their erudition can be characterised by a number of archaic phenomena that have already died out of Hungarian culture in the Carpathian Basin.³ The archaic grammatical structure and vocabulary; the musical culture that refers to strong mediaeval and Balcanic influence; and the insufficiently intense church services are factors that made the development of local religiosity possible which is full of pantheistic elements and prove archaisms of *Gyimes*.

This culture and manner requires a high degree of cooperation up to now. Beside the family and kinship, the basis of this is the „*pataka*”.⁴ However, the railway - the connection between Moldavia and the Transsylvanian Basin - along of the valley of River *Tatros* modified the infrastructural potentiality of *Gyimes* as early as at the end of the 19th century.⁵ On the other hand, the railway served as a possibility for migrating employment, and it also provided the fundamental infrastructural condition of a job in the city.⁶ The work by the railway-line or in the city, or in the local administration demanding lower educational degree (post, public supply etc.) became more and more determining sources of scales of value and social norms. The experiences of strange environments, the influence of modernisation and urbanisation have penetrated the *Gyimesian* life throughout a manifold or transformation process. The *Gyime-*

2 *Gyimes* is a tiny ethno-geographical region in the East-Carpathian Mountains in the valley of River *Tatros* and *pataka* is a local geographical category which means a little valley together with a streamlet. 90 per cent of *Gyimes* is inhabited by Hungarians.

3 The animals are kept on the hilly pastures only in summer, but in winter they are in stables in the valleys.

4 Funeral, wedding and the most exhausting season-work (the haymaking) are the general opportunities of wide concentration of forces.

5 The railway was opened in 1897.. It resulted in a booming of the exploitation of the forest in *Gyimes* and the number of population doubled.

6 *Csikszereda (Miercurea-Ciuc)* is 40 kms away from *Gyimes*.

sian culture alters its expectations considering its own value-horizon, and it integrates the paradigm of modernity into itself as a question which to be answered and interpreted.

This couple's personalities represent the social-cultural phenomena called *Gyimesian* characteristically. Their personalities, erudition, and habits reflect the peculiar *Gyimesian* world and way of thinking. The acquaintance and friendship with them, from the researcher's viewpoint makes it possible that it is not only the interpretation and comprehension of this enchanting world that one can witness, but the situation also offers an opportunity to analyse one of the most determining aspects of anthropological praxis: interpretative-mode of being.

Doing anthropological examination in our case, considering the number of appearing questions of uncle Géza's story, a fundamentally important one emerges. The analysis of this question is a preliminary condition of the anthropological praxis itself. The identification and interpretation of hermeneutical basic-question, considering the process of comprehension, is an inevitable task of anthropology.⁷ The anthropological praxis, according to its self-definition, is an intentionalised pursuit that aims to interpret „the other“, the strange culture and, consequently, the anthropological praxis has to be a reflected intellectual activity. Géza's news-interpretation forces us to deliberate this „trivial“ fact.

THE COMPREHENSION AS THE COMPREHENSION OF THE "THE OTHERNESS OF THE OTHER"

The fundamental position of social-scientific research-praxis is in its broadest sense hermeneutical.⁸ Reinterpreting Géza's story, this characteristic peculiarity of research-attitude appears as if it were a plastic impression. Two important questions sign that the reflected interpretative consciousness is not simply a formal concomitant of interpretation but, on the contrary, it is a preliminary condition of comprehension.

What can, at all, be understood by the researcher from Géza's interpretation? The elucidation of this leads us to another question. What can be perfectly understood by Géza in his commenting the news of central broadcasting from Budapest.

7 It is the one of most significant tasks of every individual anthropological case as well as a fundamental problem of anthropology.

8 Ágnes Heller analyses this question in its general context, but her principal position is scientific-theoretical in her essay about: *Heller, Á. 1997. 29-79.*

The researcher's first and most natural reaction is that Géza has misunderstood the heard information, since his interpretation is not equal with what the news actually contained. "Conserve" and "conservative" are two different things. However, from a hermeneutical viewpoint, his interpretation is not simply a miscomprehension, since it has been known since Schleiermacher that we can talk about miscomprehension if the concealed potentiality of comprehensive process does not become reality because of the interpretator's mistake.⁹ Géza's interpretation would be a miscomprehension if we were sure that, apart from this context, he knows the true meaning of notion : "conservative". But the researcher can be certain of Géza's „erudition” lacks modern political terminology.

