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# "…there is nothing more damning than anonymity…"

## Pseudonymisation and Institutionalisation of Hungarian criticism at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

THESES

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## I. Brief introduction of the aim of the research

Establishment and institutionalisation of public criticism in Hungary were the result of a process that took place from the last third of the 18$^{th}$ century until the 1830s. I associate the last phase of the institutionalisation of criticism with *Kritikai Lapok*, a periodical edited by József Bajza, as this was the first Hungarian medium which defined itself before the readers of that period by promoting panopticism in the Foucaultian sense. This long period was characterised by several debates discussing the role and purposes of the literary institution of criticism. In addition to the practice of criticism that evolved between the 1810s and the 1830s, a series of succinct theoretical works appeared with the primary aim of clarifying the issues related to review writing. One of these issues – pseudonymisation of the critic – was identified by an author under the alias Δ (Sámuel Prepeliczay) in his article of 1823, where he considered anonymity as a key problem, which – in his opinion – could resolve the debates of the era in the field of review.

During the subject period, criticism was considered to be a controversial genre, despite the fact that there was a declared consent among the thinkers of the era that its primary purpose was to educate writers and readers alike, while its trendsetting, archiving, canonising functions, or those intended to introduce the nation's cultural products and build careers could not be neglected, either. A critical approach associated with criticism, however, had brought revulsion in the minds of certain members of recipient communities, thus making it unpopular and disapproved. These tendencies urged critics to present their views through various uses of pseudonymisation on the platforms available to them. The great potential in pseudonymisation opened up a world of possibilities for critics, who had hardly had any room for manoeuvre until then. Given this phenomenon, I am focusing on the possibilities of manoeuvre offered to critics when publishing under a pseudonym, and their judgement by the recipient communities of that period. Based on the foregoing, publishing under a pseudonym can also be interpreted as a means to exploit opportunities of critical expression, while analysing this practice will unveil the relation between the values of literature and criticism of the period in question as well as their status, phases of their institutionalisation, let alone uninstitutionalisation, relations of power and interests in the world of literature as well as the endeavours of critics to build their careers. It is foreseeable that understanding the relation between pseudonymisation and criticism itself may modulate our perception of the mindset of Hungarian literary criticism as presented in the relevant literature, and it can highlight the process of institutionalisation from a new perspective.

Each chapter of this thesis has a dedicated purpose. First, in Chapter 2 *(The concept of the author's pseudonymisation),* I make attempts to create a conceptual network which will help me conduct my research. To that end, I intend to review the theories of pseudonymisation and authorship in contemporary literary theories and those of the era, and then explore the circumstances and norms determining the pseudonymisation of critics. My assumption is that pseudonymisation and institutionalised criticism involved four problems. Furthermore, the chapters of my thesis discuss the possibilities offered by pseudonymisation to resolve the problems associated with criticism and the disputes it created. Chapter 3 *(Creating opportunities for expression and pseudonymisation)* explores the possibilities offered by pseudonymisation in taking up positions when expressing oneself as a critic. In this context, opportunities of expressing oneself as a critic and pseudonymisation manifested as epistemological problems, and theories appearing under the scope of theoretical criticism were often accompanied by the interlocking of pseudonymisation and epistemology. In addition to concepts of taking up positions when expressing oneself as a critic, my thesis also explores the endeavours of their institutionalisation. Chapter 4 *(Restricting opportunities for expression and pseudonymisation)* discusses attempts that were made to prohibit critics from critical self-expression by condemning certain strategies of pseudonymisation. Some thinkers of the period considered some strategies of pseudonymisation as opportunities for showing superiority and incompetence. Anonymous reviews were observed as a means to abuse one's power and attempts were made to supplant such practices. Chapter 5 *(Educational criticism and pseudonymisation)* presents methods that appeared during the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries to meet the purpose declared as the most important of criticism: education, and strategies of pseudonymisation associated with the effectiveness of a different pedagogical methodology. In order to serve their dedicated purposes in front of the general public of the period, reviews with different concepts of education had different pseudonymisation strategies. Finally, Chapter 6 *(Genres of criticism and pseudonymisation)* explores how pseudonymisation enhanced the integration and acknowledgement of genres of criticism.

