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SÁNDOR KARÁCSONY'S IMPACT
ON GENERAL SCIENTIFIC
AND PEDAGOGICAL THINKING
IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

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Sándor Karácsony (1891–1952) was an original, creative and influential representative of Hungarian pedagogical, linguistic and philosophical thinking. As a secondary school teacher and a university professor he established a new school of thought with a lasting impact. The principle underlying his philosophy was that in education, in scientific research, and in all areas of life ‘the other person’ must be taken into account if we are to achieve valid results. In the 1970s and 1980s his former disciples and co-workers achieved significant results in various fields of science and education, such as mathematics, biology, linguistics, psychology and ethnography by applying and further developing his ideas, and many of them have also been responsible for new schools of scientific thought. Karácsony’s pedagogical thinking is very much alive even today. Representatives of the third and fourth generations of teachers who are familiar with Karácsony’s ideas believe that education takes place as a joint achievement of teacher and student if the two partners have respect for each other’s autonomy, and on this basis they relate to the ideals and values of the school. After 1990 his disciples and their co-workers created several social organisations dedicated to the task of making his work known again to those concerned. A part of this work was re-editing his ten-volume educational theory based on interpersonal logic and interpersonal psychology, and in the past 23 years holding conferences to present his pedagogical principles, which continue to be valid even today, to teachers, students and parents.

Keywords: pedagogy, Hungary, communism, dictatorship, history, retrospect, helping profession, education, autonomy, impact

Der Einfluss von Sándor Karácsony auf das allgemeinwissenschaftliche und pädagogische Denken in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts: Sándor Karácsony (1891–1952) war ein außerordentlicher, schöpferischer und einflussreicher Repräsentant ungarischen pädagogischen, linguistischen und philosophischen Denkens. Als Lehrer und als Universitätsdozent etablierte er

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eine neue Denkrichtung, deren Einflüsse bis heute spürbar sind. Seinen Grundgedanken formulierte er während seiner Zeit als Lehrer: In der Erziehung, in der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit und eigentlich in allen Lebensbereichen können wirkliche Erfolge immer nur durch die Berücksichtigung “des Anderen” erreicht werden. Seine ehemaligen Schüler und Mitarbeiter entwickelten seine Ideen weiter und erzielten in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren in den Bereichen Mathematik, Biologie, Linguistik, Psychologie und Volkskunde bedeutende Ergebnisse; einige von ihnen begründeten noch heute bestehende wissenschaftliche Schulen. Besonders lebendig sind heute noch seine pädagogischen Gedanken. Zahlreiche Pädagogen der mittlerweile bereits dritten oder vierten Generation sind der Ansicht, dass Erziehung dann als gemeinsame Leistung von Schüler und Lehrer zustande kommt, wenn die Partner die Autonomie des jeweils Anderen respektieren und sich auf dieser Basis mit den ideellen Werten der Schule identifizieren. Nach 1990 gründeten die Schüler Karácsonys und deren Mitarbeiter mehrere gesellschaftliche Organisationen, um sein Werk wieder der Öffentlichkeit bekannt zu machen. In diesem Rahmen wurde sein zehnbändiges erziehungswissenschaftliches Grundlagenwerk zu Soziallogik und Sozialpsychologie neu aufgelegt, außerdem werden seit 23 Jahren gut besuchte Konferenzen für Pädagogen, Schüler und Eltern veranstaltet, auf denen man sich über die noch heute aktuellen und gültigen Prinzipien Karácsonys informieren kann.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Pädagogik, Ungarn, Kommunismus, Diktatur, Geschichte, Rückblick, helfende Berufe, Erziehung, Autonomie, Einfluss

1. Introduction

When assessing the impact of great creative intellects, one must reckon with the fact that any impact, under the laws of nature, will be dampened over time. Yet the ideas put forward by great thinkers will remain valid, will be remembered and will revive, as shown by the afterlife of Sándor Karácsony's oeuvre.

1.1. His life and works

From his biography we can easily reconstruct his personality: he was an extremely well-educated person who was active, and highly creative, in several fields of intellectual pursuit.

He was born in Földes in 1891 and was educated in the College of the Reformed Church in Debrecen. He conducted university studies in Budapest, and visited the universities of Geneva, Munich, and Vienna. He started his career as a grammar school teacher, and then worked for the dictionary project of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Subsequently he was appointed professor of the Department of Pedagogy of Debrecen University. He also played an important role in the renewal of the spiritual life of the Hungarian Reformed Church. He played a leading role in the religious youth movements of the time and filled leading positions in KIE, the correspondent of YMCA, the Boy Scouts' Association and in the Evangelical Christian Union of Hungarian Students. Due to his work in these movements and his publica-

tions, his editing of student newspapers and his books on education that began to appear in 1938, he was one of the best-known scholars of his age and was especially popular among university students. When the Communist Party seized control of the country's political and social life, he was ousted from public life, deprived of his university department, forced into early retirement, and even his pension was withdrawn later on. He died in Budapest in 1952.

He expounded his educational theory in ten large volumes, published by Exodus (a publishing house founded by his disciples) between 1938 and 1947. They were republished between 2002 and 2011 by Széphalom Könyvműhely, supported by Csökmei Kör¹ (Csökmei Circle), a society formed by his disciples and the descendants of his disciples.

1.2. The distinctive features of Karácsony's thinking

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Karácsony's thinking on pedagogy is the discovery of 'the other person' (our trans.)² in the pupil.

Children are not of equal standing to teachers, but he has equal rights. They are not imperfect, undeveloped adults, but well-developed and perfect young children, growing children and adolescents. They have full rights and full autonomy to lead a life corresponding to their respective stage of development. (KARÁCSONY 2011, 31, our trans.)³

Unlike reform pedagogy, Karácsony does not narrow down the concept of education to issues of teaching methodology. Neither does he confine it to the framework (place and time) of formal education, as is usual in the science of pedagogy. He proposes that a fundamental precondition of education is the autonomy of both sides, and he maintains that at the very heart of every pedagogical interaction there is a meeting of the educator's personality with the curiosity of the child (adolescent, youth). From a social psychological point of view, this can best be achieved in a milieu of familiarity, in which the social and pedagogical traditions of Hungary are rooted. From this view it follows that the relationship between teacher and pupil must be continuously reformulated depending on the given situation and the status of the participants.

In his theoretical works he examines the basic categories of pedagogical relationships from a legal, aesthetic, logical, ethical, and confessional point of view, always bearing in mind that autonomy can only be ensured if the two partners are coordinated and not super- and subordinated, and that it is up to the personality of the

¹ Karácsony used the pen name Sándor Csökmei in his volume of poetry. The name refers to the place from where his family came from. For more on *Csökmei Kör*, see Section 7.2.

² 'The other person' is a key term in KARÁCSONY's pedagogical, linguistic and philosophical thinking. From a pedagogical point of view, the best summary is found in 2002, 379.

³ Original text: 'Nem velünk egyenrangú fél a gyermek, hanem velünk egyenjogú fél. Nem tökéletlen és fejletlen felnőtt, hanem fejlett, tehát tökéletes kisgyerek, növő gyerek, serdülő és adolozscens. Teljes joga és tökéletes autonómiája van a kisgyerek, növő gyerek, serdülő és adolozscens életre.'

educator to ensure the cultural standard of the interaction. In this way he identifies education with existential relations unbounded in space and time, a human activity best approximating the transcendental sphere.

