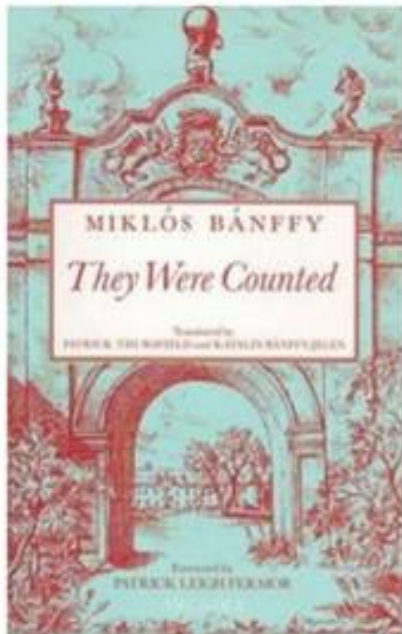


August 2017



Our book this month was *They were Counted*, Book One of the Transylvania Trilogy, known originally as *The Writing on the Wall* by Miklos Banffy. Originally published in Hungary in 1934 it became an immediate bestseller, as it was when republished in 1982. It is an epic in its length, breadth and depth, its many characters, racial tensions, language differences, murder, mystery, duels, politics, wars, balls, parties and love affairs. The author's concern is the politics and social disasters looming for the Hungarian people in the lead up to World War I.

The novel's main characters are two cousins, Count Laszlo Gyeroffy and Count Balint Abady. Gyeroffy is a musician, an orphan, from an ancient family, who organises balls and parties and as lead dancer enjoys significant social standing. His thwarted love for his cousin Klara leads him to a life of gambling and drunken behaviour. His cousin, Count Balint Abady, is a politician, rich, urbane and socially adept. A good man with a social conscience who says at one point that 'leadership is our responsibility', meaning the upper classes with their money, social position and influence. He is hopelessly in love with his married cousin Adrienne Miloth and this love affair is central to the plot.

The author cared deeply for the countryside and the Hungarian people. His descriptions of the landscape are beautiful and minor characters in these chapters are often more interesting than the major characters. He developed wonderful villains who are written with great relish, e.g. The lawyer Azbej and Laszlo's lover. His women and their love affairs and gossip are at times melodramatic.

As we continue with our year of reading European novels in translation, this one was clearly not a popular choice. As only two of our members had read the novel, discussion was limited.

Read a positive review [here](#).

Ratings: Alexa DNF, Claudia DNF, Gail DNF , Janet DNF , Judith 4 , Kim DNF, Margie DNF , Nic DNF, Penny 3.5 and Viv DNF.

Next month we get together on the 11/09/17 at 6:30pm at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) to discuss [I Malavoglia : The House by The Medlar Tree](#) by [Giovanni Verga](#). This continues our year of European novels in translation.

Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

Other Books We Read

August 2017

Our book this month was [They were Counted](#), Book One of the Transylvania Trilogy by [Miklos Banffy](#), but we also read other books. Maximum rating is 5.

A Palace in the Old Village by Tahar Ben Jelloun, 3.5

The Curse of the Pogo Stick: a Laotian murder mystery by Colin Cotterill, 3.5

Regions of Thick Ribbed Ice by Helen Garner, 4.5

The Last Woman Hanged by Caroline Overington, 3

The Notebook by Agota Kristof, 4

Understory, by Inga Simpson, 4

Sprinter and Sprummer: Australia's Changing Seasons, by Timothy J. Entwistle, 3

Australia Day by Melissa Cheng, 3.5

The Animators by Kayla Rae Whitaker, 4 and 4

Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self by Danielle Evans, 4