Accordingly it seems presumable to us that Géza simply has not understood the radio news since what he states is obviously something else than contained by the news. Nevertheless this approach of ours may be misleading as well. It is true from the researcher's natural viewpoint that the connection between the heard information and Géza's interpretation might be grasped either as the explanation of an associative situation which sources from mishearing or as a consequence of his insufficient „erudition”. Moreover, we have to see. that his interpretation with regard to the news is adequate. Géza's conclusion is a causalistic statement that contains objective facts. The rise of prices is a disastrous political praxis because it can result in social unrest that would be most awkward just for them who are responsible for raising of the prices. The researcher's interpretative approach is faulty if he hopes to understand Géza's news-comment on the basis of his own and not according to Géza's interpretative horizon. It must be verified as to the fact that Géza and the researcher heard two totally "different" texts in the radio, consequently the comprehension that he renders presupposes a quite unlike perspective.

But what is exactly understood here by the researcher? In order to answer this question we have to elucidate Géza's interpretative horizon that makes it possible that he is able to understand the same text as the researcher in another way and still in spite of this fact his interpretation is legitim. A roughly outlined reconstruction of Géza's personality and „erudition” seems to be a sufficient basis to characterise the interpretative praxis if the fundamental facts of legitimacy of his interpretation are conceivable. Consequently, the researcher's wax to interpret the story goes throughout the comprehension of Géza's interpretative strategy.

9 Schleiermacher summarised his idea concerning this theme in his book: *Schleiermacher, F.* 1993. 15-17.

Nevertheless, who is Géza actually? He was born in *Gyimesközéplök* (*Lunca de Jos*) in 1938 and his family, by its origin, is partly gypsy.¹⁰ His elementary studies were enough to pick up writing, reading and doing simplest mathematical operations.¹¹ Pursuant to his narration, his father who did not teach him anything, had pressed him to take up subsidiary work beside herdsmen and later he became also a "*csobán*".¹² He learned the archaic cultural motives which built the basic level of his erudition in this early period of his life. His skilfulness in traditional work and his enormous working ability is acknowledged by everybody. This opinion can be confirmed by the fact that he is a preferred day-worker during the summer season-work by the wealthy farmers. There was a fundamental change in his life when he married Demeter (Nyicu) Erzsébet in 1963. He is Erzi's second husband and he is twenty years younger than her and what is more he is her god-son.¹³ After the herdsmen's free life, setting down in the tiny house in *Antalok pataka* and the work in the wood-mill in *Gyimesközéplök* meant radical changes in his everyday life. The most important turn was the experience of modernity that was graspable first in the phenomena of the wood-mill.¹⁴ However, he has episodic impressions about modernity since he took a few trips to Moldova and to Transsylvania, but the frames of his life have been determined by the wood-mill and by the community of *Antalok pataka*.

The two levels of Géza's „erudition” can clearly be circumscribed. The archaic level obtained in the everyday life-practice is not only of a τεχνη (technic) characteristic.¹⁵ Comparing Géza's skill with other *Gyimesians*’, he is an "expert" of traditional culture: once he used to be an excellent dancer and singer and he is an experienced craftsman as well. Furthermore, it shows his remarkable histrionic talent that he entertains his guests with his own Nativity play

10 Because of the relatively limited number of surnames in *Gyimes*, it is a general habit to give nicknames in order to distinguish families. In quite lot of cases, the nicknames refer to the person's social position and origin. This is true in Géza's case as well, since „*Balázs*” is a well-known gypsy surname in *Gyimes*.

11 Géza is almost completely illiterate, his letters are read to him by the neighbours.

12 „*Csobán*” a word of Rumanian origin means herdsman. „*Csobán*” is the man who takes care of the flock all the day through, but we have to distinguish him from the „*bács*”. „*Bács*” does the cheese making and the complete processing of milk and he stays at herdsmen's hut all the day. To be a „*csobán*” means lower rank than to work as a „*bács*”.

13 Their marriage is a complex cultural and social phenomena that can be analysed in another essay.

14 The wood-mill in *Gyimesközéplök* was founded in 1930 and it is the single industrial enterprise in *Gyimes*. Géza worked by the company for 30 years.