## II. Methods used for collecting and processing material

Research conducted in Hungary during the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries clearly identified pseudonymisation as a problematic issue and such findings were also implemented in the relevant studies, but the reasons and purposes pseudonymisation by critics have not yet been

studied in detail. Literary science mostly regarded pseudonymisation as a debate technique tool in the practice of criticism of the era. It is evident that research in Hungary was focusing on the phenomenon of pseudonymisation, rather than the issue of the critics' pseudonymisation, which was considered as a marginal question. Interlocking the research of pseudonymisation and critical periodicals has a rich tradition abroad. Research methods that mainly focused on attribution (*i.e.* the identification of authors of publications) or onomastics (*i.e.* observations of naming the authors) were already adjusted both in German and Anglo-Saxon literature (cf. studies by John Mullan or Stephan Pabst). Their methodology was significantly shaped by involving the roles, purposes and functions of critics' pseudonymisation. The aim of my thesis is a parallel examination of the norms, considerations and practices associated with critics' pseudonymisation, by also considering the tools of onomastics in terms of authors' names as well as the issue of identifying authors, if required.

In the course of my research, I identified a group of texts the analysis of which helps to understand the phenomenon of the pseudonymisation of critics and institutionalised review that has so far received less attention. The studied source group contains texts of a heterogeneous format and genre. In terms of genre, I included critical genres, such as reviews, antirecensions, critical letters or aesthetic-critical epigrams, and works of theoretical criticism, (*i.e.* programme articles and studies) in my research. When selecting the sources, I did not strive for completeness, nor was I driven by the aim of processing certain critical genres in their entirety. Selection was basically determined by the framework of my thesis and, therefore, I was focusing only on texts that in some way raised important questions of pseudonymisation and theoretical criticism, and to which contemporaries also reacted. My research is fundamentally focused on the history of criticism and, therefore, texts of (the also institutionalised) contemporary literary science of that era are not included. In several cases, I was driven by the aim of repeatedly reviewing the debates of criticism of the era according to the chosen criteria. To that end, I sought to review both printed and manuscript sources and – if possible – to broaden their scope. By focusing on pseudonymisation, in several cases I succeeded in shaping a debate that has long been the subject of literary history or enriching it with new or less popular and referenced sources.

In the era – following Western practice – the press was the platform for publishing criticism. Given that such debates usually appeared in periodicals publishing reviews of the period (such as *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, *Élet és Literatura*, *Kritikai Lapok,* etc.), I put great emphasis on reviewing these. Press organisations that published regular reviews until *Tudományos Gyűjtemény* started in 1817 and were active only for a short period of time, which

encouraged critics to publish their reviews on other platforms. Reviews, pamphlets, collections of debates or works on theoretical criticism associated with criticism and pseudonymisation were often published as independent publications. In terms of genre, the correspondence between writers nicely complement and illuminate the underlying problems of reviews and pseudonymisation. Examining the institutionalisation of criticism, however, offers the possibility of also involving sources associated with the institutions in my research. In relation to criticism exercised by a body of critics, I used a work on theoretical criticism published in 1818: *A' Recensiókról* ("About Reviews") by Vida Füredi, but I also examined the institutionalisation based on MTT's practice. Furthermore, I also used manuscript sources for my research with a great deal of help received from the Manuscript Collection of OSZK (National Széchényi Library) as well as the Manuscript Collection and Old Archives of the Academy maintained by MTA-KIK (Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences). The concept of using and modelling viewpoints was basically elaborated by Ferenc Kölcsey, and the interpretation of his theories and practices under theoretical criticism would be impossible without his studies in the field of philosophy and aesthetics.

