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### **Dreaming and Collecting Dreams in the Occupied France: Emil Szittya's Illustrated Collection of 82 Dreams**

Recently rediscovered and republished in 2019, the *82 Rêves pendant la guerre entre 1939-1944* (82 Dreams during World War II), this peculiar collection of dreams – occurred to children or elders, men or women, French or emigrés, members of the resistance or Nazi officers – compiled and illustrated by a French-Hungarian writer and painter, Emil Szittya, remained as hard to classify as its author himself. Szittya, being Jewish and a foreigner, was forced to flee the occupied Paris to the Free Zone of France when he decided to ask those who crossed his path during his exile about their dreams. In his book published originally in 1963, he gives a detailed description of 82 dreams and, occasionally, a key for their understanding, that can either be circumstances in which they were conceived or details of the dreamers' past life. Yet he explicitly does not aspire to interpret the dreams (unlike Charlotte Beradt in her *The Third Reich of Dreams*), at least not directly, by means of psychoanalysis. However, his painted illustrations can be considered as attempts to translate visually the symbolic language of dreams (described among others by Reinhart Koselleck). The knowledge generated by the textual and visual endeavor of Szittya is as difficult to define as the specific genre of the "dream during war/occupation". My paper examines therefore how text and painting rely on dreams to document intersections of private experience and historical events – in this peculiar case, those of the German occupation –, and how their characteristics as genres influence this documentary work. Also, a collection of dreams in which the focus shifts from the individual spiritual functions of the dreamers to the "dream-producing, dream-provoking" power of atrocity, has to be considered as political action. Therefore, I recognize Szittya's way of shaping or staging of dreams by means of literature and fine art as the result of a translation process between mediums, in order to compare the effectiveness of text and image as historical-political action.

While investigating this particular collection of dreams, I set out a broader perspective of the personal, social and artistic context in which Szittya's transcripts and paintings of dreams were conceived. To this end, I rely on egodocuments, such as the artist's personal notes and the illustrated diary of his daughter, the 14 year-old Jeanne; as well as on his writings about art produced by *métèques*, foreign artists living in Paris, who had been facing hostile reception and misunderstanding in the context of French Modern Art, and were called – due to a semiotic operation carried out by sympathetic art critics producing a collective name for this loose grouping of foreigners to defend them individually and

collectively, as Sophie Krebs pointed it out – the Parisian School. I also aim to demonstrate and interpret the „dream-like“ in a broader group of Szittyá’s painted oeuvre, while investigating the origin of the artist’s interest in and use of dreams, comparing it notably to those of Sigmund Freud, of painters such as Marc Chagall, and of writers who explored dreams as forms of resistance and tools of survival during World War Two, such as Charlotte Beradt and Jean Cayrol.