Writing for the Family Audience

Gartenlaube, Családi Kör and the subversion of a domestic magazine

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ABSTRACT

Családi Kör (1860–1880) was the leading Hungarian domestic magazine of the mid-19th period, which, under the editorship of the first Hungarian woman of letters Emília Kánya, played a major role in introducing the domestic readership to contemporary European literature and in discussing the struggle of women's employment opportunities before a wider public. Critical studies have also suggested that it was edited and published under the influence of the German *Gartenlaube* (1853–1944), the journal credited with embedding the journal of domestic magazine in the broader regime of 19th century print culture. Based on a close reading of the two magazines' coverage in its European cultural historical context, this chapter offers an account of the possible connections and affinities between the two periodicals, and argues that the Hungarian magazine was significantly more daring in its politics and more systematic in its pursuit of introducing the local audience to European literary trends and works.

Keywords: Hungarian domestic magazines, Családi Kör, Gartenlaube, E.Marlatt, women's employment, periodical culture in the 19th century

In the yet to be written history of Hungarian popular magazines in the 19th century, an important place should be given to *Családi Kör* (Family Circle), the domestic magazine that ran from 1860 to 1880.¹ It stood out as the most sought after and most influential of family magazines, and its close association with Emília Kánya (1830–1905), the first Hungarian female periodical editor and one of the first acknowledged Hungarian

1 There is no comprehensive history of Hungarian popular press in the 19th century, but general press histories provide accounts of some journals. Of late, important articles about individual women's magazines have been published by Zsuzsa Török, Petra Bozsoki and Zsolt Mészáros. Zsuzsa Török is also responsible for the RECITI conference volume series. (Budapest: MTA), some of whose volumes focus on 19th women's writing.

woman of letters, gave it a particular intellectual flavour. Though rather undervalued by posterity until recent times, women's magazines fulfilled a range of functions: through the vehicle of literature, biography, travelogues and news digests and popular texts, they created and shaped an educated (female) reading public and also shaped and strengthened the sense of modern bourgeois national identity. *Családi Kőr* carried an impressive range of material, encompassing contributions from the best national writers like Mór Jókai and János Arany, polemicists like Pál Balogh Almási, and fiction by foreign authors like Washington Irving, George Sand and Dumas père in translation. It was instrumental in the assertion of women's role in national history, in familiarising the woman reader with contemporary foreign literature and introducing the developments of the women's movement. Though not the only one in Hungary in the genre, it was the most influential and of the highest standard among them.

Family magazines did not just reflect on local or regional news or national history, but they were also closely embedded in a wider network of the transnational circulation of information, reportages and literary publications; a process which is largely undocumented by 20-21st century literary historians, though some recent work has already started to map out the field.² The initial work on 19th century periodicals focused on periodicals of the major European languages, represented by the work of Joanne Shattock and Alexis Easley in the British context and Kirsten Belgum's work in the German one. The work of Marianne van Remortel and Gillian Down has made important inroads into literary interactions between French and English periodicals, driving the point home that by the mid-19th century, printed content was often transmitted between major European publishing cultures, or directly adapted or borrowed from periodicals printed in the languages of international circulation.³ For domestic magazines, the German language illustrated *Gartenlaube* was known to provide a model which they all followed and it is commonly claimed to be the progenitor of domestic magazines. (Belgum 1988, xii) *Gartenlaube* was a particularly important journal in the context of women's popular magazines, and critics have argued that the Hungarian magazine owed much to its mother journal. (Fábri 118 and Varga 'Translation,' 2016, 86) This article sets out to revisit this thesis put forward by Anna Fábri and later repeated in my own work about the *Gartenlaube* serving as a model, and argues that notwithstanding the similarities, the Hungarian magazine shifted political and aesthetic

2 The European Society for Periodical Research has done an immense amount of work to give institutional shape to European periodical research, and its journal, the *Journal of European Periodical Studies*, launched in 2016, is an increasingly important hub for scholarly work on European periodicals.