15 It is clear that Géza's picture of modernity is schematic. The recent social conditions in Middle-East Europe are determined by peculiar economical processes which remind us of the capital accumulation in 18th and 19th century Europe: the technical civilisation, that realises itself as a vision of compulsion is basically negative and frustrating experience in *Gyimes*. Over the direct goals of this analysis, there arises the question: what are the causes that modernity is unable to represent itself as a positive phenomenon.

where he alone presents all the characters from Mary to Balthasar. Moreover, his conception of the universe is supplemented by other motives which consist of a superficial impression of modernity. Géza's idea of technical civilisation is a phantasmagoria with childishly naive thoughts. From our viewpoint: his idea of modernity is irrelevant, but far more important is Géza's method, the way he would like to present his relation to modernity as a authentic one. In this context, his news-interpretation illuminates the basically modern characteristic features of his personality, where he interprets his own life for himself and also for his environment as an experiment that involves the goal of comprehension of world.

The statement calls our attention not only to that well-known fact that any human being, according to his basic character, is an interpretative one. The rejection, the isolation and often antipathy of traditional societies against the strange cultural phenomena are widely known peculiarities as well. For that very reason is extremely interesting Géza's interpretation, since he in his intellectual "adventure" goes beyond his own personal and cultural competence. But Géza would like to present his authenticity of aspiring of comprehension just with the help of pretence of competence. Summarising the foregoing ideas two things become clear.

On the one hand, analysing the two levels of Géza's erudition, it is conceivable that his thinking is situational. Two perspectival interpretative strategies are available parallelly for him and he selects between them ostensibly. Now he is a *Gyimesian* peasant, then he is "news-analyser", but sometimes he is a dissolute, tipsy fellow, and yet again he fusses with servile politeness in the bureaux. His personality always appears in its different forms (metamorphoses) as an occasional solution of eternal conflict between archaic and modern.

On the other hand, we have to see that Géza in his interpretation undertakes to modernity "an sich" (in itself). It is clear that the conversation in the twilighted kitchen in that particular evening when Géza expresses to the researcher his idea considering the relation between political dilettantism and price-increase of "conserve" is a situation in which he demonstrates that the subject of comprehension is first of all not the text of news but the researcher himself. With his presence the researcher induces the hearing of news and, in an indirect way, motivates Géza's interpretative method: that is to say, an element of his erudition can be linked to the experience of modernity. The essence of this is to demonstrate the will striving for comprehension.

At this point of the analysis, the researcher has to face the problem of his own presence ("being there") as a key question of anthropological research.¹⁶ From the researcher viewpoint, an important question appears: how the researcher's presence can be understood as a subject of Géza's interpretation and in this context as a manifestation of modernity? How is being the researcher "there"?

THE COMPREHENSION AS A SELF-COMPREHENSION

The researcher, as the current subject of Géza's modernity-conception, has to make his own status clear for himself too, because this is an indispensable condition of the interpretation of our story. However, the researcher's role in this case at first sight seems to be a very complex phenomenon.

From Géza's viewpoint, the goals of socio-scientific research activities are very obscure, they are hardly characterisable. The systematic interest for him based on a strange erudition and the honourable attention given especially to his person are the highly significant motives of research activity from his perspective. To remain in the centre of the "stranger's" interest is Géza's device to raise relatively his social status within the hierarchy of *pataka*. He is always very kind to help gathering information and likes staying together with the researcher and hopes to demonstrate his indispensability this way. He raises up themes spontaneously if he thinks that it had some importance for research and he demands to record all of his presentations.

The other inhabitants of *pataka* can interpret our interest for Géza with difficulty as well. From their standpoint „Balázs” Géza is a contemptible, pauperistic alcoholic who does not deserve any appreciation because of his indigence. He is a marginal figure of the social hierarchy of *pataka*. For this very reason, the researcher's interest regarding Géza irritates the owners of the *pataka*, because they have to face a phenomenon which denies their scale of values.

Another aspect of Géza and the researcher's relationship perhaps can be marked with the expression; „friendship”. This motive that can be characterised as a very sincere one, which might be grasped in the common experiences of excursions to the mountains and in the common remembrance of hayharvest. Of course, we cannot speak about a friendship in original sense of the term, since

16 The classical anthropological literature analyses in detail the experience of meeting with „strange” cultures. Most authors point to the influence that is caused by the researcher's presence there. The most different orientations of anthropology agree with each other in the fact that all analyses have to reckon with the distorting influence of the researcher's presence.

the cultural distance creates discrepancy between us against all of our efforts again. This aspect of the relationship can be definable rather as a fundamental, open-hearted and reciprocal interest in the other's personality but it lacks any routine that is an indispensable condition of „friendship” in its conventional sense. Consequently, from Géza's viewpoint, the researcher's presence represents an intensified interest in his personality, but the causes of the interest mean something else for him than those of the researcher. Géza experiences the consciousness of his importance as a challenge that contains intellectual and existential risks at the same time. His goal to preserve the situation results in an exigency there is a lot at stake.