Acknowledging the existence of the partner, in Karácsony's words, 'the other person', is manifested in verbal communication through the use of clear, intelligible language. In aesthetic relations the same is manifested in the sincerity of emotions; in social relations, it is the atmosphere of freedom; in religious relations, the security of faith; and in legal relations, the unchallengeability of security. From a psychological point of view, then, interaction (in Karácsony's terminology, relation) is the process through which education may take place, and it is interaction that is the common denominator of general human (legal, artistic, linguistic, social, and religious) situations. It is these considerations that led him to call the psychological foundations of his pedagogy *interpersonal psychology*.

Karácsony studied not only the formal psychological aspects of educational interactions, but also their content and logical aspects. All forms of interaction are verbal; this is why Karácsony says that all education is linguistic education. The logical content of psychological forms, in his view, is the sign, and it is the sign that will grow into symbol in artistic interactions, into act in social interactions, into principle in legal, and into confession in religious interactions. The fact that his scientific views were well in advance of his age is shown by the fact that social psychology, politology, and communication theory recognised the connection between social acts and linguistic signs only much later. The sign as content is the common denominator of the content aspects of general human interpersonal interactions, including educational ones. The logical content is also a function of interpersonal interactions: a sign means something only if it is adjustable to the partner's sign system, and a symbol is successful only if the audience can identify with it; an act can be tolerated if the partner can freely decide whether to accept it or not. Karácsony studied the relations between sign and meaning mainly from a linguistic point of view, although he also extended his investigations to the problems of meaning related to symbols and acts. He believed that the sign has meaning only if it is associated with an image that will also be activated in the process of comprehension. It is the image that we encode as a sign, and in decoding, the sign is converted into an image; messages and thoughts without images are senseless. In his view, meaning is a secret related to the transcendent (but senselessness and unintelligibility is not identical with transcendence).

By linking meaning to mental images, he constructed a framework in which art, literature, natural and social sciences found their place. This was recognised only much later by various scientific disciplines such as linguistics, mathematics, natural science, aesthetics (communication theory, mathematical logic, modern hermeneutics, generative linguistics).

In Karácsony's interpersonal psychology the term *religion* does not refer to any organised religion, and religious education does not mean the teaching of knowledge about religion or of religious ethics but an interpersonal psychologic-

al relation in which one party confesses his/her faith, and the other party accepts this as authentic. Obviously, education is impossible without faith: since socialisation in the most general sense of the word is aimed at getting children and young people to accept universal human ethical values, those who intend to educate young people must believe in these values and must profess their faith in them. Karácsony himself was deeply religious. He derived his ethical values from his faith and the traditions of the Reformed Church, and he professed his faith in these values to his disciples. However, he avoided the temptation to cite religious arguments in support of his scientific theories. As a scholar he demonstrated that for children and young people only those values are acceptable in which the educator has a firm and sincere faith. He confessed his own security of faith, deriving from Christianity, without excluding the possibility that others may have security of faith based on other sources.

All this, together with his deep respect for the autonomy of other people, explains why and how the communities that sprang up around him were able to attract believers and non-believers, Christians and Jews, Hungarians and other nationalities.

1.3. Communities founded – widespread impact

Sándor Karácsony saw a parallel between the fate of Hungary, struck to the ground by the injustice of the Trianon Treaty, and the Jews' liberation from slavery in Egypt: he thought that an Exodus, a leaving behind of the past may lead to a spiritual revival and may promise a new homeland – on a territory that we can 'fill with culture'. This idea lay in the background of his choice of a name for the community⁴ and the Bible circle that started to form around him from the early 1920s on, comprising members from youth movements within the Reformed Church, his former students and colleagues. He maintained that reviving our own sense of cultural identity and, at the same time, obtaining better knowledge of the culture of the nations living around us and reconciliation with them may create a unity among the peoples of the Carpathian Basin and even the Danube Basin that may protect us from the economic, political and cultural expansion of the great powers. The members of the Exodus community developed many other communities which have throughout the years adhered to Karácsony's legacy. The seminars of educational science he held at the University of Debrecen led to the formation of another community, joined by scientists. Karácsony's impact can best be demonstrated by presenting these communities and listing, without claiming to be complete, outstanding representatives of Hungarian cultural and scientific life, who were connected to him in one way or another, and whose thinking and activities may be shown to have been impacted by him:

⁴ Here and in the following, the word *community* will be used to translate *munkaközösség* ('work community'), a term suggesting that the main objective of the community is to work together.

- educational psychology: *Endre Gyököcssy, Mária Székácsné Vida, Mátyás Durkó, Dezső Boros, Ferenc Pataki, László Vekerdi;*
- linguistics: *János Lotz, Géza Sebestyén, Ferenc Fabricius-Kovács, György Szépe;*
- literary studies: *Gyula Földessy, Ákos Kocogh, Dénes Kövendi, Balázs Vargha;*
- mathematics: *Tamás Varga, László Kalmár; Péter Rózsa, János Surányi, Tibor Szele, Imre Lakatos;*
- philosophy: *Imre Kondor;*
- public education: *György Kontra, Miklós Heltai Sr. (1909–1989),⁵ Ilona Kozma (Mrs György Kontra), Lajos Szathmáry, Gyula Pataki;*
- medicine: *György Kardos, Andor Oláh (folk medicine);*
- ethnography: *Gábor Lükő, Péter Morvay;*
- musicology: *József Ujfalussy;*
- classical studies: *Árpád Szabó, Gyula Muraközy;*
- church life: *Bálint Kovács, István Hegyi Füstös;*
- youth movement,
dance house movement: *Sándor Jánosi, Jolán Borbély;*
- church music: *Béla Árokháti;*
- literature: *Sándor Gellért, Géza Képes, Tibor Szobotka, Domokos Varga, Gyula Fábrián.*

It is striking that Sándor Karácsony, who had a degree and teaching qualifications in Hungarian and German language and literature and a doctorate in philosophy, pedagogy and Hungarian linguistics, was able to impact people working in various fields of culture and science.

In this paper there is scope for presenting only those people whose work clearly shows the distinctive marks of the Karácsony school and whose work generated further ripple effects. We shall also provide an overview of the civilian organisations that were formed after 1990 and set themselves the aim of reintroducing Karácsony's ideas into present-day scientific and pedagogical thinking. For further information, the reader is referred to György Kontra's book about Sándor Karácsony (KONTRA 2003).

⁵ Miklós Heltai Sr. was the father of the present author.

2. Influence on Hungarian educational theory and practice in the second half of the 20th century

Sándor Karácsony was first and foremost a teacher and an educationist. The impact of his ideas was felt in public education for a long time. Up to the 1980s there were many schoolteachers both in Budapest and in other parts of the country whose work was inspired by his ideas. Before 1990, however, his pedagogy was strongly disapproved of and suppressed by the official educational authorities, since its transcendental aspects were inconsistent with prevailing Marxist doctrines. By promulgating Karácsony's ideas, those in the teaching profession were bound to expose themselves to existential risks. For this reason, many of his followers tried to find possibilities for pedagogical innovation in areas that were ideologically neutral or where there was some degree of tolerance for dissent, as in the area of methodology. It is perhaps this that explains why in the 1960s to 1980s there were so many methodological innovations in public education (introducing subject rooms, group work, foreign language and art education projects), and why extracurricular activities involving both teachers and pupils were so popular (study circles, local history circles, folk song groups, student research projects). Teachers and educators who followed Karácsony's ideas played a significant role in all this.

2.1. A dedicated teacher: Miklós Heltai Sr.

A good example for methodological innovations and out-of-school education is provided by the educational work done by the late Miklós Heltai Sr. Karácsony was his form master at secondary school, and he became a teacher due to Karácsony's influence. He maintained his ties with him even in the most repressive years of the Communist dictatorship.