3 I am particularly indebted to Wendy Bracewell (UCL-SSEES) for introducing me to the concept of 'languages of international circulation' which enables a nuanced distinction between languages with many native speakers and languages used by many different non-native speakers.

emphasis in significant ways, and by these shifts, it subverted the model of the domestic magazine.

Gartenlaube stood out both by circulation and geographical spread. First launched in Leipzig in 1853 with 5,000 printed copies under the editorship of the liberal Ernst Keil (Fitzpatrick 97) its circulation rapidly grew: in 1863, it was printed already in 160,000 copies and it reached its height in 1875 with 382,000 copies. (Belgum 1994, 92) Aimed specifically at family readership, the magazine reached millions, and subscriber information shows that German speakers of Brazil, or of the Habsburg Empire also read the magazine. The Hungarian journal *Krassó-Szörényi Lapok* briefly mentions 10,000 subscribers in Hungary alone. (Krassó 1882 n.27:2) We do not have such reliable figures for *Családi Kör*, but the journal mentions 1,400 subscribers in 1864 (1864/12), and the correspondence columns indicate a broad geographical spread in the territory of Hungary.⁴ Though slight in comparison with *Gartenlaube*, *Családi Kör*, with its highest circulation of 2,000 copies, was likely to reach at least ten thousand readers in its heyday. The fortunes of the two magazines greatly diverged: *Családi Kör* was influential, popular with readers and supported by the leading polemicists of Hungary until 1876, when it went into decline until its final demise in 1880. *Gartenlaube* underwent several transformations from its early days as a 'moralistisches Wochenblatt' (1853–1871), when the entertainment and moral education were in focus, to the fostering of liberal politics in the following decade, while after Keil's death in 1878 it shifted towards political conservatism and entertainment. The focus of comparison is the period between 1860 and 1876, when both periodicals expanded in circulation and coverage and when both deliberately and self-assuredly identified themselves as family magazines for the domestic audience. Due to language, circulation and the solid network of distribution, *Gartenlaube* established itself as the model of mainstream popular magazines that other magazines felt compelled to imitate. (Belgum 1988, xii)

Popular magazines in Germany started with the moral weeklies. The first German magazine, relatively safe from censorship, was the educative-entertaining *Pfennig-Magazin* (1833). It was followed by the *Illustrierte Zeitung* 10 years later; rich in images and much more expensive. Between 1850 and 1890s, 140 family magazines existed. (Belgum 1988, 10) *Gartenlaube* therefore built on an existing tradition of production and reception, and the combination of illustrations and cheapness largely contributed to its phenomenal success. Women's magazines were considerably more scarce in Hungary, but *Nővilág* (1857–1864) already preceded it with its specifically domesticity-oriented agenda, and running the prominent woman writer Júlia Jósika's letters from Brussels and letters describing Pest-Buda literary sociability. (*Nővilág*) But,

4 An important and yet unexplored area is the availability of reading material for Hungarian émigré communities.

significantly, *Nővilág* exclusively addressed the female – rather than domestic – audience as is shown by the emblazoned masthead.

The family audience was an unquestionable target for both Ernst Keil and Emília Kánya. Keil intended to enlighten the German middle classes in the spirit of educated liberalism, yet his earlier imprisonment for political activities showed him the necessity to keep explicit political issues at bay. (Fitzpatrick 97–98) *Családi Kör*'s distance from politics was equally motivated by recent history: after the overthrow of the 1848–49 Hungarian revolution and war of independence and the subsequent Bach era repression, the magazine could only be launched when the Oktoberdiplom of October 1860 offered some sort of limited constitutionalism to parts of Habsburg Austria. For Keil, there was a strong self-defensive element behind choosing ostensibly harmless, familial concerns, for Emília Kánya, the choice also stemmed from notions associated with her gender. But for both periodicals, developing a community of domestic readers and a bourgeois readership was shared purpose. This readership was instrumental in creating a bourgeois public sphere, where nationally minded reading was a prerequisite.⁵

⁵ Bozsoki puts forward an important argument about constructing the 'daughter of the homeland' in *Családi Kör* in her PhD Dissertation. Bozsoki, 2021.