On the one hand, he has to emphasise his aptitude and competency, because this character is the most adequate means to preserve the researcher's interest in him. In Géza's interpretation, this goal is realisable if he can manage to clarify it for himself, in its clearest sense what the causes of researcher's systematic interest in him are. Therefore, the key to solution of the situation, from his viewpoint, is the comprehension of the researcher's personality or to be more precise, he has to understand the culture that is represented by the researcher. For Géza the researcher's presence thus turns into a question that regards the essence of modernity. At the same time, Géza can eternalise the temporary advantages in the society of *pataka*, if he is able to express the sense and the causes of significance of the researcher's interest in his personality. In other words, he is able to mediate that certain exact picture of modernity which is understood as the result of the interpretative exigency of the researcher's presence. Consequently, Géza can live in accordance with the idea of this double expectations, if he is able to clarify the sense of modernity for himself.

When we grasp the researcher's presence in our case as a cause of an interpretative cogency when the interpretor has to face phenomena of modernity, we have to see as well that the situation from Géza's standpoint, gains its own sense in another context; the interest in modernity is not a way of scientifically intentionalised, systematic program. In his comprehension, the situation is an existential condition, from which the intellectual task of interpretation derives naturally. Géza's relation to this task is not reflected consciously. On the contrary, it is reflected existentially. He looks for the sense of the situation as an aspect of everyday life-practice and not as a theory. In his comprehension the success of his endeavour depends on the authenticity of his own answer to the double expectation; i.e. to the parallelly appearing expectation of the researcher and those of the community in *pataka*. In his activity and in his behaviour, he

succeeds in this pursuit exactly and the researcher might grasp it as an authentic answer on the cultural challenge of modernity.

If we get back to our original starting-point, it seems to us there is some contradiction in our explanation. The certain sentence that was apostrophised as the adequate manifestation of Géza's picture of modernity and which fits in the associative language-game of words „conserve” and „conservative” seems much rather a verbal (theoretical) product like an existential conclusion. However, it is an obvious contradiction, when. Géza in his sentences re-evaluates the communicative rank of language. He is not able to use the language on the abstract level where all problems might be formulated as theoretical dilemmas. In his comprehension, the sense of interpretation of modernity is an existential conclusion that derives from his everyday life-practice and that only in its formal character is a linguistic manifestation. In Géza's usage the language much rather is a device to express and to relate his world, it is a narrative phenomenon and it is even less something like the stage of thinking. He uses it to transform and mediate the existentially reflected experiences of his life. We can prove this statement if we analyse Géza's comprehension of modernity.

THE COMPREHENSION AS THE SIMULTANEOUS COMPREHENSION OF THE OWN AND OF THE STRANGE CULTURE

So that we can understand the situation exactly, we have to consider three basic motives of Géza's news-interpretation. He linked together the experience of the deterioration of living-conditions and the radio-news that seemed to him as some enigmatic objectivity and the associative language-game of „conserve” and „conservative”.

Considering the deterioration of living-conditions and the *Gyimesian* interpretation of these phenomena with regard to its own culture presses the researcher to analyse a complicated economic and social situation. On the basis of their financial potentialities, the inhabitants of *Antalok pataka* can be divided into two parts. Rich and well-to-do farmers possess enough property and implement to produce goods of sufficient quality and quantity and they are able to evolve acceptable standards of living. Beside comes, as supplementary income, the profit of timber trade and those of tiny family-sawmills and the salary in the case of a few families, where the head of family is employed in the city. The exhausting traditional farming system in these families is a sufficient base to reproduce the working capacity and to keep their economic conditions balanced.

Other people who form another group of population in *pataka* are the inhabitants who do not possess property or their estates are so little that it is hardly enough for self-supporting. (By the way, Géza belongs to this second group.) The two social groups adjusted themselves, in accordance with their different self-supporting interests with adjustments and changes possible.

As far as the first group is concerned the liberalisation of economic and social conditions meant new chances for success, at the same time groups first of all from economic viewpoint felt the shady side of change of regime defenceless. This fact has had a unique importance from the standpoint of analysis of Géza's news-interpretation. His gradually inflating retirement pension resulted in the feeling of uncertainty of existence.