Like other disciples of Karácsony, he made a conscious decision when he chose to work in provincial schools. He spent the longest time (from the early 1950s to the late 1970s) in Gödöllő. In these years the linguistic handicap that children from peasant and working-class families had (the difference between school language and the dialect they spoke at home) was still acutely felt, and he made conscious efforts to solve this problem. He devoted an enormous amount of time (far exceeding official school hours) to bridging this gap. One of his methods was joint reading of the Hungarian classics to help students learn the language of school subjects (not only that of the arts subjects, but also the science subjects). He pointed out that the Latin and Greek words occurring in Jókai's novels are the same words that are used as international terms in biology or geometry. Although he was a teacher of history and Latin, he helped pupils in studying the science subjects, too. If he found that he himself was not up to it, he asked other students (who were good at the given subject) to help, and eventually he invited knowledgeable members of the Exodus community to talk to the students. If there was no room for out-of-school discussions at school,

he invited the students to his home, so there were no spatial constraints on building a community. His own children were also often involved in this type of out-of-school classes, implementing the principle of familiarity in a natural way. He felt that it was natural for him to devote all his time and energy to his students, and he also felt that it was natural to ask them to help when he needed help in his school or public education activities. When a movement for studying local history was started, he founded a school museum, which later developed into an exhibition of local history and then the Town Museum of Gödöllő. Collecting objects and arranging them in the stands of the school museum proved to be an activity very well suited to the age-related features of young adolescents. In the sixties this was naturally complemented by another joint enterprise, i.e. the creation of the history room of the school.

When he retired, he continued to work for the Exhibition of Local History and formed a community from visitors interested in local history. Subsequently, relying on this community, secondary school students, and his former disciples, he transformed the Chronicle-Writing Movement, initiated by the so-called People's Patriotic Front, into a local history research group.

His history study circle continued for three decades, and within it, every participant found an opportunity to develop their creative potential according to their abilities and interests. His students with a literary bent dramatised short stories by Móra and Mikszáth, and those who were interested in theatre acting performed these plays at the end-of-semester sessions. Those who were interested in folklore took an active part in collecting folk art objects and other relics of the material and spiritual culture of a receding world, the life of peasants and craftsmen. An endeavour close to his heart was to learn more about the culture of the ethnic minorities living among Hungarians. Some of his disciples who were attracted by this cause collected the folk traditions of adjacent villages (Nagytarcsa, Csömör), inhabited partly by Slovaks, and presented them to other members of the circle. He regularly took the circle to popular scientific lectures and exhibitions, such as the exhibition of the history of technology or the Museum of the History of Transport. He was opposed to all kinds of narrow specialisation, and in this way his study circle had a broad range of interests and allowed development in many directions. Several members of this study circle were to become university professors (of literature, chemistry and biology), many of them were to become teachers (of various subjects), and others were to become engineers or agriculturists. Their working styles and their ability to relate to other people are a hallmark of the community in which they were raised.

The former disciples of Miklós Heltai still constitute a living community, and together with other followers of Karácsony they play an important role in maintaining the Csökmei Kör, an association created to foster Sándor Karácsony's spiritual and intellectual heritage. Many of them have formed study circles from their secondary school or university students in Szeged, Gödöllő, and Budapest, helping the members find their path to creative work in linguistics, literature, pedagogy, or natural sciences.

2.2. György Kontra's pedagogical activities and his role in shaping educational policies

György Kontra⁶ (1925–2007), as a scientist and a teacher, carried on and developed the traditions of Sándor Karácsony's spiritual workshop.

As a secondary school student he joined the Magyar Evangéliumi Keresztyén Diákszövetség (Hungarian Evangelical Christian Student Union) (MEKDSZ) and subsequently he became its general secretary, working with Karácsony, then president of the union. He obtained a degree in medicine, but he also conducted studies in philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy, and obtained teaching qualifications. He remained an active member of the Exodus community during his whole life, although in the period between 1948 and 1989 this was a serious disadvantage for all those who worked in education. However, even in the years of 'existing socialism', ideological limitations were less severe in the field of natural sciences, since the 'theoretical foundations' of the Marxist system were claimed to be 'scientific'. In this way, due to his wide-ranging scientific and pedagogical knowledge he was able to reach a position where he could influence the methodology of teaching biology: he became head of department and later Deputy Director in the Central Teacher In-Service Training Institute in 1958 and its successor, the National Pedagogical Institute. Although his ideas often received hostile reception, in the 1960s and 1970s he introduced successful innovations into the curriculum of biology and took part, directly or indirectly, in the writing of six biology textbooks for secondary schools and five for primary schools.

György Kontra developed a new type of subject pedagogy for biology based on Sándor Karácsony's developmental psychology. Biology as a school subject inherited a descriptive approach from the 19th century, enshrined in the curricula at both primary and secondary level. In modifying the curricula, György Kontra followed Karácsony's fundamental educational principle: in determining the requirements and the material to be acquired, children, adolescents, and young people should be treated as partners having full rights as children, adolescents, and young people. He claimed that 'the child's stages of development and the research methods used in biology can be very well coordinated' (KONTRA 1963a, 6, our trans.).⁷ Accordingly, the 1963 curricula for the primary school subject 'Living World' and biology introduced so called do-it education, and the 1965 secondary school biology curriculum introduced student experiment classes. In this way, adjusted to the psychological traits of students in different stages of development, in primary school it was observation, description, and comparison that were focused on, while in secondary school it was experimenting that was emphasised, in keeping with the psychological traits of adolescents. In the upper classes this was followed by increased emphasis on

⁶ For information on Kontra's work on subject methodology I am indebted to István Franyó, his former colleague.

⁷ Original text: 'a gyermek fejlődési szakaszai és a biológiatudomány kutató módszerei jól párhuzamba állíthatók'.

leading students to recognise evolutionary regularities and problems through practical work related to the content of the course.

In setting the requirements laid down in the curriculum, he insisted that one can check, test and evaluate knowledge only if the student, ‘the other person’, understands what s/he is required to know.

He was convinced that a satisfactory curriculum and textbook must contain material based on requirements determined with the help of scientific methods. He asked the following question: ‘Is it possible to determine the requirements using scientific methods?’ (KONTRA 1972, 189, our trans.)⁸ In contrast to prevailing pedagogical opinion he held that it was possible, and he also showed how. The performance of the students must be measured with objective methods. One method is multiple choice testing where the distractors are based on the false choices made by the test takers. As he says, ‘we have given up inventing distractors for several reasons. Instead, based on interpersonal-psychological considerations, we choose the distractors based on the incorrect choices of the students’ (KONTRA 1972, 191–92, our trans.)⁹ In a series of tests he showed that multiple-choice tests make it possible to evaluate the students’ performance ‘from the most primitive reproductive memory performance to the most complicated applications or inferencing ability’ (KONTRA 1972, 190, our trans.)¹⁰ He had the opportunity to do this because, as a professor of the Biology Department of the National Pedagogical Institute, he maintained close contacts with all the schools. He constantly reminded his co-workers that this kind of evaluation can be carried out only with standardised tests based on a nationwide sampling process. However, later on he also insisted that this method was unsuitable for one-off measurements of individual performance.

He was always of the opinion that this method was best for measuring performance on a nation-wide representative sample.

This type of performance evaluation . . . may be used to obtain information that can help us find out whether the curricular requirements are reasonable . . . this information can be used as baseline data if the requirements are to be changed. The data obtained represent values that can be compared and can have scientific and practical significance only if they are compared to values obtained with the same method. (KONTRA 1972, 199, our trans.)¹¹

This shows how Kontra approached problems as a teacher and as a scientist, proving that it is possible to determine curricular requirements with scientific

⁸ Original text: ‘Lehet-e tudományos módszerekkel megállapítani a tantervi követelményeket?’