The choice of genres played a significant role in constructing themselves as a particular type of periodical in a bid to develop their audience. On the weekly 16 pages, *Gartenlaube* strove to offer reading material to young and old, male and female. The lead piece in each issue was usually a serialised novel or a short story, and it also contained poetry, short biographies of prominent people, travel writing. It devoted considerable attention to German communities abroad. (Belgum 1998, xii) As it became more established, the number of illustrations increased but they always framed the readers in a domestic context. All in all, as the century wore on, *Gartenlaube* represented German scientific, literary and colonising achievement in increasingly assertive terms.

Családi Kör followed these thematic, generic and formulaic patterns. Also appearing with a weekly frequency of 16 pages, the magazine deliberately drove the message home about its intended domestic audience. As the mast heads illustrated, both magazines purported to reflect and shape the domestic audience.

Articles belonged to the same genres: serialised fiction and short stories, biographies of prominent people, with particular respect to great exemplary men.

The connections between the two periodicals were manifold and occasionally directly textual, though currently we have no evidence of any correspondence between editors or regular contributors. *Gartenlaube* occasionally covered Hungarian topics. In 1864, it carried an article from an unidentified author about the 'charitable bazaar of Hungarian women' ('magyar nők jótékonyági bazára,' 1864, 283–286), which was organised by the National Association of Hungarian Housekeepers (Magyar Gazdaasszonyok Országos Egyesülete), which was immensely significant in shaping earlier, sporadic and uncoordinated actions for education into a broad social movement. (Szegevári 82) The Association was presided over by Emília Csernovics Damjanich, the widow of one the martyrs of the 1848–49 war of independence – a highly respected aristocratic lady whose charitable work focused on providing formal education for the daughters and orphans of the impoverished middle class. Emília Kánya was closely connected with the Association, and she did publish an article about Mrs Damjanich (1865/6), but this came out after the *Gartenlaube* report. Occasional articles discuss Kossuth and Ferenc Deák (1861/51 and 1866/23), while Daniel von Kaszonyi, the Leipzig-based Hungarian journalist contributed a series of articles about the Hungarian outlaw Sándor Rózsa, a staple figure in the exoticising description of Hungarian matters. (1868/21, 1868/25). Though political changes and the Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich could have attracted some attention, the journal's general lack of interest in non-German politics attitude militated against it. In *Családi Kör*, there are very few references to the German magazine, apart from a direct connection in 1866, when commenting on the high circulation of the journal, the article praises the German magazine for 'spreading the true, the good and the beautiful;' for being the source of 'pure truth.' (1866, 1)

But textual connections are scarce.

Importing oeuvres

Guiding female literary taste and reading was one of the agendas of the *Gartenlaube*, achieved by the very traditional tool of publishing letters penned by leading literary men to a fictitious female reader requiring guidance in matters of literature. (Belgum 1994, 98) But apart from this rather indirect and perhaps somewhat patronising method, the publication of text by authors – mostly novels and novellas – was the main tool. On the pages, we find an almost endless flow of contemporary writes including the novelist and biographer Amely Bölte (1811–1891), who also made her name as the author of the German governess novels, Elise Polko (1822–1899), the Galician German writer Leopold Sacher-Masoch (1836–1895) and the journal's star writer Eugenie Marlitt

(1825–1887). (Müller-Adams) Marlitt's prolific production of fiction marked her as the novelist whose domestic plots concern themselves with romantic choices of younger women and the channelling of unruly impulses into the safety of domesticity, but behind the façade of the ingénue, these heroines are inventive, adventurous and subversive of gender norms. Marlitt's first novel *Goldelse* appeared in 1866, and it was soon followed by *Das Geheimnis der alten Mamsell* (1867), *Reichsgräfin Gisela* (1869) and *Das Heideprinzesschen* (1871) which were all later published in book form. (Belgum 1994, 101) *Gartenlaube* owed much of its popularity to these serial publications, and Marlitt's standing as the most popular and widely translated German woman writer was inextricably linked to her role in the periodical. (Stohler and Mihurko-Poniz) An early example of constructing the author as celebrity is shown by an article in 1869, which describes the author's home from close quarters.

