

Summary in English

This paper argues the biopolitical contexts that determine the interpretative framework of Imre Kertész's oeuvre. Above all, it examines the forms of authorial self-representation and the authorial practice of rewriting in 'fictional' and 'real' texts through two concepts of Giorgio Agamben's theory of biopolitics: sovereignty and bare life. The paper will first outline Agamben's concept, paying attention to its relationship with Michel Foucault's notion of biopower, and then, in a way that has been underemphasised in relation to Kertész, it will examine the role of 'labour' in relation to the 'bare life' produced in the camps. This will be important because, from here, it will be possible to link authorial self-representation and narrative self-reflection in general to Kertész's later works, the *Gályanapló*, the lectures of the 1990s, and then the novel *Felszámolás* (Liquidation). The main stake of the second step of the analysis is to explore the contradiction between the instantiation of "bare life" as "ones-own-life" in *Sorstalanság* (Fatelessness) and the increasingly openly represented "intellectual individualism" in later texts, which points back to a "bourgeois-individualist work ethic". The paper locates the contradiction in two steps. The "Musselman-condition" as enacted in *Fatelessness* is for the narrator still the basis of the narrative: detached from the total goal-means relation of production, of (forced) labour, he is able to deconstruct the categories ("valuable" and "worthless" life) externally imposed on the individual by the sovereign. In the *Gályanapló* however, labour in the sense of total production becomes the basic concept of writing. On the one hand, the literary work of self-production pushed to the point of self-liquidation, is not only able to represent but also to simulate, from the point of view of the recipient, the mode of operation of the total state. On the other hand, however, there is a risk - and this is confirmed in the pages of his late *A végső kocsma* - that this authorial self-representation increasingly places the forms-of-life incompatible with the self-referentiality of productivity in this sense in the position of the alien to be excluded. In the third step, I will analyse the articulation of this tension in post-regime change works.