⁹ Original text: ‘Több okból ‘mondunk le arról, hogy a téves választási lehetőségeket mi találjuk ki. Ehelyett társaslélektani megfontolásainkból kiindulva a tanulók téves visszajelentéseiből válogattuk ki a többé-kevésbé helytelen alternatívákat.’

¹⁰ Original text: ‘hogy a legprimitívebb reproductív emlékezeti teljesítménytől a legbonyolultabb alkalmazási vagy következtetési képességig értékeljük a tanulók produkcióját.’

¹¹ Original text: ‘A teljesítményértékelésnek ez a fajtája . . . arra való, hogy a tantervi követelmények realizálását mérlegelni tudjuk . . . amelyhez a tantervi követelmények változtatása esetén mérni lehet az újabb adatokat. A nyert adat tehát a viszonyítás alapjául szolgáló érték, amelynek csak akkor van igazán tudományos és gyakorlati jelentősége, ha teljesen azonos módszerrel kapott értékekhez viszonyítjuk.’

methods. 'When we define the requirements, and try to make them consistent with scientific development, we must measure the impact with the most objective, most rigorous techniques and adjust the requirements accordingly' (KONTRA 1972, 212, our trans.).¹² He put forward these methodological requirements in 1969, and the same requirements were applied even in 1978 when the curricular requirements for biology and the new experimental textbooks were determined.

In his efforts to renew textbooks and curricula, György Kontra implemented the principles that followed from Sándor Karácsony's thinking on logic and linguistics. Going beyond merely adopting the general psychological and linguistic principles of Karácsony's educational theories, he applied them in practice in determining the content of the school subject *Biology* and the grading of the material, taking into consideration the students' stage of development. He also investigated the problems that hinder comprehension in learning the linguistic terms used in science subjects.

We are happy to see that learners can acquire the concepts of science, and consequently the laws and theories much more successfully than a decade ago. It is time, however, to call attention to another alarming phenomenon: often the words denoting concepts are not associated with an image: they remain empty words. Such verbal knowledge is not worth a thing. . . . If the word does not arouse the primary stimulus . . . it will lose its meaning. . . . Unfortunately, there is too much evidence to show that our students often learn in a parrot-like fashion, memorise terms, and cannot recall the image associated with the word.

(KONTRA 1972, 128–29, our trans.)¹³

In analysing a task containing a term and a figure, he finds that

some of our students know all the terms, but cannot identify anything in a figure, and some can recognise things in a figure, but do not know any of the terms. In traditional evaluation, the former student gets an excellent and the latter a fail mark. In reality neither has adequate knowledge, but their knowledge is equally inadequate . . . we must enable them to acquire concepts so that they are always associated with an underlying image . . . since if students learn in an imageless way, their knowledge will not be viable.

(KONTRA 1972, 132, our trans.)¹⁴

¹² Original text: 'Amikor mi a követelményeket meghatározzuk, és azokat igyekszünk a tudományok fejlődéséhez igazítani, akkor állandóan a legkönyörtelenebb objektivitással kell mérnünk a hatást és ennek megfelelően korrigálnunk a követelményrendszert.'

¹³ Original text: 'Örömmel állapíthatjuk meg, hogy sokkal eredményesebben sajátítják el a tanulók a fogalmakat (és ezek alapján a törvényeket, elméleteket is), mint egy évtizede. Ideje azonban, hogy felhívjuk a figyelmet egy másik aggasztó jelenségre: a fogalmakat jelölő szavak mögül gyakran hiányzik a reális kép, olykor a szavak mögött semmiféle kép nincs. Vagyis a szóban reprodukált ismeret sokszor fabatkát sem ér. . . . Ha a szó nem idézi fel az elsődleges ingert . . . , akkor elveszti jelentését. . . . Sajnos túlfent sok olyan adat áll rendelkezésünkre, mely azt bizonyítja, hogy tanítványaink igen sokszor csak szajkóznak, bevágják a neveket, és nem tudják felidézni a szóhoz tartozó képet.'

¹⁴ Original text: 'van olyan tanulónk, aki minden nevet tud, de egyetlen képet sem, és van olyan, aki minden képet jól jelöl, de egyetlen nevet sem reprodukál. A szokványos felettetés során az első tanuló jelest kap, a második elégtelent. Valójában egyiknek a tudása sem megfelelő, de egyformán nem megfelelő . . . érzük el, hogy a tanulás munkája közben a fogalmakat jelölő szavak mögött mindig ott legyen a kép . . . mert ha képtelen módon tanulnak a gyerekek, tudásuk csak életképtelen lehet.'

‘We have already heard opinions that it is an unalterable natural law that children can always talk better than they can see, and that most words will never conjure up images’ (KONTRA 1972, 139, our trans.).¹⁵ This situation was changed by the workbooks accompanying the Living World textbooks. The authors, following the instructions of Kontra, compiled workbooks so that at the expense of traditional rote learning there should be an increased proportion of knowledge acquisition associated with visual experience and drawing. As a result, the efficiency of learning the subject increased in a measurable way.

In secondary schools, efficiency was increased by introducing the book *Kis Növényhatározó (Small Botanical Guide)* (SIMON–CSAPODI 1966). Better results were obtained not only by cutting down on the amount of encyclopedic material to be memorised and increasing the amount of activities, but also because

identifying plants starts with visual experience, it requires the students to compare real plants to schematic representations and colour pictures of the plant or plant part. The morphological traits are designated in the Guide with the appropriate terms, and the process of identification requires the learner to make new decisions and draw new conclusions . . . the act of identifying and the related visual operations will yield significant results even within one school year. (KONTRA 1972, 141, our trans.)¹⁶

Based on the success of the botanical guide, the book *Kis Állathatározó (Small Animal Guide)* (MÓCZÁR 1975) was introduced, and then the even more effective supplementary textbook *Állatismeret (Knowledge of Animals)* (VARGA 1981).

György Kontra undertook to revise a textbook only if he could inspect not only the text but all the pictures, figures, and explanatory drawings in the book. He paid special attention to harmony between the words and the pictures, to ensure that the picture afforded a good schematic drawing or a true likeness of reality but did not contain anything unnecessary or distracting.

Forming a meaningful mental image is greatly helped by literary accounts of natural phenomena. Kontra himself often used such literary descriptions to make his lectures or writings more colourful. He wanted to apply this principle in the teaching of school subjects too. He was instrumental in compiling a reader presenting wildlife in Hungary that contained Hungarian folk songs, images of folk art, poems and prose extracts selected from the best works of Hungarian literature in order to help link the scientific descriptions of the textbook with artistic presentation and to show the unity of the ‘two cultures’.

He also had a plan to have the scientific text of schoolbooks ‘translated’ by lit-

¹⁵ Original text: ‘Hallottunk már olyan véleményt, mely szerint megváltoztathatatlan természeti törvénynek kell tekinteni, hogy a gyerekek mindig jobban tudnak beszélni, mint látni, hogy a szavak nagy része sohasem fog képet felidézni.’

¹⁶ Original text: ‘[a] határozási tevékenység a vizuális élményből indul ki, megköveteli a valóságos növénynek, a vázlatrajznak és a növényvel vagy növényi résszel azonos nagyságú színes festmények egybevetését. A határozókulcs a morfológiai bélyegeket adekvát szakkifejezésekkel jelöli, és a határozás menete ezek alapján új meg új döntésre, ítéletalkotásra készíti a tanulót . . . a határozási tevékenység és a vele szükségszerűen együtt járó vizuális műveletek eredményei már egy tanév után is, szignifikáns módon megmutatkoztak.’

erary authors. This was not realised, although MÓRA and WAGNER's *Természetráajz (Nature)* (1909) textbook might have been an example. However, he had Sándor Török, a well-known writer, write introductions to the various chapters in the book *Az emberi test (The Human Body)* (KONTRA 1958), which started out as a Teacher's Book, but was later used more extensively. The book, which he wrote and edited himself, had six editions after 1958. Its secret was, among others, that it reflected Kontra's endeavor to provide comprehensible input by linking image, sign, and meaning.