Családi Kör was similarly committed to publishing German popular fiction for the domestic audience. Bölte, Polko and Marlitt were the recurrent names amongst their writers. Bölte's fiction and other instructional writing were run in the *Gartenlaube* in the 1850s ('Das Begegnen in der Oper,' short story, 1853/35–36, and different articles about girls' education in 1854) and *Családi Kör* ran one article by her about the assassination attempt against Tsar Paul in 1867. Elise Polko's fiction was also published in both journals, although *Családi Kör* published her writing with about a 10-year delay, but the titles here, too, were different. But the cult of Eugenie Marlitt also reached *Családi kör*, and *Blaubart* (1866) – *Kékszakáll* (1871) was published in both periodicals. Emília's appreciation for Marlitt's work found its main outlet in the 100-volume book series 'Library of Hungarian Ladies,' accompanying the magazine and given as gift to subscribers, and, in a bid to serve the popularity of women writers. It included several novels by Marlitt and by the Scandinavian writers Marie Schwarz and Flygare-Carlén, who all had some presence in *Gartenlaube*. The fact that five of Marlitt's novels came out here in a quick succession and closely following the publication of the works in *Gartenlaube* shows an intimate connection between the two publishers.⁶

Despite these perceivable structural connections and similarities, there are several different aspects that indicate the strong intention on Emília Kánya's part to adapt the model of the family magazine to her own purposes. The daughter of the Lutheran intelligentsia of Pest, the editor was bilingual in German and Hungarian, broadly educated through formal and informal means of education, and was well-versed in English, German and French literary matters.⁷ A mother of eight

6 *Goldelse* (*Gartenlaube*) 1866—*Aranyos Erzsike* (Library) 1867; *Das Geheimnis der alten Mamsel* (*Gartenlaube*) 1867—*A vénkisasszony titka* (Library) 1867; *Reichsgräfin Gisela* (*Gartenlaube*) 1869—*Gizella hercegnő* (Könyvtár) 1870; *Die zweite Frau* (*Gartenlaube*) 1874—*A második feleség* (Library) 1874.

7 Her memoirs *Réges-régi időkről* amply illustrated her education. See Varga, 'Translation' 2016 and Varga, 'Emília Kánya' 2016.

children and a professional woman earning her bread by writing, she was equally committed to supporting women's emancipation in life and in her journal and to the emancipation of women in matters of world literature. It was these two themes that were pursued in *Családi Kör* with unprecedented commitment.

The early woman's movement was one of the shaping forces of mid-19th century political life, and it is also commonly acknowledged that the struggle for women's private rights and educational and employment opportunities preceded any struggle for political participation, whose precedence over private rights is more reflexive of 20th century concerns with equality than of 19th century realities. (Caine 2–3) *Gartenlaube* also gave emphasis to an articulation of demands for education. The article 'Frauenbewegung in Deutschland' (1871, 817–818) is particularly important from this perspective. The author specifically states that the focus of enquiry is women's education and employment, but education and employment are important for their ability to support the notion separate spheres rather than as a way of challenging them. Giving wide berth to more subversive topics, the author avoids the discussion of women's organisations, and shifts emphasis to the introduction of Auguste Schmidt and Louise Otto-Peters, who presided over the German women's union. (Belgum 1994, 96–97) Occasional references introduce a work of authors on the 'woman question' like the educator Fanny Lewald (1862) and Dora d'Istria (1864/15) whose 'Les Femmes en Orient' discussed the life of women in Europe's East. While the Hungarian magazine also devoted attention to both authors, the references stem from a general interest in contemporary issues rather than from explicit connections.