## III. Findings and benefits

My thesis pointed out the connections between the disliked and slowly institutionalising criticism unfolding during the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries and pseudonymisation. The concept of the romantic author based on "genius theory" enhanced the significance of the phenomenon of pseudonymisation. Increased attention was paid to the names used by authors when signing their finished work. Contemporary critics were driven by the same considerations, for who pseudonymisation practices to be chosen and considered as acceptable were vital.

To clarify this, first I had to define the concept, functions and types of pseudonymisation. My purpose was to create a conceptual network valid for contemporary Hungarian conditions. To that end – on the one hand – I assessed the critical circumstances of critics' pseudonymisation, such as rhetoric, ecclesiastical and secular powers, various contemporary public domains, and the problems of intermediary relations. On the other hand, I put an emphasis on identifying the norms that also had an influence on name selection. When choosing a name, critics had to weigh up the norms of propriety, authenticity as well as the feasibility of attribution. Considering all this, I defined the concept of pseudonymisation based on Foucault's

theory, by which I mean a method whereby the reader of the name – by interpreting it – separates different texts and discourses, assigns and interprets the modes of reception and places such texts in the literature. My thesis differentiates between three types of concepts: (i) discrete, (ii) masked and (iii) career builder pseudonymisation. In the event of discrete pseudonymisation, critics hide their proper name because they use a representative narrative or protect the social status of their subjects. Masked pseudonymisation, on the other hand, represented less significance in terms of invisibility: the primary goal of critics was to delicately separate the reviews from the rest of their oeuvre. The purpose of critics using the third – career builder – type of pseudonymisation was to obtain certain literary or financial advantages or to generate debates.

Subsequently, I studied the problems that interlocked the institutionalisation of criticism and pseudonymisation in contemporary discourse.

Firstly, pseudonymisation combined different types of criticism that had various epistemological grounds (*i.e.* criticism exercised by a body of critics or applying different viewpoints, as well as unbiased criticism). Controversial positions offered different ways to take up one's position as a critic and to seize the opportunities of expressing oneself in front of the nation, where different uses of pseudonymisation represented the authenticity of the body's judgement, a means of modelling different viewpoints or a method of liberating biases. I also studied the institutionalisation of theories discussed here that were in conflict with each other. Optimistic expectations associated with criticism exercised by a body of critics (*i.e.* that it will resolve the problems of criticism) was basically not realised in criticism practised by MTT, and stakeholder groups within the body were struggling against each other for positions. This phenomenon was demonstrated by analysing the disputes associated with the awarding of a Great Prize by the Hungarian Academy of Science in 1833 and 1835. As a result of my research, I concluded that – in addition to internal criticism practices of institutions, indicating the name of the author as well – press debates characterised by the desire to influence the distribution of the prizes, discreet pseudonymisation and harsh tones have increasingly emerged. The theory of the application of viewpoints (in the sense Ferenc Kölcsey used it) was given shape in the periodical *Élet és Literatura*. The editors of the magazine – Pál Szemere and Ferenc Kölcsey – endeavoured to examine certain issues of aesthetics or criticism from several points of view, by dedicating a separate pseudonym to each position, thus encouraging their readers to form their own views on the matter. In doing so, they generally used masked pseudonymisation to create various positions of expressing the critics' view, while deliberately protecting their anonymity was not a key issue for them. Finally, I explored unbiased criticism as exercised by József Bajza

and his circle, which can be mainly associated with the periodical *Kritikai Lapok*. In case of the Pyrker Circle (1831), pseudonymisation as used by Ferenc Toldy served the purposes of a truly unbiased judgement. In later debates, on the other hand, the primary use of pseudonymisation was for communication or rhetorical purposes, attempting to spark debates among opponents and discredit them. My thesis demonstrates this practice through the example of the Aurora Trial (1834).