This direct motive in Géza's interpretation can easily be followed. In his life, the „conserve” purchasing is something unspeakably luxury-consumption. The symbolic sense of this phenomenon refers to the level of richness which makes it the outbreak possible from *Gyimesian's* autarchian way of life. In this context for Géza, the State retirement pension has been the warranty of some sovereignty and, at the same time, it meant a devaluation of the *Gyimesian* way of life based on the estate. In his reaction, where he automatically links together the word „conserve” with the fact of price-increase, we can feel the worry about the loss of the safety of existence. This first motive of his interpretation presents the real-existential level of his comprehension to us.

Otherwise, a spiritual, transcendental motive in his interpretation can be observed as well. It has an important role in the irresistible process of some associative game of interpretation that motivates Géza's thinking throughout into the conversation infiltrating radio-news. With regard to the comprehension of the situation, the details, seeming first negligible, are now highly important. In the tiny kitchen that serves as the stage of our conversation the trashy Russian-made radio is the single device which reminds us of technical civilisation. The nakedly shining bulb and the outfiltrating light of the small iron stove illuminates Géza's figure just when he tries to catch with the tuner the weak sound of central broadcasting of Budapest. With the ceremonially carefully composed scene, he would like to demonstrate his attention and his importance to the researcher. At the same time, in his movements some deep humbleness can be observed, some distance because of enigmatic objectivity of the radio. Just on the contrary, the natural way of thinking: the text which does not belong to a subject is the embodied credibility for him. Whatever is heard must be true. The absence of the narrator's presence and the absence of physical experiencability and, at the same time, his appearance in the spoken text (in news) is a paradoxical

cal ability that can be comprehended partly as a transcendental phenomenon. Furthermore, the text heard in the radio (because of the vocabulary and unordinary grammatical usage) have hardly been understandable for Géza.

The third motive of news-interpretation, the hermeneutical significance of „conserve-conservative” like associative language game, that derives directly from the above mentioned elements, reflects Géza’s comprehensive strategy exactly. The fact of ununderstandability of a situation (from his viewpoint the word; „conservative” has not any sense) results in a different reaction, like in the case of the researcher who is socialised on the basis of erudition of modernity. For him, it is a remarkable opportunity to intensively exploit the meaning-composing creativity and fantasy of mind. Nevertheless, he is uninhibited by the scientific and rationalistic systematisation. From his standpoint, the claim to be objective has only the formal importance. Seemingly, he strives for precise comprehension, though he reinterprets the sense of this in the situation, radically. For him the comprehension is not equal with the act of identification of meaning, but it is much rather the attribution of meaning. The sense of news heard does not depend on the identification and appreciation of the author’s authority, or it does not depend on some canonised meaning of text, but it is a corollary of interpretative practice. Géza’s interpretation and, in this context the designed „space” for himself in the community, appears to be objective to a certain extent, in so far as it is the reason for his own existence and authenticity.

When analysing all the three motives, we can discover a constant collision with the experience of modernity in Géza’s interpretation. In his news-interpretation the self-regulating economic principles of *Gyimesian* traditional farming lose their validity. In his opinion the collision between modern and traditional is a disastrous event. The price increase of „conserves” means some intervention of an impersonal, unknown and uninterpretable power in his life. In his comprehension, there are inseparable motives from each other: the appreciation of supremacy of modernity and the experience of dependence the unknown social and economic processes. Of course, it does not mean that he would have been independent of his marginal social and financial status, previously. In his comprehension, he acknowledges the transfer of his dependent relation to his environment on a new and on a more opaque level of interpretation. In the traditional *Gyimesian* world his place is designated by the partly postfeudalistic social rules has recently been influenced by the decrease of purchasing value of his retirement-pension. The situation is ambiguous. Géza says thanks for retirement pension, in other words; the chance of relative outbreak from traditional *Gyimesian* world, can be thanked to a modern institution that is

a manifestation of just the same impersonal power as the price increase of „conserve”. The paradox cannot be solved intellectually but existentially. In his comprehension, the modernity as an economic (in its figurative sense as a cultural and also a social) system is unintelligible, because it represents a value that it parallelly destroys. What is the worth of retirement-pension, of this fulfilment of life spent with work if it is impossible to live on it?

