

## Lejtényi, Catherine

Az előadás címe:

*The Private and the Political: Moments in the Endless Struggle for Freedom*

Absztrakt

Were it not for the 1956 Revolution, I would not exist. Yet for most of my life, my father, Lejtényi Andras, only hinted at those historical events and his role in them. Exiled, he remade his life in Montreal, Canada, insisted on his identity as a Canadian and a capitalist, and on the “uselessness” of Hungary in my life.

This latter position I never adopted as my own, and in the years since his passing in 2010, my explorations of both the history of the revolution and my own deepening affinity for the country have yielded amazing discoveries about my father and by extension myself. They have also forced me to refine my concepts of freedom: as a principle, as a privilege I enjoy personally, and as a phenomenon lacking in more and more parts of the world and most painfully for me, especially in Hungary. They also raise the question of how we can and must still struggle for it, starting with our own souls and continuing within the body politic of our country and our continent.

The first part of my talk deals with a biographical account of my father, starting in Transylvania and ending in Montreal, my relationship with him and the paths I have taken that have in turns spited or fulfilled his hopes for me. I will then engage with the principle of political freedom, referring to such thinkers as Herbert Marcuse and Hannah Arendt. Since the feminist movement is what has informed my own experience of freedom and its absence, I will touch on how feminism also shows us that the limitation of freedom (which by definition is unfreedom) is the greatest source of depression, inertia and the urgent need for emancipation, regardless of who the particulars of domination and oppression are.

Finally, I will ask how the struggle for freedom should continue today, especially when oppression comes in ever more discrete yet equally deadening forms. It is my firm belief that we are not as powerless as the establishment would have us believe.

Kulcsszavak: 1956 Revolution, András Lejtényi, biography