In his book entitled *A fejlődő gyermek (The Developing Child)* (KONTRA 1963b), which has become a classic, he employed the same principle in a popular scientific context.

Kontra did not believe that he was an original pedagogical thinker, but thinking over and applying Karácsony's ideas to his own field he became one. Kontra adopted Karácsony's idea that science education could only be successful if it was not only a dialogue between humans but also between humans and nature. The latter type of dialogue can be realised through experiments. As Pavlov put it, an experiment is a question addressed to nature, to which nature will provide an answer. Kontra extended this idea: nature is autonomous, and we must respect the autonomy of nature if we are to study God's world according to its own laws. In a somewhat joking manner he added that the time had passed when a biologist first killed an animal s/he wanted to study. Modern biologists will observe animals in vivo, in their natural habitat, and create opportunities for their students to do so. In this way, he became one of the pioneers of environment-conscious thinking in Hungary. We can thank him for the fact that environmental education has had a place in school education for the last 50 years.

In recent years the rather disheartening results of the PISA¹⁷ survey in several school subjects have stirred many controversies. The survey found that the knowledge of the 14 to 15 age group in natural science lagged far behind compared to previous years: Hungarian students were placed 14th to 17th among 31 countries. We should note that a similar survey by IEA¹⁸ in 1983 showed a different picture: the same age group showed an outstanding performance, sharing first place with Japan. (In the '80s, the surveys of natural science included mathematics, and Hungarian students were excellent at this subject too.)

Can it be a coincidence that in the years when Hungarian students scored high in international comparisons of achievement in natural sciences, the writing of textbooks and in-service training for teachers were in the hands of two former disciples of Sándor Karácsony? (The other one was Tamás Varga, the excellent mathematician.)

During his whole career, György Kontra worked assiduously for the purpose of keeping Karácsony's heritage alive and transmitting his pedagogical ideas. Elemér Kerékgyártó, head of the Department of Marxism and Leninism in the Ministry of Education and deputy head of the Department of Dialectic Materialism of Eötvös Loránd University, carrying out a commission by the Communist party (MDP, Party

¹⁷ Programme for International Student Assessment.

¹⁸ International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

of Hungarian Workers), submitted a dissertation entitled *A karácsonyista ideológia bírálatahoz* (*A Critique of Karácsony's Ideology*) (the manuscript has disappeared, its summary can be read in KERÉKGYÁRTÓ 1955). Using vulgar-materialistic and Stalinist slogans, he tried to discredit Karácsony. Karácsony's disciples attended the public defence of the dissertation, and citing facts, they refuted its theses. The doctoral committee had no choice – it had to reject the dissertation. György Kontra was the chief organiser behind this joint action, and his bold, closely argued, scientifically well-grounded criticism played a decisive role in the rejection.

Later on, as the grip of dictatorship loosened, he spoke out publicly for Karácsony's scientific rehabilitation. He made references to his master in several articles and lectures, although Karácsony was still *persona non grata* in official educational science. Kontra was a motivator of objective research on KARÁCSONY and played an important role in getting one of his fundamental works, *A magyar észjárás*¹⁹ (*The Hungarian Way of Thinking*) published even before the transition, in 1985. He gave important support to those who were willing to ignore the vulgar-materialistic evaluations of Karácsony and adopted an unbiased scientific approach. From the late seventies, Ferenc L. LENDVAI (1993) and Gusztáv LÁNYI (2000) published papers attempting to evaluate Karácsony's work objectively, and after the transition they both wrote book-length studies on KARÁCSONY (2003).

After 1990 Kontra was instrumental in the reedition of Karácsony's books. Together with other disciples he was a co-founder and for seventeen years one of the leaders of Csökmei Kör.

In 1992 he wrote an authoritative analysis on Karácsony (KONTRA 1992), and his last work was a revised and expanded edition of the same book (KONTRA 2003).

György Kontra continued to build communities in all his social and family relations along the lines proposed by Karácsony. Under his guidance and with his support, the Biology Department of the National Pedagogical Institute, the Biology Section of the Society for the Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge, and the Didactics Section of the Hungarian Biology Society developed into creative workshops, in which innovation became possible in spite of all the constraints imposed by official ideology. In these communities people with different political views and different world views, preserving their autonomy, were able to cooperate and carry on creative activities (FRANYÓ 2008).

It was due to his ability to relate to different people, a characteristic feature of the Karácsony school, and his professional authority that during the curriculum development project of 1973–1978, as an advisor to the Education Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, he was able to implement some important scientific and pedagogical principles from Karácsony's legacy, primarily in biology education and in determining the structure of so-called 'fields of education', i.e. groups of allied subjects. He regarded it as evident that school subjects are didactically presented science. At that time it was possible to have the decision-makers ac-

¹⁹ The publication of the book is due to Ferenc L. Lendvai who was responsible for editing and preparing the material for print, but György Kontra was the initiator, assisting the editor throughout.

cept this principle. They piloted any proposed changes (including the introduction of optional specialisation courses at secondary school) at least for one study cycle. Sándor Karácsony's pedagogical ideas were reflected in defining the conception of somatic-mental hygienic education, which won recognition as part of a UNESCO project. This was also inspired by Kontra (SPIRÓ 2008).

György Kontra's wife, Ilona Kozma was a teacher of Hungarian and Latin, and following Karácsony's ideal of community-building she formed permanent circles among her disciples, which were later associated with the then informal Exodus community. These circles were formed to disseminate Karácsony's ideas, but they had a very open spirit, and attracted people, including professionals and scientists, with very different worldviews, religious and political views, who were nevertheless united in one thing advocated in these meetings, namely, in recognising the autonomy of 'the other person' and having a familiar, coordinative relationship with other people.

3. Karácsony's impact on Gábor Lükő's approach to ethnography

Gábor Lükő, the ethnographer and social psychologist (1909–2001) was Karácsony's disciple at Miklós Zrínyi Grammar School in Budapest and then at the University of Debrecen. His habilitation dissertation was supervised by Karácsony, and he joined his professor's Társaslélektani Intézet (Institute of Interpersonal Psychology). In his seminal early works (LÜKŐ 1936; 1942), the impact of which lasts even today, he set forth the main lines of his scientific research agenda: he wanted to explore the system of symbols in Hungarian folk culture, and to prove that it was closely related to the system of symbols in classical Hungarian literature, extending his investigations to the similarities among the cultures of the Danube Basin. He was appointed professor of the University of Debrecen in 1945, but when Sándor Karácsony was forced out of his position, Lükő's academic career also came to an end. After 1950 he worked as a museum director in Gyula, Baja, and Kiskunfélegyháza, but he continued his ethnographic research among the Szekler from Bukovina relocated to Transdanubia, and among gypsies. Later he extended the scope of his research and studied folk music, especially the use of the pentatonic scale among the peoples related to Hungarians, the Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples.

