

Address of Mr. Ádám Fuglinszky, recipient of the Pierre Savard Award 2011-2012

Bonsoir, mesdames et messieurs. Avant mon départ, mes amis m'ont dit que j'avais gagné ce prix seulement parce que personne au Canada ne pouvait lire mon livre (il est en hongrois). Il y a deux réponses à cette remarque: une sérieuse et une marrante. Je commence par la sérieuse: il y a un sommaire détaillé en français et en anglais à la fin du livre. Et la marrante: si on a des amis comme ça, on n'a pas besoin d'ennemis du tout.

Ladies and Gentlemen, jokes aside, it is an honour and a great pleasure for me to be here tonight and to receive the Pierre Savard Award. Thank you very much for your confidence and for granting me the privilege of being a recipient. Acknowledgments are due to the ICCS for founding and awarding this prize in general, and in my case to the ten experts in particular who were ready to support the nomination of my book. Those were among others two former Hungarian Constitutional Court judges, one Hungarian Supreme Court judge, the former president of the Republic of Hungary, his Excellency László Sólyom, one of the executive directors of the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law in Hamburg (Germany), Prof. Reinhard Zimmermann and last but not least Prof. Guy Laforest and Prof. Daniel Gardner from Université Laval in Québec. I would like to dedicate this award to my wife Réka and to my son Ábel.

To be honest, my interests and relationship with Canada are not restricted to my professional life as a law teacher in Hungary addicted to comparative law. In Hungary, almost every family was involved in the revolution of 1956 against communist dictatorship and soviet occupation. Since the fight for freedom was defeated by the soviet tanks, many participants had to leave the country. You might know that more than 41.000 people found their new homes in Canada in those days. Among them was my mother's cousin. He and the other real refugees became hard working Canadian citizens and added a new shade to the diversity or colorful mosaic for which Canada is so proud and famous. There is a monument in the so called Budapest Park in Toronto; and the Hungarian flag is raised at every anniversary of the revolution on the balcony of Toronto City Hall. Let me express my honest gratitude to the Canadian people and to the Canadian state for this generous gesture.

Dear guests, since the CV of the recipients has been read during this ceremony, I do not intend to speak further about myself or my book. I would like to say a few words about my discovery of Pierre Savard. As I got the good news that I was going to receive this award, I became curious about the person after whom this award was named. Now I know all the important biographical details, but I wanted to go further and deeper, I was eager to

understand the personality, the aims and mission of Pierre Savard. I wished and still wish to understand the message in his walk of life, especially the message towards me, a Hungarian law teacher, who unfortunately can not meet him personally any more. But I got a chance to meet his spirit through having written my book on civil liability in Quebec's mixed jurisdiction. In the materials I found on him, he is often called a „bâtisseur”, a builder. Builder of a school of historians based on interdisciplinarity, a builder of the international scientific network of Canadianists, including the organisation which unifies and assists them: the ICCS.

Reading more and more about him in the last weeks shed some light on his message to my country and to me personally at least in three aspects.

- First, his research (especially on French-Canadian relations in Ontario) can provide extremely useful information about how it is possible to preserve local identity within the framework of a colorful and diverse community like Canada and the Canadian Federal State, and to accept this framework at the same time. The member states of the European Union can draw important lessons from this experience. (Actually, this was one reason why I decided to study Canadian private law. I was curious as to what we, nations of the European Union, can learn from the techniques and experiences of a federal state unifying different jurisdictions and legal cultures, especially regarding the mutual influence of common law and civil law.)
- Second, I would like to highlight another aspect of Pierre Savard's research interests, notably the relationship between France and French Canada. As a result of the peace conventions closing the first and the Second World War, almost 2,5 million Hungarians live outside the borders of Hungary. The parallel speaks for itself.
- And last but not least, in one of the articles on his life, his humanism, his good sense of humor and his generosity were highlighted. He was described as a true renaissance man who was fond of discussions. This article also contained a particular story. Once, Prof. Savard enjoyed a passionate discussion with the students so much, that instead of finishing the lesson at 7 PM as usual, he provoked further discussion and continued the lesson outside the university building, in the snow, and finally in a restaurant until late at night. I think that being a teacher is a kind of real addiction. I think I can imagine what Prof. Savard felt. Our task is to surrender ourselves completely to this addiction. There is no other choice, otherwise our life remains incomplete and fragmented. I am very happy to have found a new example and a fellow spirit in the late Prof. Savard.

A true renaissance man, writes the biographer. Our fast changing and chaotic world is not favorable to true renaissance personalities. On the contrary, we are motivated and forced to egoism, consumption, materiality and as a symptom: to continuously rush. Sometimes it

seems to be really hopeless not to follow these trends. To preserve humanism and traditional values is a challenge nowadays, but Pierre Savard helps us to deal with this situation and provides us with useful guidelines. If I may quote his relevant statement on the mission of historians: „Nous devons nous redire sans cesse que nous travaillons pour l’honnête homme de notre temps, et non seulement pour les rares collègues qui liront notre prose dans quelque revue spécialisée. [...] Être historien, c’est accepter de ne pas espérer changer le monde à court terme. Cependant, il faut espérer changer quelque chose, sinon notre métier serait bien vain.”

Mesdames et messieurs, merci encore une fois pour votre générosité de m’avoir décerné ce prix, institué en souvenir de Pierre Savard. Je suis très heureux de le recevoir. Mais je serais beaucoup plus heureux si j’aurais pu faire sa connaissance. Je vous remercie de votre attention.

*Ottawa, 26th May 2012*

*Ádám Fuglinszky*