Secondly, I examined the fact that contemporary thinkers not only recognised pseudonymisation as a means of taking up a position when expressing themselves as critics, but in principle, by using pseudonyms, they were also able to choose practices they intended to eliminate from the actual position of self-expression. As an enthusiast of criticism exercised by a body of critics, Vida Füredi disapproved of the behaviour of anonymous, slenderer and authoritative critics and promoted the idea that criticism should be exercised by a body of critics. Condemners of criticism exercised by a body of critics, however, considered the involvement in the discourse of individuals with questionable authority as a higher risk. Critics of foreign nations or nationalities were also deemed unauthorised as well as any female critics using a female pseudonym.

Thirdly, I examined the function of pseudonymisation in fulfilling the educational role of criticism. In my research, I identified two types of educational criticism: the "spurring" and "whipping" type, each of which applied the tool of pseudonymisation in a different way. The "spurring" type of criticism that considers the ideal of education as its starting point, characterised by text-centred analysis followed the practice of discrete pseudonymisation, while the centrepiece of the approach applied by its "whipping" counterpart was the author and it explicitly required a career building pseudonym that protected the critic.

Finally, I examined whether the critic's choice of name contributed to increasing the acceptability of critical genres published in the press, beyond the limits of a private correspondence controlled by the author. Authors of often-challenged print reviews of the era preferred to use various pseudonyms in order to maintain critical discourse and protect themselves against opponents of the review. This was reflected in the debate of János Kis, Sámuel Prepeliczay and Sámuel Kiss Nemesapáti, which has not been analysed so far and where it was the name that attracted considerable attention as well: namely, the influence of critical genres in light of indicating or hiding the critic's name.

As a continuation of the above research, not only criticism but also the writer's side should be examined more closely. In many cases, authors developed their own pseudonymisation strategies in order to protect themselves against the new and unknown phenomenon of criticism,

which was often regarded as a threat, and this greatly influenced the development of their image and career aspirations. Indicating or hiding their name and associating certain texts with or digressing these from their oeuvre were the tools authors used to build their image and protect it from criticism. This gives me the opportunity to use the typology developed for the pseudonymisation of critics in the future to interpret the author's considerations as well. Examining pseudonymisation considerations and practices – from the side of critics and writers alike – introduced new information and angles into the interpretation of processes that took place in the field of criticism during the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, thereby making it possible to modulate the findings of the history of criticism.

## IV. List of publications related to the topic of the dissertation

1. FEKETE Norbert. „The Author's Name and the Problem of the Status of Literature". In FENYVESI Kristóf és Tuomo LAHDELMA, szerk. Spectrum Hungarologicum, Jyväskylä–Pécs, 2018. [Közlésre elfogadva.]

2. FEKETE Norbert. „Női néven nőként bírálni: A beszédpozíció megszerzésének problémái Takáts Éva kritikusi fellépésekor". TÖRÖK Zsuzsa, szerk. Nőszerzők a 19. században: lehetőségek és korlátok. .Budapest: Reciti Kiadó, 2018. [Közlésre elfogadva.]

3. FEKETE Norbert. „Az Aurora-kör szerzői névhasználati stratégiái az írói karrierépítés szolgálatában". *Széphalom*. [Közlésre elfogadva.]

4. FEKETE Norbert. „A testületi kritika és a szerzői névhasználat problémája a 19. század első évtizedeinek magyar irodalmában". In BIRÓ Annamária és EGYED Emese, szerk. *Aranka György és a tudomány megújuló alakzatai*. Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 2018, 299–318.

5. FEKETE Norbert. „»a névtelenség kárhoztatik főkép«: A szerzői névhasználat és a kritika státusza a 19. század első évtizedeinek magyar irodalmában". *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 121 (2017): 315–354.

6. FEKETE Norbert. „Orczy Lőrinc szerzői névhasználata és az irodalom státusza". In *Az ember: Kultúrtörténeti és poétikai megközelítésben, Fiatalok Konferenciája (FiKon) 2016*, szerkesztette DÉRI Eszter és DÓBÉK Ágnes és GÖRÖG Dániel és MARKÓ Anita és MARÓTHY Szilvia, 205–219. Budapest: Reciti Kiadó, 2017.