In the field of folk music research, Gábor Lükő continued the work of Bartók and Kodály, adding some fine detail especially in his investigations of the pentatonic scale. By studying the art, outlook on the world, language philosophy, and inter-ethnic interactions of Finno-Ugric and Turkic peoples, he revealed the distinctive patterns of a peculiar, oriental language of forms and philosophy, which is basically different from those of the Indo-European peoples. Lükő investigated Hungarian culture at the time of the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin (cca. 896) as part of a wider oriental (mainly Finno-Ugric and Turkic) culture, and he demonstrated that oriental elements survived in the symbol

system of folk poems and folk art as well as other areas of traditional peasant culture even in the 19th century. (POZSGAI 1999, 27, our trans.)²⁰

Gábor Lükő maintained his ties with the Exodus community until the end of his life. After retirement, he continued his work, and a large circle of disciples gathered around him. They arranged for his later studies on the topics mentioned above to be published in the series *Gyökereink (Our Roots)* (issues 1–7) and his comprehensive book to be published, even if only posthumously (LÜKŐ 2003). His work was inspired by Karácsony's ideas: preserving our national identity and remembering our connections with a wider oriental cultural zone must go hand in hand with recognising our common heritage with the peoples of the Danube Basin – this is 'the other person' on a national level. Maintaining folk art and folk culture does not divide but unites us with other peoples.

4. Karácsony's impact on Hungarian linguistics

Sándor Karácsony's ideas about language played a decisive role in introducing a new approach to research on Hungarian grammar. When he left his job at secondary school, he held seminars in the framework of the Hungarian Evangelical Student Union in Budapest for trainee teachers. These seminars were attended, among others, by János Lotz and Géza Sebestyén, who did not share all of Karácsony's ideas, but their work was significantly influenced by his innovative spirit, and this is reflected in their works (LOTZ 1939; SEBESTYÉN 1939).

Ferenc Fabricius-Kovács and György Szépe attended Karácsony's lectures at the University of Debrecen. The former was also a junior lecturer in Karácsony's department.

György Szépe recognised the originality of Karácsony's views on language, and he had a major role in propagating it in Hungarian linguistic science.

Ferenc Fabricius-Kovács seized every opportunity to disseminate Karácsony's innovative linguistic ideas that were well in advance of his age in recognising that languages are used for communication. It is due to him that Hungarian linguistics today accepts this as an evident fact (FABRICIUS-KOVÁCS 1969, 1980).

²⁰ Original text: 'Lükő Gábor a népzene kutatás területén Bartók és Kodály eredményeit finomította tovább, különösen figyelemreméltóak a pentaton hangrendszerre irányuló vizsgálatai. A finnugor és török népek művészetének, világgképének, nyelvfilozófiájának tanulmányozásával, interetnikus kölcsönhatásaik felkutatásával egy sajátos, keleti formanyelv és filozófia alapvető – az indoeurópai népekétől alapvetően eltérő – jellegzetességeit mutatta ki. Lükő a honfoglaló magyarság ősműveltségét is egy tágabb keleti (elsősorban finnugor és török) műveltség részeként vizsgálta, és a magyar kultúra e keleti elemeit, a népköltészeti szimbólumok és a díszítő motívumok továbbélését, átalakulását kimutatta a 19. századi népművészetben és a paraszti kultúra egyéb megjelenési formáiban is.'

5. Sándor Jánosi and his circle: the role of Karácsony's disciples in the folk song and folk dance movement

Karácsony regarded scouting as a lifestyle that suits adolescents very well and is an excellent pedagogical device for their socialisation. Young adolescents growing out of childhood and desiring independence can find in the scout group a natural community that is organically related to the family. In the camps and excursions they can learn that independence means self-subsistence and taking responsibility for themselves and other people. As a co-chairman of the Boy Scouts' Alliance, Karácsony reinterpreted Baden Powell's principles in that he encouraged adolescents looking for artistic ideals to turn towards folk culture. Together with Lajos Bárdos and Károly Mathia he edited a collection of *101 magyar népdal (101 Hungarian folksongs)* (BÁRDOS 1939). He also initiated *regöscserkészlet*, a form of scouting that turned the former city-village relationship around, and did not want to 'teach' the village but wanted to learn about peasant culture which was still quite widespread at that time, and certain parts of it were almost intact. He also pointed out that this was not an end in itself: folk culture may serve as a foundation stone for high culture in the same way as the Hungarian folk song became a cornerstone of Bartók's and Kodály's music.

Sándor Jánosi (1911–1985) was attracted to Sándor Karácsony's ideas in the Young Men's Christian Association. He educated himself through self-teaching and attained a high level of education this way. He became Karácsony's disciple, his colleague, and one of the outstanding leaders of the *regöscserkész* movement. Between 1945 and 1948 the two of them together tried to save it, but in 1948, after Karácsony resigned as chairman, Jánosi was also forced out of his leading position in the Hungarian Boy Scouts' Alliance. Never again was he allowed a role in youth movements (scouting groups were disbanded), and he had difficulty finding a livelihood. He did temporary physical and clerical work and was finally employed by the Museum of Transport as a joiner. He was also an indefatigable organiser, and for a long time, he provided single-handedly otherwise unavailable scouting experience for the adolescent children of other members of the community, organising camps and excursions for them and their friends. Many people found their way to the Exodus community in this way during the years of repression when such activities were 'illegal'. He transmitted his love of folk music to his sons and their friends, and the *Jánosi ensemble* (led by one of his sons) is now among the best-known Hungarian folk bands. Hungarian folklore had a revival in the 1970s when after a television folk singing contest called *Röpülj, páva! (Fly Peacock, the opening words of a Hungarian folk song)*, a folk song and dance house movement sprang up. These movements were partly fostered by former *regös* scouts and some researchers who were connected with Karácsony and his disciples (Jolán Borbély, György Martin). In this way, Jánosi could justly regard himself as the spiritual father of all this.

His activities were of immeasurable value in finding and maintaining national identity while at the same time he always showed respect for other peoples and cultures, the ideas inspired by Sándor Karácsony.

Thanks to one of his former scouts, Iván Vitányi, who was then director of the Institute for Popular Education, and another co-worker of the Institute, Tamás Deme, in the late seventies it was possible to publish his works summarising his practical pedagogical experience in scouting. Taking advantage of these experiences remains a task in the education of young people (JÁNOSI 1977, 1978, 1979, 1981).

6. The after-life of the mathematicians' circle

The thought-provoking and liberating influence of Karácsony's ideas is very well demonstrated by the fact that at the University of Debrecen a whole group of outstanding mathematicians joined his scientific workshop. According to Kontra, this was due to the novel character of his linguistic logic, which was a revelation for those who were interested in mathematical logic (KONTRA 2003). The members of the group were László Kalmár (1905–1976), who was to become a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Tibor Szele (1918–1955), then junior lecturer, Péter Rózsa (1905–1977), who was also to become a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, János Surányi (1918–2006), Tamás Varga (1919–1987), and Imre Lakatos (1922–1974), professors, the latter at the London School of Economics.

Several of them maintained their scientific contacts with the others even after 1948, in the second half of the 20th century, and Karácsony's influence can be traced in their work.

Dezső GURKA's book gives a very incisive analysis of all this:

It is probably not unrelated to Karácsony's influence that among Hungarian mathematicians it was László Kalmár who was the most susceptible to linguistic problems. As a professor of Szeged University, Kalmár – using the theoretical foundations of Chomsky's generative grammar – became a founder of mathematical linguistics in Hungary. From 1964 on he held seminar classes on this topic for students of mathematics and linguistics, and published a study called *Mathematics and Linguistic Structures*.

The relationship between empirical observation and abstraction, even though in a different form, and outside linguistic philosophy, surfaced in the historical approach of several disciples of Karácsony. (2004, 264–65, our trans.)²¹

László Kalmár did some pioneering work in the '60s and '70s in the field of computer science and cybernetics too.