The impression that can be linked to the impersonality of radio-news fixes not only the experience of his dependency but it also fixes the hopelessness of this situation. Accordingly, it might not be altered for ever. It is true that he could not have had not any chance to alter his dependency in traditional world either, since he had not any estate.

But now he is not able to explain this new situation rationally. In his comprehension, modernity is an opaque and irrationalistic power that can be grasped only in irrationalistic way. We have to see modernity in Géza's life as a phenomenon eliciting always servile and, at the same time, critical attitudes. This manifests itself equally in his relation to the radio and other technical devices and, moreover in his relation to the researcher. His attitude is not simply a projection of his habitual behaviour or his respect for authority and power. For him the situation is a remarkable opportunity to reinterpret his attitude to his own traditional world. According to the very essence of it, this means that Géza's attempt to "identify" modernity aims principally at the legitimisation of his social position within the community of *pataka*, and it does not mean the change of his "old world" for a "new" one.

Géza, in his associative language game of "conserve-conservative" and with his peculiar intellectual devices, formulates his most important question for the researcher. Namely the news-interpretation indirectly involves the question; why is the expansivity the basic character of modernity? Why do the politicians increase the price of "conserve", if they endanger multitudes of existence and simultaneously risking their own position.

Géza who is coexistentially an actor of modern and traditional world, presents himself in his comprehension as an ambiguous figure. His individual is extremely modern, if we are able to accept the peculiarities of his "hermeneutical" position. On his authentic level, the realised existential-hermeneutical interpretation cannot be compared with that philosophical hermeneutic, which is systematically based on the twothousand-year-old erudition of Western Culture. Furthermore, this does not mean that his interpretative attempt is simply a consequence of the natural hermeneutical position. There is much more at risk. We can see in Géza's interpretation the process of collision and confusion

of modern and traditional on that very level of thinking where the process goes on in fact. We have to respect the importance of this from the standpoint of anthropological research practice. Géza's news interpretation is a peculiar commentary about a characteristic social, cultural and economic process of present Middle-East Europe. He demonstrates the general and total spread of modernity that results in the elimination of traditional cultures. He personalises the gradual, expansive and fatal infiltrating of modernity into the traditional world. His attitude and comprehension express exactly the top-resistance against this process; in other words: the fact of impossibility of any resistance.

In this context, Géza's modernity is a strictly "conservative" phenomenon. In all the three motives of his news-interpretation, he expresses his experience of elimination of traditional culture and which is reflected in his comprehension, existentially. The modernity for him is nothing else than a device to keep the memory of a disappearing world.

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CONTENTS – INHALT

<i>ZOLTÁN FEJŐS</i>	
The Hungarian Diaspora and Issues of Magyar National Identity Before 1989	5
<i>JÓZSEF KOTICS</i>	
Die moralische Wertordnung und ihre soziale Kontrolle in einigen Tschangodörfern des Moldaugebietes	27
<i>RÓBERT KEMÉNYFI</i>	
Die Frage nach der ethnischen Grenze und der Raumstruktur der Multiethnizität am Beispiel des ehemaligen ungarisch-slowakischen Komitates Gömör und Kis-Hont	50
<i>KÁROLY KOCSIS</i>	
Changing Religious Patterns in the Carpathian Basin	71
<i>ILYÉS ZOLTÁN</i>	
Die Wirkung der Exogamie auf den Zustand der Muttersprache und die ethnische Identität	84
<i>TADESSE EYASSU</i>	
The mutual effect of Religion and Culture in Ethiopia	99
<i>URSZULA LEHR</i>	
Witchand Sorcery in Folk Tales of Polish Carpathian Villages	117
<i>KINCSÓ VEREBÉLYI</i>	
Zur Begriffsbestimmung der Volkskunst	125
<i>ZOLTÁN UJVÁRY</i>	
Volkstümliche Szenische Darstellungen und dramatische Volksbräuche	134
<i>MATTHIAS GORZOLKA</i>	
Heinrich Kornmann (1579–1627)	186
<i>MIHÁLY HOPPÁL</i>	
The way of an urban shaman: Michael Harner and Neo-shamanism ...	194

<i>LÁSZLÓ SZABÓ</i>	
Light cavalry weapon turned into <i>Legénybot</i>	213
<i>GYULA VIGA</i>	
Handwerk und Handel	226
<i>VILMOS VOIGT</i>	
On Labyrinths, in Labyrinths	239
<i>GÁBOR BICZÓ</i>	
Between the Modernity and Archaism an Interpretative Anthropological Portrait	258