7. FEKETE Norbert. „A szerzőség és a szerzői név kontextusai" In *(Kon)Textus*, szerkesztette BARTÓK Boglárka és MAJOR Ágnes és SCHÄFFER Anett, 9–17. Pro Scientia Füzetek 5. Miskolc: Könyvműhely.hu, 2017.

8. FEKETE Norbert. „Kölcsey Ferenc névhasználatának ismeretelméleti háttere". *Irodalmi Szemle* 60, 2. sz. (2017): 63–72.

9. FEKETE Norbert. „»a' Pseudonymitas közöttünk szinte módivá lőn«: Szemere Pál és a szerzői névhasználat In *Műhelyszeminárium: A hatvanéves Gyapay László köszöntése*, szerkesztette FEKETE Norbert és PORKOLÁB Tibor és ROSTÁS Édua, 11–24. Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Magyar Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Intézet, 2016.

10. FEKETE Norbert. „»az éjfél' titkaiba leplezett areopagusi tribunal«: A névtelenség, mint az interkulturális kommunikáció eszköze, *Alkalmazott Nyelvészeti Közlemények* 10, 1. sz. (2016): 89–97.

11. FEKETE Norbert. „Szerzői névhasználat, műfaj és medialitás kapcsolata a 19. század első felének kritikáiban" In *Szöveg, hagyomány, interpretáció*, szerkesztette ÁDÁM Enikő és BARNA László és BARTÓK Boglárka és MAJOR Ágnes és SÁNDOR Kitti, 15–22. Pro Scientia Füzetek 4. Miskolc: Könyvműhely.hu, 2016.

12. FEKETE Norbert. „A korbácsoló kritika és a szerzői névhasználat az 1810-es évek recenzióiban" In *Miskolci Egyetem Doktoranduszok Fóruma, Miskolc, 2015. november 19.: Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa*, szerkesztette FEKETE Norbert és MAJOR Ágnes, 15–20. Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem Tudományos és Nemzetközi Rektorhelyettesi Titkárság, 2016.

13. FEKETE Norbert. „The Epistemological Background of Kölcsey's Use of Pen-Names" In *Az identitás metamorfózisa irodalomban és nyelvben III/Metamorfóza identity v literatúre a jazyku III.*, szerkesztette František ALABÁN, 96–103. Banská Bystrica: Belianum Egyetemi Kiadó, 2015.

14. FEKETE Norbert. „Kritikai műfajok és (ál)névhasználat a 19. század első felében", *Palócföld* 61, 6. sz., 39–46.

15. FEKETE Norbert. „A kritika státuszának kérdéskörei a 19. század első felében" In *Miskolci Egyetem Doktoranduszok Fóruma, Miskolc, 2014. november 21.: Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa*, szerkesztette FEKETE Norbert és MAJOR Ágnes, 27–33. Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem Tudományszervezési és Nemzetközi Osztály, 2015.

16. FEKETE Norbert. „»jó […] ha az ember tart magának egy álorczát«: A szerzői névhasználat hatása az írói karrierépítésre" In *Határátlépések*, szerkesztette BARNA László és EGERER Lilla és KAPUSI Angéla és MAJOR Ágnes, 26–33. Pro Scientia Füzetek 3. Miskolc: Könyvműhely.hu, 2015.

17. FEKETE Norbert. „»jó […] ha az ember tart magának egy álorczát«: A szerzői névhasználat hatása az írói karrierépítésre" In *Tavaszi Szél 2014: Konferenciakötet*, szerkesztette CSISZÁR Imre és KŐMÍVES Péter Miklós. 6. köt. 39-45. Debrecen: Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége, 2014.

18. FEKETE Norbert. „Kölcsey Ferenc névhasználatának ismeretelméleti háttere" In *Miskolci Egyetem Doktoranduszok Fóruma, Miskolc, 2013. november 7.: Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa*, szerkesztette BARNA László és HUSZTI Tímea, 30–35. Miskolc: Miskolci Egyetem Tudományszervezési és Nemzetközi Osztály, 2014.