The influence of the Karácsony school can be directly shown in the work of

²¹ Original text: 'Valószínűleg nem független Karácsony hatásától az a tény sem, hogy a hazai matematikusok közül éppen Kalmár László bizonyult fogékonynak a nyelvészeti problémák iránt. A szegedi professzor Kalmár – Chomsky generatív grammatikájának elméleti alapjait felhasználva – a magyarországi matematikai nyelvészet egyik megalapítójává vált. 1964-től matematikus- és nyelvészhallgatóknak tartott szemináriumokat e témában, s ugyanekkor jelent meg a *Matematika és nyelvészeti struktúrák* című hosszabb tanulmánya is. Az empirikus tartalom és az absztrakció viszonya, mesterükétől eltérő tartalommal és a nyelvfilozófián túlmenő érvennyel ugyan, de több Karácsony-tanítvány történeti megközelítésű gondolatmenetében is felbukkant.'

Tamás Varga of the National Pedagogical Institute who developed a comprehensive system for the teaching of mathematics. Starting from Karácsony's insistence on the unity of science, the teaching of arithmetic and geometry was integrated, and the teaching material was adjusted to the children's stage of development (VARGA 1974). His principles were integrated into the curricula introduced in 1978, too, and were internationally recognised.

7. Civil organisations for rediscovering Karácsony's oeuvre after 1990

7.1. Karácsony Sándor Művelődési Társaság, Földes

Imre Péter, the mayor of Karácsony's (and his own) native village Földes played a pioneering role in keeping Karácsony's legacy alive. He proposed in 1984 that the local cultural centre and primary school be named after Sándor Karácsony. This proposal was turned down by the one-party state at that time, but in 1989 it was finally accepted and the name-giving ceremony was held on September 15 of that year. Due to Péter's efforts, the Karácsony Sándor Művelődési Társaság (Sándor Karácsony Educational Society) was formed in Földes, which issued its 9th bulletin in 2012, containing collections of local reminiscences, the recollections of former disciples, and studies presenting various parts of Karácsony's oeuvre. Every year the Society holds commemorations in the local school and Karácsony Sándor Days in the local cultural centre. The society is also to be credited for the commemorative plaque on the wall of the former Zrínyi Grammar School in Budapest (today Kandó Kálmán College of Engineering). This was the school where Sándor Karácsony taught from 1919 to 1927. There is also a memorial plaque on the house at 18 Karinthy Frigyes street, where he lived in Budapest. In the Cemetery on Kerepesi út a wreath-laying ceremony is held every year on Teachers' Day.

7.2. Csökmei Kör, Pécel

Karácsony's lasting impact is also shown by the activities of the Csökmei Circle which was formed in 1991. As is apparent from the foregoing, Karácsony's disciples remained in contact from 1948 up to the transition in 1989/90 and the present. This contact was realised at two levels. The Exodus community from the '60s to 1990 collected and stored the documents relating to Sándor Karácsony's life and work, and also started to process his works, preparing the notes for eventual publication. Most of this work was done by György Kontra, Sándor Jánosi, Dénes Kövendi and Miklós Heltai Sr. Considerable work was done by Gyula Fábíán, who was an organiser of youth groups for the children of Karácsony's disciples. Being a journalist and a writer, he called attention to the importance of Karácsony's work even before 1990 through his connections with people in various walks of life and in the literary world.

Another plane of contact was a Bible-reading community which has continued to use the Bible-reading guide that was proposed by Karácsony. It should be noted that the Exodus community and the membership of the Bible circle show considerable overlap.

When the obstacles to civic organisations disappeared in 1990 and the ideological barriers in public and scientific life were lifted, the Exodus community – disciples of Sándor Karácsony, their descendants, and the informal circles they had formed – decided to return to public life and establish an association to reintroduce his ideas into pedagogical science.

The association was registered in 1991 under the name Csökmei Kör. The present author was elected chairman since he had good connections in Pécel (where he lives), and so this town became the headquarters of the association and a venue for its conferences. The organisers (György Kontra, Miklós Heltai Jr. and Gyula Fábíán) integrated their own disciple communities into the association which set the following two main objectives:

- a) to republish Karácsony's works,
- b) to reintroduce his ideas into pedagogical science.

To achieve the latter objective they made efforts to foster a dialogue between teachers and students as well as parents. For this purpose they held conferences, a form of exchange of ideas that Sándor Karácsony often took advantage of.

In organising the first conferences, important help was given by the Ráday Club of the Szemere Pál Cultural Centre, which included several Karácsony disciples. In the early '90s the conferences became annual events, with a three-day conference in August and a one-day conference in December. All the conferences focused on a selected work by Karácsony and the related area of educational science and practice.

In the past two decades, in keeping with the objectives, 150 to 250 teachers and students attended the conferences annually, many of them from outside Hungary.

The Circle covers its operating costs from membership fees and donations. Since in Hungary people can donate 1% of the income tax they pay to a non-governmental organisation, the members have supported the Circle in this way too, and this has provided an important source for the publication of Karácsony's books.

Publishing the full ten-volume series began in 2002 and was completed in 2012 with the assistance of Széphalom Publishers.²² It should be noted that it has rarely happened in Hungarian scholarship that fifty years after the death of a scholar his disciples and their descendants had his work republished at their own expense.

One prime motivator behind the Csökmei Circle's activities aimed at preserving and transmitting cultural value was Dénes Kövendi (1923–2011) who had studied literature but worked as a librarian. He put in an enormous amount of philological work to prepare the notes of the series representing KARÁCSONY's oeuvre, exploring and identifying the original places and dates of publication. Except for the book *A*

²² Karácsony's works are listed in the Appendix. The first date refers to the first edition by Exodus, Budapest, the second to the reedition by Széphalom Könyvműhely, Budapest.

magyar világnézet (The Hungarian Worldview) (1941/2007), he wrote detailed post-scripts to every book, entitled 'A kötet helye Karácsony Sándor életművében' ('The Place of This Volume in Karácsony's Oeuvre'). In addition, beginning from 1990, he wrote several studies about the place of Karácsony's work in Hungarian science.

Academician Árpád Szabó was a colleague of Karácsony's at the University of Debrecen. He was a classicist and science historian with an international reputation who achieved significant results, especially in the research of ancient mathematics and astronomy, cooperating with Karácsony's mathematician disciples like Imre Lakatos, László Kalmár and Tamás Varga. When the Csökmei Circle was founded, he put his full authority behind it, and for a decade faithfully appeared at all the conferences with his lectures. He played an important role in getting the scientific community to recognise Karácsony's work once again.

Karácsony's ideas played a decisive role in Domokos Varga's literary works. His poetic representation of the world of children is very interesting from a pedagogical point of view. In his sociographic writings he recorded the social and cultural aspects of a receding world, the world of manual workers, and as a publicist he always voiced his respect for his former professor, and gave spiritual and financial support to the Csökmei Circle to the end of his life.

7.3. Sándor Kör, Budapest

An organisation called Sándor Kör (Sándor Circle) was established in 1988 under the leadership of Tamás Deme, an educationist engaged in public education. This circle has carried on its activities aimed at preserving and increasing cultural value for 25 years. Deme came into contact with György Kontra at an educational conference where the latter introduced him to Karácsony's ideas and works. This had an eye-opening effect on Deme, who for most of his subsequent career focused on investigating and disseminating Karácsony's pedagogical ideas. It was this work that led him to establish an ecumenical pedagogical workshop with the name *Sándor*, which is a reference to Sándor Karácsony, a Calvinist, and Sándor Sík, a Catholic. The two men had developed a friendship and close cooperation in scouting. By fostering cooperation between denominations, the circle emphasises the universal application of Karácsony's pedagogy. In their monthly meetings they study various parts of his oeuvre and identify the parallels between KARÁCSONY's ideas and those of modern pedagogy and cultural anthropology; the role of classical and folk culture in education is emphasised, and the results of natural sciences are discussed in the light of Nature's 'autonomy'. Tamás Deme also initiated the reedition, by Széphalom Publishers, of *Ocsúdó magyarság (Waking Hungarians)* (2002), the first volume of Karácsony's comprehensive pedagogical series.