Gartenlaube's commitment to the expansion of women's employment opportunities was apparent already at its launch. The opening article in 1853 was explicit about the nature of reading: it envisioned it 'on long 'winter evenings' in a family circle: they would be 'far from all political debates and disagreements in religious and other matters ... truly good stories about the history of the human heart and the world's peoples.' (1853/1) The apolitical claim of the opening has been amply challenged by recent scholars who pointed out the clearly articulated liberal-national political agenda of the journal, but the manifesto did state that no explicit political agenda was to be followed. (Fitzpatrick) But *Családi Kör* made its commitment to voicing the importance of women's role in public and literary life unquestionable. The polymath, linguist and naturalist Pál Balogh Almási (1794–1867) opened the journal with an long article 'A nők mint a társadalmi élet tényezői' ('Women as factors in social life') then turned into a series and ran for another five issues. Almási asserted women's natural capability for abstract thinking and intellectual training, which, in turn, qualified them to perform their patriotic duties through the production of literature.

This systematic engagement with women's work and employment opportunities is also manifest in the transformation of a particular

Gartenlaube article for *Családi Kör*. The former ran two articles about American women in the 1860s, 'Die amerikanische Hausfrau' (1866) and 'Zur Charakteristik amerikanischer Frauen' (1867). American women, they suggest, are domestic angels of competence who dutifully take care of the physical and moral wellbeing of their households while supporting their husbands through financial misfortune with a great determination. The first article was directly adapted to the Hungarian audience and used it as a springboard for Kánya's concerns. (1866/10) The passages translated from the original are used as a prompts for shifting emphasis from American domestic virtue to the need for female remunerated employment, in which field North American women are far ahead of their European sisters: 'they become milliners, grocers, bookkeepers, doctors, postmistresses, writers, artists, teachers, lady companions, industrialists, librarians – in other words, pursue thousands of types of employment that European women would not be capable.' (1866, 219) This careful twisting of the narrative – through which the original article's marginal theme of female employment is turned into the main topic – eventually leads to the plea for better education which would thus enable the pursuit of occupation for women, which will then contribute to the improvement of morality. (1866, 219)

Családi Kör was consistently courageous in its treatment of the woman's movement, women's literary work and education. In 1863, the legitimacy of women's literary participation was defended by Emília Kánya in a debate with Pál Gyulai (1826–1909), the pre-eminent literary critic, literary historian and maker-and-breaker of literary reputations, whose short story 'Nők a tükör előtt' ('Women in front of the mirror'), published in the periodical *Koszorú* (Wreath) in 1863, contained the infamous sentence about women writers being unable to knit or embroider. ('The old gentleman knew that women writers would not knit or embroider.') In her reply 'Néhány szó a nőnem érdekében' ('Some words in the defence of the female sex'), Emília Kánya defended women writers from this accusation of unwomanliness and advocated women's right to literary work. She argued that literary work was not defeminising, that it did not detract women from their domestic duties, and it also served as a source of livelihood. (Fábri 1999, 272–281)

The journal continued support for women's education focused on the expansion of women's employment opportunities. The periodical became the official organ of the *Pest Benevolent Alliance of Women* in 1864, and this fact is reflected by long series of articles 'A nőről' ('On Woman,' 1864) in which Emília Kánya again argued for women's education. (Fábri 1999, 309–312) Education included moral as well as professional training: the former was to enable women to exercise their innate moral authority ('[t]he heart, as well as the plants, require air and movement to become stronger and to grow towards the sky, and to enrich the earth with fragrant flowers and delicious fruits') whilst the latter made it possible for her to earn her own livelihood. (Varga 'Emília' 2016, 226) Emília was keen to point out that woman's education did in fact serve

women's duties: if women were educated and capable of taking care of themselves, marriages of convenience would disappear and there would be many good marriages, in other words, 'pragmatic and modern education... would be ...of immense benefit to family life.' Again, the notion that women's domesticity is natural and that professional or vocational training would not defeminise them resonated with contemporary European notions of womanhood and education.

The national and the transnational

Creating a cohesive German textual self was central to Keil's *Gartenlaube* agenda: constructing a unified German past represented major intellectual and conceptual task for the years leading to the creation of a unified Germany. In 1861, he set out to compile a thoroughly German volume. (Belgum 1988, 21–23) The volume contains a number of articles about the fate of the German nation, its foreign occupation in 1806, and general German heroism in the face of foreign powers. Literature also was a medium for praising national heroes, and the novel by Rupius *Ein Deutscher* glorifies a German settler in North America. The glorification of the national past was accompanied by the praising of modern social institutions such as the gymnastics movement, singing clubs and German technological inventions. From the point of literary production, *Gartenlaube* only occasionally referred to or published non-German authors, though sporadic reference to Burns, Dumas, and Daudet occur, and the only non-German woman writer was George Sand whose work was regularly commented on from 1854 onwards.