7.4. Karácsony Sándor Közéleti Kör, Nagykőrös

Since its inception, the Teacher Training College of Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church of Hungary (Nagykőrös) has made Karácsony's pedagogy an integral part of teacher training for Reformed Church schools. Árpád Szenczi, the present Principal of the College has for twenty years written studies and textbooks analysing and presenting it for trainee teachers, extending this work to the pedagogical conferences and popular lectures held at the College. Szenczi has a good partner in this work: Tibor Debreczeni, honorary chairman of the Karácsony Sándor Közéleti Kör (Sándor Karácsony Public Life Circle) in Nagykőrös and the director of the Sándor Karácsony Stage, established in 1989, has for decades worked (using the opportunities of drama pedagogy too) for the purpose of bringing Karácsony's scholarly achievements back into public awareness.

8. The heritage of Sándor Karácsony in the Reformed Church of Hungary

In analysing the impact of Sándor Karácsony, we must note his significant role in revitalising the Reformed Church. As an educationist he believed that respect for the autonomy of another person comes from interpersonal interaction and dialogue, and he held that the same was true in the relationship between God and humans in an age when humanity is entering adulthood. He drew the conclusions of this view in two respects.

In Bible-reading communities, he restored the Reformed Church's original, congregation-centred order of operation: before God everyone is equal, has equal rights to speak when it is his/her turn, and according to the principle of universal priesthood, the person who is speaking is a priest! The Bible circles of the Reformed Church have observed this principle up to the present day. By recognising God's sovereignty, the Bible circle creates a dialogic interaction between God and humans. Regular reading of the Bible provides another opportunity for dialogue. Accordingly, Karácsony worked out the order of reading the Bible for the Reformed Church of Hungary.

When his Bible circle published the first Bible-reading guide, it was the second book of Moses called Exodus that was marked out for reading, and the community at that time felt that by leaving behind the fleshpots of Egypt, they could liberate themselves from slavery. From the late thirties to 1949, the Exodus Bible-reading guide was the official guide of the Reformed Church, which has defined the practice of Bible reading up to the present time: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, that is, we cannot pick and choose among the books of the Old and the New Testament as we would like according to our current wishes. If the order of reading is prescribed on a daily basis in a guide, with passages from both testaments, there is a better chance that the Word will be in the centre: instead of humans deciding what they want to hear from God, they must try to understand the message carried by the Word. When in 1950 the authorities banned Exodus Publishers, Sándor Karácsony's

circle continued to circulate the Bible-reading guide in typewritten and photocopied form. At the same time the Reformed Church also continued to publish its guide which is rightly regarded as the successor of the Exodus guide (as the foreword to the 1955 guide claims), although in the fifties some discrepancy arose in dividing up the different books.

Singing in the congregation was always a cause that was close to Sándor Karácsony's heart. He made it clear in several places that only the most perfect, most beautiful and artistic forms are worthy for the praise of God. In his view, singing, as practiced in many congregations of the Reformed Church (where rhythm is not kept and every note is sustained for the same duration) has nothing to do with the praise of God. Karácsony had a very influential role in compiling the songbook of the Hungarian Reformed Church published in 1948. In this he cooperated with Béla Árokháti, Bishop Imre Révész and Kálmán Csomasz Tóth. At his initiative, another songbook was published by the Hungarian Evangelical Student Association in 1948 which contains the unabridged version of the Psalms translated by Albert Szenci Molnár, set to music by Bourgeois and Goudimel (*Szent Dávid király százötven zsoltára 1948*). (Szenci's poetic translation is regarded very highly in Hungarian literature.)

9. Afterword

Those who read Sándor Karácsony's book today may stumble upon scientific terms not in current use, dialectal words or literary turns of phrase. Unfortunately, these words are not part of general education any more. However, if the reader takes pains to understand them, s/he may discover a world whose values are values even today, whose problems are still problems, and whose proposals for the solution of the problems are to a great extent in harmony with the latest findings of modern science, which suggests that more of Karácsony's ideas may be expected to be substantiated.

The idea that it is our relationship with 'the other person' based on autonomy and fairness that is the key to our bodily and spiritual well-being, our enjoyment of art, our efforts to understand and make ourselves understood, our satisfactory playing of social roles, our credibility and our faith, is verified in a negative way by the lack of all this in today's globalised world. Modern science has already understood that the former self-centred outlook of humanity on the world is not only outdated but also harmful to itself, as seen from the disruption of the ecological balance. More conscious members of the human race can now understand this.

For this reason we shall end this paper with the conclusion that Sándor Karácsony's oeuvre is not only something that the history of science will record as a valuable contribution, but it is a cornerstone of the science of the future. It remains an important task for the Hungarian scientific community to reencode it in other languages to make it accessible for international audiences.

Translated by Pál Heltai

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APPENDIX

The titles of Karácsony's works

Hungarian title, date of publishing	English translation of titles
'A neveléstudomány társaslogikai alapjai' sorozat • <i>A magyar észjárás és közoktatásügyünk reformja</i> (1939/2009)	'The Interpersonal-Logical Foundations of Pedagogy' series • <i>The Hungarian Way of Thinking and the Reform of our Public Education System</i>
'A neveléstudomány társaslélektani alapjai' sorozat I. rész: A nyelvi (irodalmi) nevelés és a társaslélek értelmi működése • <i>Magyar nyelvtan társaslélektani alapon</i> (1938/2010) • <i>A könyvek lelke (Irodalmi nevelés)</i> (1941/2006)	'Interpersonal-Psychological Foundations of Pedagogy' series Part I. Linguistic (Literary) Education and the Intellectual Functioning of the Interpersonal Psyche • <i>Hungarian Grammar on Interpersonal- Psychological Bases</i> • <i>The Soul of Books (System of Signs and Symbols: Literary Education)</i>
II. rész: A társaslélek felső határa és a transzcendensre nevelés • <i>A magyar világnézet (Világnézeti nevelés)</i> (1941/2007) • <i>A magyarok Istene (Vallásos nevelés)</i> (1943/2004)	Part II. The Upper Limit of the Interpersonal Psyche and Education for the Transcendent • <i>The Hungarian Worldview (Education for Worldview)</i> • <i>The God of Hungarians (Religious Education)</i>
III. rész: A társadalmi nevelés és a társaslélek akarati működése • <i>A magyarok kincse (Értékrendszer és axiológia)</i> (1944/2008) • <i>Magyar ifjúság (Tettrendszer és etika)</i> (1946/2005) • <i>Ocsúdó magyarság (Szokásrendszer és pedagógia)</i> (1942/2002)	Part III. Social Education and the Volitional Functioning of the Social Psyche • <i>The Treasure of Hungarians (System of Values and Axiology)</i> • <i>Hungarian Youth (System of Acts and Ethics)</i> • <i>Waking Hungarians (System of Customs and Pedagogy)</i>
IV. rész: A társaslélek alsó határa és a jogi nevelés • <i>A magyar demokrácia (Függetlenségre – autonómiára nevelés)</i> (1945/2011) • <i>A magyar béke (Háborúból békére – reformra nevelés)</i> (1947/2011)	Part IV. The Lower Limit of the Interpersonal Psyche and Legal Education • <i>Hungarian democracy (Education for Independence and Autonomy)</i> • <i>Hungarian Peace (From War to Education for Peace and Reform)</i>