A different understanding of the national is perhaps the most striking innovation in the Hungarian magazine. Hungarian heroes, heroines and historical events were present in text and image, but the periodical also served as platform for the systematic introduction of foreign literary work. The intentional nature of publishing the best of European literature in a bid to emancipate women is made clear in Almási's opening series. As he explains, Emília 'set her mind on editing this journal, in which more serious and informative essays should be regularly published, by which she will start the emancipation of Hungarian women in the field of world literature.' (1860, 83) From this intention, an important list of travel narratives and travel letters stemmed, such as the early publication 'Letters from London' by Emília Kánya's personal friend Linda White. The letter proved a successful start to expanding the horizons of the female readership, and the work of the Countess of Bassanville, Napoleon's contemporary became the subject of the long opening series in 1861. It was *Családi Kör* that published the first translation of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Letters about Constantinople*, the foundational text for English women's travel writing setting the terms of the Western representations of the Orient. The articulation of a female travel writing tradition is complemented by contemporary travel

writing from major European authors, including Andersen's Spanish travelogue in 1864 and writing about then-exotic territories such as St Petersburg and Livingstone's Africa.

Women's emancipation into world literature – an effective extension of domestic education – is also served by running the translations of the best known European novelists: the short story 'Mrs Badger' by Wilkie Collins appeared in 1861, and in the first couple of years, work by Béranger, Björnson, Turgenev and Smollett came out, and Washington Irving became a regular author in the 1860s. In 1863, the editor decided to expand the horizons of her readership in beyond Europe by publishing translations of parables and examples from Persian and Turkish. Short stories by Dickens came out in the 1870s. French literature was amply represented by Dumas, and Balzac and Victor Hugo as a poet and novelist. Running an excerpt from Hugo's *1793* (1874), reflecting the intention of providing fresh and immediate translations of the best writing of her age. The only extensive piece of the foreign woman writer is that of George Sand's *Marianne* (1876, ns. 1-11), which is published in installments, and which is the corollary of the periodical's regular engagement with Sand. By covering the best of contemporary writers and seminal texts from earlier periods, and publishing them in excerpts or serial installments, the periodical genuinely fulfilled its self-appointed mission of broadening the literary and geographical horizons of the female reader.

Conclusions

Having explored the few similarities and numerous differences between *Gartenlaube* and *Családi Kör*, it is possible to understand how successfully Emília Kánya used and adapted *Gartenlaube*'s format and its fare of German popular novelists for her campaign for women's employment. By doing so, she also made a significant contribution to Hungarian women's literary emancipatory progress through the introduction of modern European work. Both of these projects make Kánya's and her journal's role unique and add an important dimension to 19th century Central European cultural history: drawing on a Western model by no means implies any direct, unreflected borrowing or copying; rather it points to a creative adaptation of an existing model, generating results that here are significantly more engaging and thought provoking than their original.

But the research also uncovered striking gaps in scholarship concerning interactions between European periodicals. Notably, periodical studies and modern reception studies have asserted themselves only in the last 20 years as legitimate and important dimensions of literary studies, and scholarly engagement with the processes of textual circulation emerged even more recently. As the example of these two periodicals shows, formal and structural similarities and unmarked

textual borrowings between publications may inspire conclusions about deep and engrained connections. Yet a closer examination might reveal different conditions and conclusions, and even suggest that a magazine, whose status was assumed to be derivative and only reflexive of its more widely influential predecessor's concerns, subtly yet noticeably introduced intellectually radical agendas to its readership. *Családi Kör*'s championing of women's employment and world literature demonstrated a strategy of turning a domestic magazine into a carrier of truly modern messages.

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